

# Monday Night Raw – September 9, 2002: The Long Form Joke

## Monday Night Raw

Date: September 9, 2002

Location: Hilton Coliseum, Ames, Iowa

Commentators: Jim Ross, Jerry Lawler

So there's a new World Champion and that means we get to hear about how amazing HHH really is. That's been the case around here for a long time but you can feel it cranking into a much higher level around this point. We're a few weeks away from Unforgiven and the only match that seems to be coming up is HHH vs. Rob Van Dam for the title. Let's get to it.

Opening sequence.

Tag Team Titles: Un-Americans vs. Kane/Bradshaw

Lance Storm and Christian are defending after another failed flag burning last week. After the standard AMERICA ROCKS speech from Bradshaw, the brawl is on in a hurry. Bradshaw shoulders Storm all the way out to the floor and it's off to Kane for some right hands of his own. Christian comes in and takes just as much of a beating as this is one sided, just as it probably should be to start.

Kane's side slam gets two on Christian but a Canadian crotching against the post lets the champs take over for the first time. Ah so it's one of those matches where low blows work on Kane. You never know how that's going to work. The fans think Canada sucks (racists) but a hot tag to Bradshaw makes them a bit happier.

House is cleaned with one heck of a powerbomb on Christian and Kane's top rope clothesline to Storm. The ref gets bumped though and here's Test with the big boot to Kane. Bradshaw makes the save but William Regal comes in to knock him out with the Power of the Punch,

giving Christian the pin to retain.

**Rating:** C+. This was better than it had any right to be but the ending really dragged it down a bit. They didn't need to have new champions here but just have Regal or Test instead of both of them. I was surprised by the action here though and that's how Raw should start: a fun match instead of a long talking segment.

Speaking of a talking segment, here's Eric Bischoff to announce a four way for the #1 contendership with Jeff Hardy vs. Big Show vs. Rob Van Dam vs. Chris Jericho. That brings us to Smackdown and Stephanie (you knew that was coming) with this week's commitment ceremony getting publicity in the New York Times, the New York Post and ESPN. Bischoff has his own idea though: HLA, Hot Lesbian Action. As my head hurts, I can kind of appreciate them for not hiding what they're going for. They're just flat out admitting that the women are sex objects, which I can take over a horrible attempt at "wrestling".

Chris Jericho eats an apple and says he has a plan to get the World Title back. This means apple being spit on Terri.

HHH doesn't care who he faces for the title at the pay per view. Cue Bubba Ray Dudley to accuse HHH of being a coward and can't wait to see HHH vs. Spike Dudley tonight. Steven Richards, Bubba's opponent for tonight, jumps him from behind as I wonder why Bubba is the one getting this push.

Terri and Trish Stratus walk past the lesbians' dressing room, which has an actual "LESBIANS" sign on the door. They're not exactly subtle here.

#### Bubba Ray Dudley vs. Steven Richards

Bubba charges down the ramp to jump him from behind and it's time for some early elbow drops. The fans want tables as Lawler plays Who's The Lesbian. Richards comes back with a forearm and a swinging neckbreaker, only to have Bubba hit a surprisingly good looking sunset flip for two of his own. The Flip, Flop and Fly actually gets Jerry's mind off the lesbians for a change but Richards gets two off

a superkick (and a very strong pop). Steven breaks up a super Bubba Bomb but can't get out of a super sitout powerbomb for the pin.

**Rating:** C-. This was a bit more energetic than I was expecting and that finish looked great. That being said, I'm not sure I can get behind the idea of a Bubba vs. HHH match. I know they're building Bubba up fairly well but that doesn't mean I want to see him have some long match way above his talent range. Just stop doing things that you aren't ready to pull off, like separate titles.

#### Victoria/Stacy Keibler vs. Terri/Trish Stratus

Stacy, in black shorts and a matching tied off top, sends Lawler even further over the edge. Terri and Stacy catfight to the floor and it's time for a lot of slapping. Lawler: "Oh they like it rough." Victoria and Terri (oh dear) start things off with Terri getting slammed for an elbow drop. Stacy does her long legged choke in the corner as Lawler has binoculars. JR has just about had it here and I can't say I blame him.

Terri slips out of an over the shoulder backbreaker and some heel miscommunication goes nowhere because Terri isn't smart enough to make a hot tag. Thankfully it's off to Trish thanks to a missed moonsault so we actually get a little wrestling. It's back to Stacy for the awkward looking kicks but Trish easily knocks them both silly. Terri hits a high crossbody to put Stacy away.

**Rating:** D-. What exactly is there to say here? The wrestling only existed when Trish and Victoria were in there, which of course was the smallest percentage of the match. I can't stand this nonsense and it's not fair to people who have the ability to work a decent match. Why do we need Stacy and Terri in there other than for eye candy? I mean....I just answered my own question.

Jerry is disappointed in the lack of HLA and you can hear JR getting more and more annoyed.

Regal dumps Christopher Nowinski to join the Un-Americans. Chris talks about HLA and Regal slaps him in the face because Chris is an embarrassment. Preach it brother.

Here's Nowinski with something to say, including a few jabs at Iowa State's football team. Back at Harvard they have a chant: "Five, ten, fifteen bucks. We'll own the company, you'll drive the trucks." Cue Tommy Dreamer with offers of Singapore cane shots, triggering a brawl with Dreamer getting the better of it. Nothing to see here though Nowinski was kind of funny.

Spike runs into the Lesbians and really doesn't care. Again I say, preach it brother.

### HHH vs. Spike Dudley

Non-title. Spike wants nothing to do with a handshake and it's time to fight over wrist control. A rollup annoys HHH so he slaps Spike in the face. Spike slaps him right back so Lawler calls him a pervert. Those running forearms drop HHH as you can feel the attempts at HHH vs. Taka Michinoku from 2000.

Back in and Spike charges into a boot, followed by a few backbreakers. The third is countered into a headscissors though and Spike hits a dive to the floor. Back in again and HHH clotheslines him out of the air with Lawler blaming thoughts of hot lesbian action for Spike's issues. The Pedigree gets no cover so Spike gets in a low blow, followed by the Dudley Dog for two. Another Dudley Dog is blocked though and HHH grabs a sleeper of all things for the win, drawing a weird face pop in the process.

**Rating:** D+. They tried here but there's only so much that can be done with Spike Dudley vs. the World Champion. On top of that, what in the world was the point in finishing with a sleeper? Are we really supposed to buy the idea of a sleeper as a main event finisher? I know HHH fancies himself as a huge old school style star but come on now.

HHH keeps stomping until Bubba comes out for the save.

Jeff Hardy is talking about his main event tonight when he sees Bischoff and goes to yell about next week. Why Jeff just suddenly saw him when it looks like Bischoff has been standing there for awhile and Jeff was looking in the same direction the whole time

isn't clear. Jeff threatens violence if there's another 3 Minute Warning.

Chris Jericho offers Big Show a deal and leaves. Johnny the Bull of all people comes in and hears about Jericho's offer of an alliance, complete with the statistics to go with it. Johnny thinks it's a good idea and gets thrown into a chair.

Booker is ready to face the Un-Americans tonight when Goldust comes up wearing a Kane mask. Of course the real Kane comes up and comedy ensues. Since it's Booker and Goldust though, it's actually funny. Bradshaw comes up and tells them to go beat up the Un-Americans, but first let's watch the HLA. Goldust is aghast but Kane says he'll go.

#### Booker T./Goldust vs. William Regal/Test

Test knocks Booker into the corner to start so it's off to Goldust for a hip attack on Regal. That's about it for the offense as Test stomps Goldust down in the corner before Regal adds in a few knee shots to the head. Goldust's clothesline allows the hot tag off to Booker for the house cleaning. Everything breaks down and Regal gets in the Power of the Punch, only to have Kane and Bradshaw come in for the DQ.

**Rating:** D+. Nothing to see here but I'm sure the fans will have fun chanting USA for most of the time. Despite not being the strongest team in the world, the Un-Americans will be fine enough for a midcard act for the next few months. I'm not sure if Bradshaw and Kane are the best options for opponents but at least we're getting some entertaining promos.

It's HLA time with Bischoff moderating. Bad acting ensues, there's a bit of stripping and a kiss before 3 Minute Warning comes in for the obvious finish. So to clarify: Bischoff teasing us with HLA is a heel move but Stephanie not delivering a fake gay wedding is going to make her the big face. That's how WWE works here and it's really rather confusing.

Ric Flair gives Rob Van Dam a pep talk.

#### Rob Van Dam vs. Big Show vs. Jeff Hardy vs. Chris Jericho

Non-title and under elimination rules. Show beats on Van Dam in the corner to start while Jeff is backdropped to the floor. Poetry in Motion fails completely and Show tosses Van Dam down as well. Back in and Rob teams up with Jeff to put Show down but the Swanton only gets two.

Rolling Thunder gets the same with Rob being launched onto the referee. Jericho cleans house with a chair but Show takes it away and Jericho teases getting hit...for a DQ. You mean Big Show can't take a Swanton for a pin in a nothing four way elimination match and has to get disqualified instead? Seriously?

We take a break and come back with Van Dam diving onto Jericho, followed by Hardy running the barricade for the double clothesline. A double springboard moonsault gets two on Chris and a double superplex makes it even worse for him. The good guys follow it up with a double springboard leg lariat to put Chris outside. With the Canadian gone, Van Dam DDT's Jeff for two but Jericho breaks up the Swanton and steals the pin.

Van Dam is right back up with a spinning kick to Jericho's face but he gets caught in one heck of a release German suplex. Back up and Jericho posts himself in the corner but manages to remove a turnbuckle pad. Rolling Thunder hits knees to give Chris two more and the Lionsault is good for yet another near fall. Cue HHH to watch as Van Dam sends Chris into the buckle and drops the Five Star to go to Unforgiven.

**Rating:** B. It's like Wrestlemania XVI all over again: once you get rid of Big Show, the match gets a lot better in a hurry. The key thing here is Van Dam winning as he was supposed to and getting the pin for the final victory. It makes him look like a bigger deal because just being the Intercontinental Champion doesn't mean much around here. I mean, was his title pulled out of a briefcase just a week ago?

**Overall Rating:** D+. While the main event is good, it's not enough to pull a lot of this show up out of the muck. As usual, the biggest problem around here is the one joke dominating the whole thing. That

HLA segment was as pandering as you could get and that's not the way I like my wrestling shows. There's some good stuff here but the big problems are too much for it to overcome.

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