

Monday Night Raw – May 6, 2002: Beyond Free Fall

Monday Night Raw

Date: May 6, 2002

Location: Hartford Civic Center, Hartford, Connecticut

Commentators: Jim Ross, Jerry Lawler

Maybe a new month will help things out a little bit. I know I say this every week but it almost can't get worse than last week with Undertaker very slowly beating Hulk Hogan down because Hogan can barely move at this point in his career. The pay per view really can't get here soon enough as I can't imagine they'll keep the title on Hogan any longer. Let's get to it.

Oh and as of today: it's WWE. I'll put the over/under on mentions of the new name at 5000.

We open with....gardening? An older woman chops up her bushes to get them into a perfect WWE logo, which she then lights on fire. The new tagline: Get the F Out. I actually like that as it gets straight to the point.

Women's Title: Trish Stratus vs. Jazz

Jazz is defending, there are no disqualifications and Steven Richards is in the champ's corner. The fans want puppies as Jazz sends Trish into the corner to start, only to miss a splash. Richards offers a distraction though and Trish's rollup goes nowhere. JR says this is for the World Wrestling Entertainment Women's Title and I think we're all glad that name didn't last.

Jazz throws her around with some butterfly suplexes for two, followed by the double chickenwing facebuster to send Lawler into hysterics. A Chick Kick and Stratusfaction has the champ beaten but Richards makes another save by superkicking Trish down to give Jazz the pin.

Rating: D. Was there a point to this that I don't get? The No DQ stuff

could have been forgotten with a simple referee distraction but to be fair I'd probably call that stupid. It might be easier to just have them do a regular match and scrap Richards as a whole but then we couldn't do the following.

Bubba Ray Dudley with a Bubba Bomb, Raven with the Raven Effect, Justin Credible with a superkick, Crash Holly with a missile dropkick, Bubba with a trashcan shot and Trish stealing the title and a blinded Bubba (fire extinguisher) powerbombing Trish through a table so Richards can steal the pin gives us six Hardcore Title changes in about two minutes because old jokes are funnier when you do them for the third time in less than two months. Bubba takes Trish to the back because that makes up for powerbombing her through a table.

Here's the NWO for a chat due to reasons of WE'RE TELLING YOU THEY WERE A GOOD IDEA AND YOU CAN JUST DEAL WITH IT! Show lets us see him turning heel and joining the team in a big moment. Two years ago, he was in the main event of Wrestlemania while Austin was hurt. Now it's 2002 and he spent Wrestlemania in a restaurant pretending to have a good time instead of being on the show. Last month he was in a preliminary match on Heat while Austin had a #1 contenders match. Show is a monster that no one can stop and now the NWO is even bigger.

This brings out Ric Flair to say he wishes he could have Big Show's natural gifts but he's a sixteen time World Champion because he didn't whine and cry. It's really more about when Flair didn't cry but we're not quite to that point yet. Flair tells Show to deal with it and announces the NWO vs. Bradshaw/Austin/Flair, which he already announced last week. Hall promises a history changing announcement for later tonight.

European Title: William Regal vs. Spike Dudley

Spike is defending and is coming in with a bad ankle due to Regal attacking him over the weekend. He's ready to fight anyway and jumps on Regal's back, earning himself a stomp to the foot and a slam onto the ropes. A simple leglock makes Spike tap in about 35 seconds. That would be two title changes in 40 seconds combined for this belt.

Regal beats Spike up even more after the match. D'Lo Brown of all people

comes out for the save.

Flair rants to Arn Anderson in a nothing segment.

Booker T. goes to 7-11 for a Slurpee and is annoyed that there's no Booker T. cup. He runs into Goldust in a Latrell Sprewell jersey with headphones around his neck. Goldust has followed him from his hotel (Booker: "YOU BEEN FOLLOWING ME???") and wants to talk strategy for their match tonight. Booker seems to agree but has to go. Goldust: "If you'll let me have a drink of your Slurpee, I'll let you have a bite of my weiner." Booker responds as you would expect anyone to if he's offered a bite of a hot dog. Funny stuff as always.

We look at Planet Stasiak costing Brock Lesnar and himself a tag match at Insurrextion over the weekend.

Flair finds an APA hat in the NWO dressing room. Bradshaw doesn't seem like one to just leave his hat laying around.

Undertaker arrives and assigns someone to watch his bike.

The NWO is standing near the entrance, seemingly waiting on somebody.

Planet Stasiak vs. Brock Lesnar

Brock fires off the shoulders in the corner to start as we get the GOLDBERG chants. The spinebuster looks to finish but Heyman wants an example made. An F5 and a boot on the chest is enough for the easy pin. Another squash.

Hulk Hogan has stolen Undertaker's motorcycle because Undertaker left the keys in the ignition.

GET THE F OUT! It's the same thing as earlier as the company is still WWE about an hour later.

Here's Hogan on the motorcycle to Undertaker's music. I really could have gone my whole life without seeing Hulk Hogan coming out to Limp Bizkit. Hulk gets right to the point by calling Undertaker out for a fight and threatening his motorcycle to sweeten the pot a bit. Undertaker comes out

and tells Hogan not to mess with the bike. Hogan isn't impressed and swears a bit before turning the bike on. It moves a whole three feet before the engine stalls, leaving Undertaker to....stand right there and not do a thing.

Hogan finally leaves the bike on the ramp and runs (work with me here) after Undertaker as we cut to the commentators. You can hear the engine revving as Hogan is apparently still out there trying to get the thing to work. Well done by JR and King to not die of laughter here. The chase is FINALLY on with Hogan driving the bike around backstage (had to do it as the pre-tape shows him on the bike backstage). He changes pace a bit by driving around even more, all while shouting for Undertaker.

Hogan eventually parks it in front of a semi truck and gets inside as we go to a break. Back with Hogan crushing the bike. You know, a month and a half ago he used a similar truck to crush an ambulance with Rock inside so this is real progress for him. This was WAY too long and I'm amazed that both guys didn't just walk off the show when the bike stalled. What a sign indeed.

Rob Van Dam/Jeff Hardy vs. Booker T./Eddie Guerrero

Van Dam and Guerrero hit the mat to start with Rob monkey flipping him down but missing a kick to the face. Instead a faceplant out of an electric chair sends Eddie crawling over to the corner for the tag to Booker. More kicks have Mr. T. in trouble and it's off to Jeff as things speed up again.

Booker finally gets in a shot on Hardy and it's time for a face to be in peril. An elbow to the jaw sets up the Spinarooni for two (Lawler: "Dagnabbit.") but Jeff comes back with a dropkick (totally missed) and the real hot tag brings in Van Dam. Everything breaks down again and Rolling Thunder gets two on Eddie. Cue Goldust for a failed distraction so a Swanton from Jeff and the Five Star from Rob can put Eddie away.

Rating: C+. These guys are becoming the lone bright spots on this show and it's a bit disappointing to have them all in the same match. At least it was one of the better segments so far this week with a good looking ending. You certainly can't fault Eddie for losing when he takes back to

back finishers so he was even a bit protected in the loss.

Terri has challenged Molly to a swimsuit contest later tonight with a contest between pure and wholesome or what's under her robe.

Flair and Anderson think Bradshaw has joined the NWO, guaranteeing that he hasn't.

It's time for the swimsuit contest and of course Lawler is in charge. Terri comes out and Lawler is praying for a thong. Molly brings a pair of flippers for more proper swimming attire (JR: "The Hilary Clinton of the WWF."). Molly decides she's going first and, after putting on her swimming cap, reveals a conservative one piece with a skirt. It looks like a figure skating costume, meaning it looks like what a lot of run of the mill women would wear to a pool every day.

Naturally Lawler and the crowd think it's horrible and treat Molly like she's wearing a full body suit with only her ankles showing. Terri reveals exactly what you would expect and wins because fans go for the orange skin with countable ribs look. Molly lays her out with a flipper in the only heelish thing she's done in the entire segment.

Flair goes to Bradshaw's locker room (Bradshaw has his own locker room?) and finds Kane's mask, which X-Pac stole weeks ago.

After a break, Flair runs into Bradshaw and demands an explanation. Bradshaw says he'll see Flair in the ring.

Undertaker finds his bike. Where in the world has he been for the last half hour? He tries to pull the bike out from under the truck and then stomps on the bike, likely thinking that floating out of the top of a casket after cutting a promo to a camera hanging from the lid wasn't so bad after all. Undertaker leaves and Kevin Nash arrives for the surprise.

NWO vs. Ric Flair/Bradshaw/Steve Austin

Austin and X-Pac start and it's a spinebuster each for X-Pac and Hall. Steve cleans house with right hands but can't get a Stunner on Hall. Instead it's off to the Big Show for some choking in the corner and a backdrop that sends Austin flying. You don't see Austin in the air that

often. Bradshaw tags himself in for the fall away slam on Hall as JR thinks there's only one Kane mask in existence. You know, because they're not sold at the merchandise stands.

Show comes back in and throws Bradshaw around "like a double cheeseburger." Who throws double cheeseburgers around? I've never been to Oklahoma but are things really that different there? The bloody (thanks to some Big Show headbutts) Bradshaw is beaten down by all three NWOites with Show headbutting him into the bad corner. A big boot finally drops X-Pac and it's Flair coming in with the chops.

Everything breaks down and Bradshaw's Clotheslines lays out X-Pac but Big Show pulls him outside for a chokeslam through the announcers' table. Austin finally goes after Show (which is the point of this whole thing) but has to Stun Hall and X-Pac at the same time. Some Big Show chops have Austin in trouble and he falls out to the floor. Austin actually goes aerial again with a middle rope Thesz press to put Show down but the Stunner is easily blocked and we get a ref bump.

A low blow sets up the Stunner but there's no referee. Of course there isn't because this hasn't gone on long enough. Flair hits Austin with a chair to go full heel and destroys the knee to make things even worse. With Austin down, Flair makes himself and Big Show vs. Austin at the pay per view. Ric grabs a Figure Four as the match is a no contest.

Rating: D-. The length here is the big problem as this went on for over fifteen minutes and set up the most obvious ending they could have gone with after eliminating every other possible option. Taking out the fact that Nash was just a decoy and what else could it have been other than Flair turning heel? It makes sense, but it was really tiresome having to sit through the APA hat/Kane mask stuff earlier. Just WAY too long here though and it really dragged things down even further than they were before.

Overall Rating: F+. Raw is now beyond free fall and has hit the ground, exploding on impact. Other than the same four midcard guys having their regularly good matches (less than six minutes this week), I can't think of a single thing on this show that isn't either too short, boring,

offensive or the pit of torture that is the main event.

Raw has had six shows since the Brand Split. Here are the main event matches/segments which go along with Hogan/HHH as World Champion:

Kane vs. X-Pac/Austin contract signing

Austin vs. Hall

Austin/Bradshaw vs. NWO/Undertaker

Austin/Big Show vs. NWO

Hogan vs. Regal/Undertaker beats Hogan down

Austin/Bradshaw/Flair vs. NWO

Here's the thing: other than two major pops for Hogan, is there any reason that Austin isn't in Hogan's spot? Hogan has a long history with Hall, Nash and Flair while Austin has a long history with HHH and Undertaker. Much more importantly though, Austin may be a shell of his glory days but he's WAY ahead of Hogan at this point. Hogan's matches so far have been embarrassing while you could at least pencil in Austin for watchable at worst. Couple that with swapping the NWO out for ANYTHING else and this show is instantly better.

Raw is a disaster right now with two major angles being huge wastes of everyone's time and it's turned into one of the biggest messes I've seen in a long time. I know people would get sick of the upcoming HHH and Shawn Michaels dominance but it puts this nonsense to shame. At least you could get a decent main event, which we haven't gotten so far in six weeks.

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