

Monday Night Raw – July 1, 2002 (2016 Redo): Make Yourself Famous

Monday Night Raw

Date: July 1, 2002

Location: Verizon Wireless Arena, Manchester, New Hampshire

Commentators: Jim Ross, Jerry Lawler

We're starting the second half of the year as things aren't exactly the most thrilling at the moment. The big story here though is Jeff Hardy challenging Undertaker for the Undisputed Title in a ladder match. Now this match is really, really fondly remembered but I wasn't blown away when I saw it a few months back. Maybe another viewing will change that so let's get to it.

We open with a recap of Vince's Ruthless Aggression speech from last week which transitions into Lesnar destroying Van Dam.

Here are Heyman and Lesnar with the former talking about how this is the summer of Brock Lesnar. See, Brock has the intelligence to be inspired by people like Kurt Angle. Over on Smackdown, Angle issued an open challenge to any rookie (actually it was to anyone Angle had never wrestled but whatever). Tonight, Lesnar has issued an open challenge to any veteran willing to be put into retirement.

Brock Lesnar vs. Ric Flair

Flair calls himself a legend but Brock says it's the wrong year against the wrong guy. As usual, Lesnar is just not a good talker. Lesnar shows off the power to start but gets slowed down by a chop. A powerslam plants Ric and it's time for Heyman to dance a bit. Some backbreakers send Flair outside because he has no idea what to do with a monster like this.

Back in and Brock goes shoulder first into the post but grabs the bearhug anyway. A not great looking spinebuster has Flair begging off but also

sets up a low blow on Brock. The Figure Four is quickly broken up but Flair goes after Heyman, setting up the F5 to give Brock the pin.

Rating: D+. Lesnar beating a legend is a good thing but it didn't exactly show us anything new. We've seen Brock do the exact same stuff time after time and that's not exactly thrilling. He really is just a monster who is rising up the ranks but the lack of charisma and presence is hurting him.

Jackie Gayda says she didn't lose the Golden Thong Award because she just didn't win. Also, Molly Holly cost them the tag match last week. Cue Molly so they can brawl into the arena with Jackie missing a swing with a pipe. The fight heads into the ring but here's Trish to pants Molly. Humiliation ensues.

Christopher Nowinski doesn't want the Hardcore Title because it's not worth the constant looking over your shoulder. Fair point actually.

Bradshaw vs. Christopher Nowinski

Non-title. Bradshaw beats him up and goes for weapons, only to be told that it's a regular match. Chris gets in a bell shot for the cheap pin.

Rob Van Dam arrives and is annoyed that Lesnar has already had a match. He'll settle for William Regal instead.

Jeff Hardy runs around backstage and climbs onto various things because tonight is a ladder match.

And now, Goldust is Darth Vader. Booker says he's never seen Star Wars and he never will but he does seem to like the Lightsaber. "OBI-BOOK KENOBI!!!"

Vince and Eddie have a chat about ruthless aggression. The Spanish translation for ruthless aggression: EDDIE GUERRERO. Chris Benoit comes in and is ready for his Raw debut tonight. "The Smackdown guys" will have to be compensated somehow, even though Vince owns both shows now and should be able to dictate all roster moves.

Rob Van Dam vs. William Regal

Neither title is on the line. Regal starts with the half nelson suplex and those evil forearms to the face. The jumping double knees to the face have Van Dam in even more trouble and we hit a chinlock. A monkey flip gives Van Dam a breather and a spinning crossbody is good for two. Regal's tiger bomb is countered with a backdrop and the Five Star gives Rob the pin.

Rating: C. Completely acceptable match here, assuming you're ok with a champion losing clean. I get the idea of building towards Van Dam vs. Lesnar again and it gives Brock an actual feud but the lack of any serious drama doesn't help much. This was fine though and that's an improvement for Raw.

Post match Van Dam calls out Lesnar but Heyman comes out and says they'll do it at Vengeance, presumably for the Intercontinental Title.

Bubba Ray Dudley/Spike Dudley vs. Chris Benoit/Eddie Guerrero

This is Benoit's first match in over a year. Guerrero and Spike start things off with a dropkick and neckbreaker actually putting Eddie down. Bubba comes in and scores with a running splash in the corner as this is more one sided than you would expect. Benoit gets the tag and actually earns a nice round of applause for his first appearance in so long. It's nice to see the fans show appreciation like that.

The first German suplex rocks Bubba but he partially lands on Benoit's head for a somewhat scary visual. It's back to Spike so we can get to the real beatdown. Bubba has to break up the Crossface but the save only allows some double stomping. Eddie dropkicks Benoit by mistake though and the Dudley Dawg sets up the hot tag to Bubba. One heck of a powerbomb gets two on Eddie as everything breaks down. What's Up hits Eddie but he's fine enough to climb the corner for a hurricanrana on Bubba. Not that it matters as Bubba gets in the Bubba Bomb to put Eddie away.

Rating: B. Who knew Bubba and Spike worked so well together? This was way better than I was expecting with Bubba doing everything he could and Spike taking a beating like few others could pull off. Benoit is back and while him losing doesn't make a ton of sense, he looked great out there, especially with the suplexes.

Post match Spike gets thrown through a table and Bubba takes the Crossface, which turns into a choke.

Rey Mysterio is coming.

Big Show yells at Goldust, who says he's Show's father. Goldust hits him in the head with a plastic sword but here's Kevin Nash, who says he's Goldust's daddy. You know, Nash and Dusty do have some similarities. Goldust gets beaten down.

Jeff Hardy ladder match highlight reel.

Undertaker isn't worried about being in a ladder match and walks out when asked if he's nervous. JR interprets this as being scared.

X-Pac is out too.

Booker T. vs. Big Show

This was supposed to be a tag match but Goldust and X-Pac are taking their naps. They take turns hitting each other in the corner and Show gets the better of it with a vertical suplex. It's off to the bearhug for a bit, followed by a hard clothesline to drop Booker. Speaking of dropping, Show gets low bridged and dropped out to the floor. Show picks up the steps but gets them kicked back into his face for the very lame countout.

Rating: D-. Oh come on with that ending. You can't have BIG SHOW do a job against Booker T., who could easily be in the main event scene at the drop of a hat. Big Show on the other hand looks like he's wearing a one piece women's swimsuit and has almost no business anywhere near above the midcard. But the NWO was a big thing years ago so let's go with that.

Booker leaves through the crowd to avoid the NWO.

Post break here's the NWO with Nash punching Show in the face. Shawn plays peacemaker and everything is cool because HHH is about to join the team. Ignore the fact that the NWO is on Raw and HHH is on Smackdown of course. For reasons of "it's the NWO", this takes WAY too long to accomplish. Shawn superkicks Show to wrap it up.

Vince makes Undertaker vs. Rock at Vengeance.

Matt Hardy wishes his brother luck and Lita makes a cameo to say the same.

WWE World Title: Jeff Hardy vs. Undertaker

Undertaker is defending and it's a ladder match. JR warns us that this could be the biggest trainwreck in history. Before the match, Jeff jumps onto Undertaker's motorcycle to start the mind games. The champ goes outside and has a ladder dropkicked into him, followed by a chair shot to the head.

That goes nowhere though as Undertaker clotheslines Jeff's head off, only to have Jeff send him into the ladder up against the apron. Another ladder shot to the head knocks Jeff into the announcers' table but Undertaker opts to climb back down and do some more beating. They both wind up inside for I believe the first time with the very slow beating continuing. Jeff slugs away for a bit but is punched right back down to kill the crowd again.

Undertaker puts Jeff inside the ladder for the apron legdrop and the destruction continues. A Whisper in the Wind gets Jeff out of trouble and he uses the ladder as a springboard to take Undertaker down again. It's time for the big ladder and a horrible looking hurricanrana sends Undertaker outside. Jeff gets a hand on the belt but a chair to the back brings him right back down.

Undertaker loads up the Last Ride but Jeff gets in a weak chair shot to the head. Thankfully Undertaker almost pops back up so Jeff BLASTS him with a much better shot. That's not really sold either as more chair shots slow Jeff down. A chokeslam off the ladder (chokeslave really) allows Undertaker to pull the title down.

Rating: C-. This is one of those matches that just hasn't aged well. I remember losing my mind when Jeff hit Undertaker with the chair on the original viewing but this really doesn't hold up later on. The last few minutes help this but it was a long squash until the ending. We've sat through a few weeks of Undertaker destroying the Hardys and now he does

it again in Jeff's signature match before moving on to the Angle match. Not great but watchable enough.

Undertaker leaves as Jeff pulls himself up. That's not cool with the champ so he comes back and gives Jeff a Last Ride. Undertaker tries to leave again but Jeff says he's still standing. Well with some help from the ropes that is. That brings Undertaker back to the ring again but he raises Jeff's hand in a sign of respect.

Overall Rating: D+. This show is running with an anchor but they're getting a few steps further this week. The main event made an attempt at elevating new stars and the tag match in the middle of the show was strong. Unfortunately this show's biggest problem is that it's compared to Smackdown. The blue show is doing almost everything right and making almost none of Raw's mistakes. They're trying a bit harder but there's still a long way to go.

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