

Monday Night Raw – November 18, 2002: I'd Rather Talk About Anthology

Monday Night Raw

Date: November 18, 2002

Location: Webster Bank Arena, Bridgeport, Connecticut

Commentators: Jim Ross, Jerry Lawler

We're past Survivor Series and that means Shawn Michaels gets to keep HHH's World Title warm for the next few weeks. That's really all that matters from the Raw side as the show was almost all about the Elimination Chamber, which makes sense for the most part. We're less than four weeks away from the next pay per view so let's get to it.

Eric Bischoff is in the parking lot waiting on someone unnamed but gets Ric Flair instead. There's no HHH but Bischoff has him in a #1 contenders match tonight so he better be here soon. Flair gets in Bischoff's face, talking about how HHH had a crushed trachea last night but kept fighting anyway. Ric thinks Bischoff only cares about the show so Eric gives him a match against Kane. That doesn't seem to bother Ric because he'll show Kane how it used to be done.

Opening sequence.

Here's Shawn to get things going. After declaring himself the NEW World Heavyweight Champion, he talks about not being able to believe this is real. Last night he accomplished his goal of becoming the NEW World Heavyweight Champion but now he's not sure what to do. Does he want to be someone who keeps going way after his prime or be someone who knows when to hang it up?

Walking away now would be the smart, logical thing but he's never been the most logical guy. He'd love to come out here and see what he can do against all that young talent in the back so let's just see what this old, beat up body has left in it. Cue Rob Van Dam to talk about what an inspiration Shawn was when Rob was growing up. If Shawn wants to meet some new faces, how about his first title defense is against Rob Van Dam? Shawn sounds ready to accept but

here's Bischoff to cut them off.

If Van Dam wants to be the #1 contender, he can win a triple threat match also involving Booker T. and Chris Jericho for a shot at the title next week. That sounds fine but Shawn has a bone to pick with Eric. He's not going to represent a show that features necrophilia because it offends him as a wrestling fan. That's about it on that subject so Shawn gets in one more shot at HHH before wrapping things up.

We're coming up on the 10th anniversary of Monday Night Raw so here's a look at the first episode.

3 Minute Warning/Rico vs. Dudley Boyz

D-Von is back on the team, thank goodness. Bubba hammers on Rico to start but a little heel distraction lets Jamal deck Bubba from behind. That's not enough for Rico to hit a (great looking) moonsault though and Bubba drops him with a clothesline. D-Von comes in to almost no reaction and starts to clean house with Rosey being sent outside. What's Up hits Rico low but Jamal actually hits a dropkick. Spike gets kicked to the floor, leaving Rico to take 3D for the pin.

Rating: D+. This was basically "hey the Dudleys are back" and there's nothing wrong with that. The team really needed to be put back together after the pretty horrible face runs (though I'll miss Reverend D-Von's music) so let them go back to something you know will work. It's not like the tag division is overflowing with talent or anything.

Stacy makes testicle jokes and is going to unveil Test's new shirt tonight.

HHH is on the way.

Recap of the Chamber.

Scott Steiner, who seems to be the person Bischoff was waiting for earlier, arrives to Bischoff's delight. Steiner still hasn't signed yet.

Here's Stacy with a bunch of lame testicles shirts, which are just puns in white text on a black shirt. She puts them in a t-shirt gun and launches some into the crowd until Steven Richards comes out to interrupt. He complains about this being stupid and takes a shirt to

the groin. Crazy Victoria comes out and bites Victoria's nails off before leaving with Steven.

Post break Stacy freaks out so Eric gives her a title match against Victoria.

Lance Storm/William Regal vs. Tommy Dreamer/Jeff Hardy

The brawl starts in the aisle for no apparent reason and it's the evil foreigners taking over on Dreamer. Jeff dives off the apron to take Regal down but William kicks Dreamer in the head to give Lance the pin.

Dreamer gets beaten down post match with Storm doing Raven's drop toehold onto a chair.

We look back at Steiner beating up Matt Hardy and Christopher Nowinski at Survivor Series.

Here's Steiner for presumably his big signing announcement. Steiner talks about only caring for his freaks and his peaks before saying he's been watching both shows a lot lately. People have been talking about being the best of all time but the best of all time is standing right here. Cue Chris Jericho to say he's the King of the World so Steiner needs to shush. If you want to talk bodies, look at this gorgeous piece of meat. A brawl is teased but Jericho declines because he has a #1 contenders match later. Scott says he'll stick around. Having Steiner not wrestle is probably the best for everyone at the moment.

Women's Title: Victoria vs. Stacy Keibler

Stacy is challenging. Victoria chokes her a lot, Stacy does her horrible looking leg based offense and the Widow's Peak retains the title in just over a minute.

Victoria stays on her but Trish Stratus comes out for the save. Richards comes out and lays Trish out.

Hurricane talks about his song to promote the Anthology CD set. I loved that thing.

Maven is at the World.

Al Snow vs. Christopher Nowinski

Nowinski is in a suit with a backpack and this is a "School of Hard Knocks" match because WE DON'T DO HARDCORE ANYMORE. Snow hits him with a small blackboard and knocks Chris into the crowd. That means

it's time for the bowling ball but Nowinski gets in a spinebuster before anything can be done. More weapons, including a freaking skeleton, are brought in with Chris talking to the skull. Snow hits him in the ribs with a femur before switching over to a chair. We get the bowling ball to the crotch spot as Chris is bleeding from the mouth. The moonsault only hits a pile of chairs though and Chris gets the easy pin.

Rating: F. It's not funny, it's nothing we haven't seen a hundred times before, Nowinski isn't getting anywhere out of this and the whole thing is just a major waste of time. Just do the Hardcore Title again if it's that important to you. Either that or put Nowinski in a tag team or something else where he's not on his own because this is a bunch of stupid stuff week after week.

Val Venis doesn't want to be known by that name anymore and now works for Bischoff.

Kane vs. Ric Flair

Ric is in a suit but says he's not going to fight. Cue Batista to lay Kane out instead.

Jericho can't get Christian to help him tonight.

Booker T. vs. Chris Jericho vs. Kane

The winner gets Shawn next week. Before the match, Booker isn't cool with not being mentioned as a potential title contender. JR says that the research staff says Shawn hasn't wrestled on Raw since October 1997. The internet research staff (and a decent knowledge of Raw) says WWE needs a new research staff. Jericho gets double teamed to start but, as usual, the double teamers argue over who gets to go for the cover.

Rob's standing moonsault gets two as the announcers keep bringing up the fact that there are no disqualifications. Jericho hits Booker in the head with the Tag Team Title for two but Rob gives him the monkey flip out of the corner. Van Dam is sent outside so Booker pops back up for some chops and a Walls of Jericho on Chris. In case you didn't get the idea, Van Dam makes the save and gives Booker an ax kick, only to have Jericho add a Five Star (good one too) on Rob.

Booker kicks Jericho down but gets dropkicked down by Van Dam. The snap spinebuster gets two on Jericho, only to have Christian come out and chair Booker in the back. Jericho grabs the Walls but here's

Steiner for the save. The beatdown ensues and Rob adds the Five Star for the pin and the title shot.

Rating: B-. Good match here, or at least it was until we had to get two people interfering. This felt like three guys trying to get their heat back, which they certainly have to do after everything has been shifted to HHH vs. Shawn. It's also nice to see a good match get some time, though it might be that the match was good because it got time. Sometimes it's hard to tell which it actually is.

Shawn comes out to shake Rob's hand to end the show.

Overall Rating: D+. Bad show with some good highlights, which means it's a big upgrade over most of what we see from Raw anymore. The main difference is the lack of HHH (who they said was coming here tonight and was then never mentioned again), who really does drag down almost everything that happens on this show. While Shawn doesn't even wrestle, it already feels like a breath of fresh air, which is one of the best things that could have happened to the show at the moment.

Now, that being said, Stacy was a major focal point on this show and that's not a good thing. Other than the World Title situation, Stacy being destroyed by crazy Victoria was the biggest thing on this show. The lack of a midcard title is really hurting this show as there's the World Title, the meaningless Tag Team Titles (because there are all of three teams on the roster) and then it's a bunch of nothing stories that are there to give people something to do without putting much effort into them.

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