

Monday Night Raw – May 17, 1993: This is What Put Raw on the Map

Monday Night Raw

Date: May 17, 1993

Location: Manhattan Center, New York City, New York

Attendance: 1,000

Commentators: Vince McMahon, Randy Savage, Bobby Heenan

To say these recent shows haven't been interesting is a huge understatement. They're just not working and haven't been in almost the entire time the show has been on the air. You get a few moments that are better than the rest but really, the show feels like Superstars with a budget and we need more than that. Let's get to it.

Opening sequence.

Earlier today, Savage and the Smoking Gunns supported some Special Olympians. Nothing wrong with that.

We look at last week's brawl between Mr. Perfect and Shawn Michaels. Lord Alfred Hayes says someone is here in disguise and we'll see who it is later.

Smoking Gunns vs. Glenn Ruth/Tony Vajda

Ruth is more famous as Headbanger Thrasher. Bart hiptosses Vajda to start and the Gunns start tagging a bit. Ruth comes in and takes a clothesline as well but something is botched, only to have the Gunns save it with a double legsweep. Some very slow offense ensues, including some kicks and legdrops as the arm work continues. Billy backdrops Glenn into a piledriver (which might have been a botched powerbomb) for the pin.

Rating: D. Long and boring stuff here but that's what you had to expect. The Gunns certainly weren't a great team but at this point, there wasn't exactly much to go around in the division. They helped bolster the ranks a little bit and that's exactly what the division needed around this time.

Vince brings out Shawn Michaels for a chat and we hit the SHAWN IS GAY chants. Heenan: "You hear that? Shawn is great!" Shawn told us all that he would win the Intercontinental Title and defend it around the world, which is exactly what he did. He told us he would beat up Mr. Perfect and he's done that too.

Vince suggests that Shawn isn't exactly a fighting champion so Michaels agrees to face anyone anywhere anytime and you know that's not something you say in wrestling. Cue a "fan" who looks a lot like Marty Jannetty in a hoodie and sunglasses. The "fan" gets in the ring and removes the hood and sunglasses to reveal...MARTY JANNETTY! He'll take a title shot tonight and just happens to have his gear in the back. Vince says it's on for later tonight.

Razor Ramon vs. The Kid

This one is kind of famous. Razor throws the toothpick in his face to start and lights up Kid's chest with some chops. There's the fall away slam and Razor slaps him in the back of the head. Razor misses a charge into the corner though and Kid goes up for a moonsault press for what might be the biggest upset in company history.

THIS is the moment that put Raw on the map. After being just another wrestling show for a few months, this match put it on the map as a show where things could happen. This isn't some pin where interference led to a pin. The Kid capitalized on Ramon's mistake and got a 100% clean pin. It's the kind of thing you don't see very often and the New York crowd ate it up. There's a reason this one was on highlight reels for a very long time and it still shows up occasionally.

Tatanka vs. Scott Taylor

Taylor gets backdropped to the floor for a fast start as Heenan talks about toilet paper statistics. More throwing around ensues and Vince suggests the Kid should now be the 1-2-3 Kid. The Papoose to Go puts Taylor away.

Rating: D+. Another squash but the fans needed a minute to breathe after the huge upset. It really is amazing how well Tatanka did with such a generic gimmick. He wasn't all that talented in the ring either but he made the most of it and that's what matters more than anything. Fans can tell when you're trying and that usually means success.

King of the Ring Report with Gene talking about the tournament and World Title match.

Yokozuna vs. Kamala

Kamala looks confused by Yokozuna's entrance but he looks that way more often than not. The collision goes to Kamala and a superkick to the chest staggers the bigger man even more. Kamala chops away but a shot to the throat slows him down again. The huge leg crushes Kamala but he pops up for more chops. Fuji grabs the leg though and Yokozuna finishes with the usual.

Rating: D. This was actually a lot less bad (I can't say better) than I was expecting here with Kamala giving us a few hope spots before losing in the end as you had to expect he would. Yokozuna was clearly on the way to getting the World Title back at the King of the Ring and there's nothing wrong with that. He never should have lost it in the first place.

Intercontinental Title: Shawn Michaels vs. Marty Jannetty

Shawn is defending and gets rolled up a few times to start. A clothesline puts Shawn on the floor as Heenan is in full on panic mode early on. Marty follows him out with a slingshot plancha and the fans are WAY into him here. Back in and Marty grabs a flying headscissors for two as the very hot pace continues. A whip into the corner turns Shawn upside down and out to the floor. Michaels can't walk out though as Mr. Perfect is waiting for him in the aisle.

Back from a break with Marty eating a hot shot and we hit the chinlock. A catapult sends Shawn had first into the post for a very close two as the fans continue to die over these near falls. Marty gets two off a jumping back elbow and powerslam, followed by a spinning crossbody for the same. Shawn comes right back with the superkick but stops to yell at Perfect. That earns Shawn a towel to the face, setting up a small package to give Marty the pin and the title.

Rating: B. This was the kind of fast paced match that you just didn't get from Raw so far, making this even more impressive than usual. Marty winning the title (the first title change ever on the show) was a major deal as it made you feel like anything could happen. The fast pace helped a lot here and that's why the match stood out: it was genuinely different and more proof that the line should be "the Jim Neidhart of the team" rather than the Marty.

Overall Rating: B+. This is the show that made people believe Raw was something different. Having two big surprises like that in a row made Raw feel so much different and really inspired the Monday Nitro formula. The idea here was to make Raw feel like a show you couldn't miss and that's exactly what they did. Really well done here and by far the benchmark for good Raw's in the early days.

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