

Monday Night Raw – January 3, 1994: A New Year's Hangover?

Monday Night Raw

Date: January 3, 1994

Location: Mid-Hudson Civic Center, Poughkeepsie, New York

Commentators: Vince McMahon, Johnny Polo

It's a new year as we're getting close to the start of the second year of Raw. We're also getting close to the 1994 Royal Rumble and that means we're still in the fallout of the Lex Express. It also means we're seeing the upgraded Bret Hart rising to the top of the company and that's a very, very good thing. Let's get to it.

We open with Undertaker building a casket which Paul Bearer says is for Yokozuna. Undertaker's New Year's Resolution is to make Yokozuna rest in peace.

On Wrestling Challenge, Jim Cornette reveals that the title match he accidentally signed Yokozuna up for a casket match. As expected, Yokozuna is scared of caskets. Of note here: Stan Lane, as in Cornette's old client in the Midnight Express, is the interviewer here.

Opening sequence.

Yokozuna vs. Dan Dubiel

For some reason Dubiel goes right after him and has exactly the same luck you would expect. A hard Rock Bottom sets up an even harder belly to belly with Polo absolutely loving this on commentary. The usual sets up the Banzai Drop with Yokozuna landing much higher than usual and nearly hitting the guy's neck for the pin. That could have been very, very bad but Dubiel seems to be fine.

Rating: D+. The first thing here is how much better Polo is on commentary. He's just so laid back and relaxed about everything and that's all exactly what he should have been. It made for a very amusing exchange as he kept referring to Vince as Vic. Oh and the Banzai Drop looked TERRIFYING here, which is fine as long as the jobber was ok.

We look back at the Quebecers switching places and still losing to Lex Luger anyway. Polo took a steel forearm of his own.

Earlier today, Luger sat down with Vince for a chat. Luger is on fire at the moment but none of that matters if he doesn't get to compete in the Royal Rumble. We'll find out whether or not he gets to be involved in a week but the people have already given him a vote of confidence via a poll. Until the decision is made though, Jim Cornette and the rest of Yokozuna's people can keep being worried about having to face even more competition. Lex gives Tunney and the people one last plea and we're done in a hurry.

Sparky Plugg drives cars.

Smoking Gunns vs. Bastion Booger/Bam Bam Bigelow

My that's a lot of B's, plus Luna Vachon in the monsters' corner. Bigelow throws Billy around to start but a dropkick puts him on the floor. It's off to Bart for some arm cranking before Booger comes in, meaning Polo wants to know what's up with the hump on his neck. The cowboys are sent outside and it's time for an early break. Back with Booger getting shouldered down but he low bridges Bart...through the ropes because Bart didn't get over the top for some reason.

Polo talks about Booger wanting to lose three pounds by the end of the year but there are several excuses, such as a dog running his running shoes or the TV at the gym being on the wrong channel. It's off to Bigelow, who Polo says has made Barney and Betty proud since he broke up with Pebbles.

A legdrop gets two on Bart but he avoids a charge and makes the hot tag to Billy. Polo: "N000000000!!!!!!" Luna is busy rubbing Booger's hump (don't ask) and a double backdrop gets two on Bigelow. Unfortunately for Bam Bam, Bastion kisses Luna and gets slapped for his efforts. Bigelow finally sees what's going on and gets in a brawl with his partner for the countout.

Rating: F. Go back and read through some of what I wrote near the end of that match and try to figure out why I call this match a failure. There was nothing to this one and it was a great example of how horrible wrestling can get at times. I'm sure Vince found this hilarious in some twisted way and I'm going to leave it inside his head.

Todd Pettengill is in the Royal Rumble Control Center to explain the

concept of the namesake match and list off twenty seven confirmed named. The other three will be announced over the weekend. The rest of the card gets some attention as well.

Next week: Raw's First Anniversary!

Jeff Jarrett vs. John Chrystal

Jeff actually gets rolled up for two to start so he runs John over without much effort. A sunset flip gives John two more and it's time for some right hands while the announcers talk about the pay per view. Chrystal gets in a weird powerslam for two more but a running DDT (not a great one either) gives Jeff the pin.

Rating: D. Who would have expected this to be so competitive? Again though Jarrett was hardly anything worth seeing but that's the case with almost anything he did more often than not. The long blond hair didn't help him much either but at least John seemed more than game here.

Last week, Polo beat Marty Jannetty with a little help from the Quebecers. Therefore, Jannetty and the 1-2-3 Kid come out to ask for a Tag Team Title shot against the Quebecers next week.

Razor Ramon doesn't want us to smoke.

Shawn Michaels vs. Brian Walsh

Since this is going to be a squash, let's take a phone call from Quebecer Jacques. Shawn takes him to the mat without breaking a sweat and it's time to work on an armbar. Walsh bridges up from the mat and Shawn can't break him down. A few rollups are good for two each on Shawn and Polo is freaking out. With nothing else working, Shawn throws him to the floor so Diesel can....put him back inside. A bodyguard who does his job and nothing more? I don't see much of a future for him in this business. We hit a chinlock on Brian so Johnny can talk about his ancestor Horatio Abercrombie Polo settling the island of Palm Beach. Walsh makes a comeback but misses a dropkick, setting up the superkick. A piledriver gives Shawn the pin.

Rating: D. This was similar to the previous match, making it a pair of slightly more competitive than usual squash matches. Polo continued to be the most entertaining part of the match but I'm not sure he's enough to overcome an interview with Jacques. How could someone decide that was the best possible option here?

We run down the Anniversary Show card to end the show.

Overall Rating: F+. Pretty standard show for the time and that's not too surprising. As mentioned multiple times, Polo was the best part of the show and that's a good thing, assuming he actually sticks around. Unfortunately I have a feeling we'll be seeing a replacement sooner rather than later because it could mean some entertaining TV. It's a bunch of bad wrestling around Polo though and that's not going to work.

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