

Monday Night Raw – June 3, 2002 (2016 Redo): Gross Jokes and No Punching

Monday Night Raw

Date: June 3, 2002

Location: American Airlines Arena, Dallas, Texas

Attendance: 7,800

Commentators: Jim Ross, Jerry Lawler

We're at an interesting place here as it seems that we're gearing up for Steve Austin/Rob Van Dam vs. Eddie Guerrero/Chris Benoit though Benoit isn't quite ready to get back in the ring after his neck injury. Unfortunately the NWO is still running around and that's not good for anyone, especially the people actually on the team. Let's get to it.

Ric Flair, Arn Anderson, Benoit and Eddie are in the back with the boss saying he's got a lot to announce in the ring. If Austin shows up, Anderson is assigned with telling Austin to find him in the ring. Austin doesn't seem like the kind of guy who is going to show up and go to the boss' office but whatever. About fifteen cops follow Flair, Benoit and Eddie to the ring.

Opening sequence.

Here are Flair and the talented young'uns for the long opening chat. After a quick look back at Austin getting beaten down, Benoit gives the obvious explanation: Austin put him out for a year and it's revenge time. That's one of the few logical things I've heard on this show lately and it's such a relief. Eddie says his title was stolen from him last week and it made him feel like less of a Latino man.

Then he gave Austin a frog splash and the blood started flowing again. Flair: "You are so cool." As for tonight, Austin isn't wrestling because he's benched. That brings us Austin on the screen with an unconscious Arn Anderson. Austin (with bulging veins like I've never seen him have) wants

Benoit or Eddie tonight but Flair says neither is available.

That's fine with Austin because he can just fight Flair one on one. If Austin wins, he's off the bench but if he loses, he's back on the bench. So what does Flair have to gain here? The match is made anyway but Flair says it's going to be a pure wrestling match. Austin is cool with that but has a question: what is a Nature Boy? Actually never mind as Austin has to stomp Anderson down some more and relieve himself on Arn's shirt. If this is the best they can come up with for Austin, he might as well just walk now.

Hardcore Title: Bradshaw vs. Steven Richards

Richards is defending, neither gets an entrance and Jackie is guest referee because we're in Texas and that's going to make the fans care. Bradshaw kicks him in the face and hits a pumphandle slam before hog tying Steven. Now it's time for a saddle and a big pair of horns because IT'S TEXAS YA'LL! Some trashcan lid shots get Steven out of trouble (apparently Bradshaw sucks at knots) but the Clothesline gives Bradshaw the title. Spike Dudley tried to win the title in there too but it really didn't seem important enough to mention at the time.

Justin Credible and Crash fail at title defenses. Bradshaw winning the title might have meant something if Big Show hadn't recently pinned him in a nothing match.

Kevin Nash gives the NWO a speech when Goldust comes in, dressed as Coach (meaning in a collared Raw shirt). He wants on the team so Nash says the winner of X-Pac and Goldust can be on the team.

King of the Ring Qualifying Match: Goldust vs. X-Pac

The X-PAC SUCKS chants are out in full force early on tonight and Goldust makes the fans happy with a quick stomping. He rakes the face but X-Pac's spinwheel kick drops him. The Bronco Buster misses and Goldust hammers in some right hands to the head. Instead Goldust hits his own Bronco Buster, which would have been a much bigger deal about six years earlier. A second attempt is countered with a low blow (not a DQ due to storyline necessity) and the X-Factor sends X-Pac on in the tournament.

Rating: D. So we'll ignore the X-PAC SUCKS chants and keep the NWO going because that's what the fans want to see. In theory this is setting up Goldust and Booker teaming up to fight the power, though that's assuming you consider the NWO any kind of power in the first place. The team is at least stable (for the moment) but more than one interesting member might help them out a bit.

Video on last week's ladder match.

Rob Van Dam (who is actually shorter than Coach) thinks this will be his summer. Paul Heyman and Brock Lesnar come up to laugh at Rob, who will be Lesnar's latest victim in their tag match tonight. Lesnar going after the Intercontinental Title would be a good upgrade for him, though the booking might be a bit tricky.

Jeff Hardy plays guitar and is all depressed when Matt Hardy comes up. Matt: "What are you doing?" Jeff: "Just playing the guitar." Jeff wants more out of life and seems bored. The extreme is gone and they're hypocrites. Maybe he should take a bunch of stuff and screw up a pay per view main event. Or buy a compound and take over a bad wrestling show where he can box a kangaroo.

Flair wants more stipulations in the contract for the match with Austin (There was a contract?). Like, if he beats Austin, Steve becomes Austin's personal assistant. That's not all though: if Austin throws a single punch, he's disqualified. Austin comes in and signs without reading it. That's really, really stupid and not something Austin would do.

Women's Title: Trish Stratus vs. Terri

Trish is defending and this is a lingerie match so Lawler can freak out even more. Trish...I think misses an elbow to start and Terri isn't sure what to do so she just steps to the side. A high crossbody (actually not horrible) gets two on the champ as Lawler is basically begging for clothing to come off. Trish loads up a powerbomb and we get all the required camera shots until Trish FINALLY hits the bulldog to retain. This was actually worse than you would expect as it's clear that Terri has even less business being in a ring than most of the horrible non-wrestlers.

Post match Molly Holly comes out with brass knuckles and is nice enough to wait until Trish is ready to put up the belt like a shield. A shot to the head lays Molly out and Trish takes off her underwear to reveal a thong. What exactly that does for Trish isn't clear but this division wasn't exactly about common sense.

Arn is furious, as he should be. Benoit comes in and toilet cleaning jokes are made.

Bubba Ray Dudley/Rob Van Dam vs. Eddie Guerrero/Brock Lesnar

Eddie starts but changes places with Brock without a tag. That means a double stomping for Bubba, who walks into something like an AA. We officially start with Eddie pounding Bubba down in the corner, who comes back with that good looking side slam for two. Lesnar comes in and it's still so strange to see him in the midcard like this. Like he'd ever associate with anyone at this level today.

A DDT gets two on Brock so it's back to Rob, who is promptly powerslammed for two. Van Dam spin kicks Eddie down and it's back to Bubba for a big backdrop. Everything breaks down and Brock gets thrown with a release German suplex to scare the heck out of Heyman in a bit that shouldn't be as funny as it is.

It's too early for a table as Brock decks Bubba, setting up Eddie for a slingshot hilo into a seated Blockbuster (that's a new one). The Bubba Bomb drops Lesnar though and it's a double tag to Eddie vs. Rob with the big monkey flip sending Eddie flying. Everything breaks down (again) again and Brock misses a charge into the corner but Heyman breaks up the Five Star. Eddie comes in off the top with the frog splash for the pin.

Rating: C. This was messy as it felt like it was about three minutes too long and was spot after spot with no time to breathe. Lesnar was clearly in over his head here too as he wasn't sure where to go after he finished whatever he was doing at the time. He's young though and matches against anyone with experience will help him more than anything. Cut this down a bit and give us a little more down time and it's a better match.

Booker thinks he would be a better king than William Regal because his

side won the Revolutionary War. If anyone can explain to me why Booker is stuck in a midcard heel stable without some form of "well it was all we could think of", you're smarter than I am.

We look at the Tough Enough II finale. This would be the one where there were two female winners despite almost no mention of the "one man, one woman winner" from the first season. It says a lot when the host seemed confused by the result too, though the finalists seemed to know as the second female winner was looking anxious at the reveal.

King of the Ring Qualifying Match: Booker T. vs. William Regal

Non-title. Regal takes him to the mat as you would expect, followed by a shoulder block for two. The knee trembler gets the same but Booker chops him back and gets two off the ax kick. Regal goes outside and grabs a chair and the European Title. The referee gets rid of the first but Booker uses the belt for the easy pin.

Rating: C-. Two talented hands having a match for the sake of having a match, meaning no one cared. The European Title means nothing and the NWO is just there so why should anyone care about either of these two advancing to the final eight that they only have a prayer of winning?

Booker does a Spinarooni.

Tommy Dreamer gets sick in a bucket at the thought of having to face Undertaker.

WWE World Title: Undertaker vs. Tommy Dreamer

Undertaker is defending and Dreamer brings the bucket with him because we need this gag to continue. Dreamer gets sick again so Undertaker freaks out, allowing Tommy to get in some shots to the head. A powerslam on the floor makes Dreamer sick again and this is hard to watch. Undertaker elbows him in the face a few times and a chokeslam sets up the dragon sleeper to retain.

Post match Undertaker pours the bucket on Dreamer but here's Jeff Hardy to dropkick Undertaker into the contents. I can't stand this kind of stuff and it was one of the worst things Raw has done in awhile.

Back from a break and Undertaker beats up Matt to send a message to Jeff.

Here's Kevin Nash for the big announcement: there's a new member of the NWO and it's....Shawn Michaels, giving us five members with three active wrestlers. Shawn doesn't talk or anything but the fans go nuts for his appearance.

Debra reads the contract and finds out that Flair is Austin's assistant if Austin wins.

Steve Austin vs. Ric Flair

Punches are illegal and the loser has to be the winner's personal assistant. They go to the mat to start and Austin can handle himself just fine down there, as is almost always the case. Back up and WOO is met with a middle finger. A half crab has Flair in trouble as I begin to question the logic of making your most popular wrestler work a style completely against his normal pace. It's working well enough here but how bad could this be with someone other than Austin?

They chop it out and Austin chokes off the Thesz press for a change of pace. Here's Chris Benoit and of course there's no one to count a cover off the Stunner. Since this referee is especially stupid, Eddie runs in for a low blow and frog splash. Back from a break with Austin being sent out to the floor where he backdrops Flair again.

As Austin throws more chops, JR thinks Flair told Benoit and Guerrero to come in. Ric sneaks in a right hand and Austin sells it like he's been shot. It's time to go after the knee with the Figure Four going on in a hurry. Austin turns it over for the break and Flair gets slammed off the top. Some chops and pokes to the eye don't matter much as Austin Stuns him for the fast pin.

Rating: B. Sometimes you just need two talented guys to go out and have a good match. This was a flashback for Austin as wrestled a technical style for years so it's hardly like asking him to do something he's never heard of before. Thankfully they didn't go overboard with teasing right hands and Austin threw the chops like he was supposed to. Benoit and Eddie didn't play too big of a roll either and Austin gets to one up the boss

one more time.

Another Stunner and beer drinking end the show.

Overall Rating: C+. There's been a better effort made to push the strong main events lately and that's almost always going to help bail out a lackluster show. Austin is starting to get some steam back but this personal assistant thing is going to get old in a hurry. Benoit and Eddie waiting in the wings is a great thing though and Austin should be able to have great matches with both of them at the drop of a hat. Actually I know he could with Eddie as I saw them fight at a house show a few days after this. Anyway, better show here but the midcard is still really needing some work.

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