

Monday Night Raw – January 17, 1994: A Phone Call From The Future

Monday Night Raw

Date: January 17, 1994

Location: Richmond Coliseum, Richmond, Virginia

Commentators: Vince McMahon, Crush

It's the go home show for the Royal Rumble and that means it's time for a good old fashioned hard sell show with a big brawl at the end. Unfortunately it also means more about Undertaker vs. Yokozuna to help set up one of the worst matches of all time. This show starts the second year of the show so let's get to it.

We open with a recap of last week's Tag Team Title change, including the false finish for some reason.

Opening sequence.

Crush is on commentary. I didn't know he could talk for five minutes straight, let alone an hour. We get some ranting about how Crush is going to win the Royal Rumble and how horrible Savage is.

Owen Hart vs. Terry Austin

It's weird to see Owen as a face with Bret in his corner. Owen takes him down and hits a monkey flip without the flip. We hit the chinlock as Crush is actually complimenting Owen on his good stuff, which you rarely hear from a heel comment. It's time to work on the arm as we go to a phone call from Stan Lane at Madison Square Garden for a live report on the Tag Team Title match. This is a bit more interesting as the title match wouldn't take place for another week. Owen throws him down for a top rope elbow, followed by the missile dropkick. The Sharpshooter ends Austin in a hurry.

Rating: D+. Nothing to see here but Crush said "Brudda" every other word and it's going to be a long night. Owen was starting to come into his own around this time and he's on the verge of launching through the roof when his brother gave him one of the best rubs of all time. You can hear the seeds in the commentary too as we keep hearing about how their issues have been smoothed over.

Owen is happy for Marty Jannetty/1-2-3 Kid but he wouldn't mind the Quebecers getting the titles back so the brothers can have a shot. Bret says about the same but knows Marty and the Kid would give them a shot too.

Tatanka vs. George South

South is a long time NWA jobber who Ric Flair always wanted to have a classic match with but the company would never let it happen. Scott hammers away in the corner and they trade clotheslines. We hear from Lane again as the title match has begun with the champs showing a lot of fire. A ram into the buckle sends Tatanka onto the warpath and it's a series of chops, capped off by the top rope chop, for the pin.

Video on Alundra Blayze.

Here are Yokozuna and Mr. Fuji for a chat. Jim Cornette isn't here because he's over in Tokyo at a press conference to get ready for Yokozuna's big celebration. Cue Paul Bearer with the big casket to scare Yokozuna. This takes forever and of course Undertaker is inside. Yokozuna wobbles away after taking nearly six minutes for the whole thing.

Next week: The Hart Brothers vs. the Headshrinkers. That actually sounds pretty good.

Diesel vs. Scott Powers

Diesel hits Snake Eyes and a side slam before throwing it to Shawn for some cheating on the floor. There's something so evil about a guy who can beat up the jobber like that but allows his buddy to get in a few shots of his own. We go back to Lane at MSG and THOSE DASTARDLY QUEBECERS HAVE STOLEN THE TITLES BACK! As we try to digest that, Diesel powerbombs Powers and then boots him in the face (odd choice of a sequence) wraps it up.

Rating: D. This was about what you would expect but the amazing thing is that Diesel would be World Champion in about ten months. Then again that's the kind of thing you can never guess in wrestling, which is one of the most fun aspects. Diesel was starting to get good and only needed a few more months to put it all together.

We hit the Royal Rumble report with a look at most of the card and everyone in the Rumble.

Randy Savage vs. IRS

Vince calls Savage the Joe Montana of the WWF. IRS actually takes over to start and sends Savage into the corner and then to the floor. I guess Savage is devastated over the title change. Crush continues to surprise me as he basically turns his commentary into a long heel promo on Savage, only to be cut off by Savage's comeback taking us into a break.

Back with Savage being dropped across the barricade, which Crush hopes will shut his big mouth. A suplex sets up a chinlock (pretty clearly a choke) for a bit until Savage misses a charge into the corner. Savage is sent outside and we take a second break. Back again with Savage caught in an abdominal stretch before hitting the third chinlock of the match. Another quick comeback sees Savage slam him and go up for the elbow, only to have Crush come in for the DQ.

Rating: D+. The chinlocks took the life out of this but I'm glad they didn't have IRS, who is challenging for the Intercontinental Title at the Rumble, lose clean here. You could see that Savage had lost a lot of steam at this point but he was still able to have a perfectly acceptable match, especially if he had someone willing to put in a bit more effort than IRS here.

Post match the Mini-Rumble breaks out to end the show.

Overall Rating: D-. Horrible show here but that's pretty standard for this era. The 94 Rumble wasn't the most interesting thing in the world and they really didn't do much of a job of featuring Luger, especially when he's possibly the biggest star in the whole thing. It really does feel like a show where anyone could win, but that doesn't always make for the best match. If nothing else we do have to sit through the build for Undertaker vs. Yokozuna and that wouldn't be good for anyone.

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