

Monday Night Raw – January 6, 2003 (2017 Redo): Who Says Nitro Is Gone?

Monday Night Raw

Date: January 6, 2003

Location: America West Arena, Phoenix, Arizona

Commentators: Jim Ross, Jerry Lawler

It's a new year and somehow we're stuck with Scott Steiner vs. HHH for the Raw World Title because HHH needs to make it clear that he has the best body in the world. Well the world of wrestling that is. Other than that we have Booker T. and Goldust as the Tag Team Champions, but far more importantly D'Lo Brown being held back by the man. Let's get to it.

We open with a long recap of last week's HHH vs. Steiner arm wrestling contest. How manly it was.

The Dudleys come out for a match but here are Eric Bischoff and Chief Morely to say we're changing things up a bit. We see a package on Jim Ross/Jerry Lawler beating Lance Storm/William Regal thanks to Bubba and D-Von. Bischoff says this is going to be his year so let's start with a handicap match.

3 Minute Warning/Rico/Batista vs. Dudley Boyz

Ric Flair is with Batista (confirmed for the Rumble) for a bonus. It's a brawl to start (of course) with Jamal being sent outside and Rico eating a very early 3D for two with Batista making the save. Even Chief Morely comes down for some right hands to Bubba as things finally settle down with Batista beating on D-Von.

The spinebuster looks to finish but the referee won't count for some reason. Bischoff comes in and demands the count, only to have Batista pull him up at two. Bubba comes back in and slugs away but Rosey suplexes him down. Flair grabs a Figure Four and Jamal adds a

top rope splash to crush Bubba again. The Batista Bomb finally ends D-Von.

Rating: D-. I guess this is the latest Corporation knockoff and the Dudleys are supposed to be important enough to be the adversaries. I'm not sure how bright it is to start a brand new year with something like this, especially with Steiner vs. HHH as the big story on top. Obviously not really even a match but no one ever accused Raw of being a wrestling show at this point.

Regal and Storm come out to yell at JR and Lawler before heading to the ring to beat on the Dudleys even more.

Flair tells HHH that the project is coming along nicely. HHH goes on about how awesome he is and brags about his physique. That physique has been featured on the cover of Flex Magazine but Steiner comes in to answer HHH's challenge for a posedown later tonight.

Trish Stratus/Jacqueline vs. Victoria/Molly Holly

Victoria runs Jackie over to start and it's quickly off to Molly for the handspring elbow in the corner. Trish tries to come in but the distraction just lets the villains put Jackie in a camel clutch/Boston crab combination. That goes nowhere since it would likely kill Jackie so it's off to Trish for the house cleaning. A rollup has Victoria pinned but Steven Richards turns it over so Victoria can grab the tights for the pin.

Rating: D. The wrestling isn't exactly off to a good start this year. This was your standard women's tag match of the day, meaning it just kind of kept going as we keep waiting until we can get to Victoria vs. Trish for the title again. Or until Lita can return from injury, which is the real long term solution.

Booker T. and Goldust don't like the idea of the Year of Bischoff and laugh at the idea of humiliating the boss.

Bischoff is livid and makes Booker/Goldust vs. Storm/Regal for later.

Here's Chris Jericho for a chat. He wants to be back in the main event of Wrestlemania so he can regain the World Title. Jericho

doesn't care who he faces to win the title back because he's going to win the Royal Rumble. Cue Shawn Michaels to say he understands the idea of needing to be the best.

Jericho thinks he's the best and Shawn isn't going to dispute that. What Jericho needs is the validation from everyone in the arena, everyone watching this TV show and everyone in the back to know he's the best. To do that, Jericho needs to volunteer to be the #1 entrant in the Rumble. Chris brings up the 1995 Rumble with Shawn lasting from beginning to end (details left out, as you might expect) because Shawn has to make everything about himself.

That brings Jericho to beating Austin and Rock in the same night because Shawn never beat either of them. Shawn cuts him off and says if Jericho won't enter at #1, he will. A fight is teased but RNN BREAKING NEWS brings out Randy Orton live. Orton has two points to make: his shoulder is up to 93% mobility but more importantly, he's the NEW sexy boy. Shawn punches him in the face and the fight is on with Jericho stomping away. Rob Van Dam comes in but the numbers get to him, thanks to Christian running in as well. Kane makes the save. Good segment but a forced way to set up a likely tag match for later.

Tag Team Titles: Booker T./Goldust vs. Lance Storm/William Regal

Storm and Regal are challenging and stare Lawler and JR down during their entrance. Booker hammerlocks Storm to start and drops a knee to the chest. Bischoff looks miserable in his office as Goldust comes in to stay on the arm. It's off to Regal to get his arm cranked a bit as well until Storm gets in a cheap shot to let the evil foreigners take over.

We're already in the chinlock with Regal and Storm both taking turns keeping Booker in trouble. Since chinlocks are only going to get you so far, Booker is right back up and making the hot tag off to Goldust. The Hart Attack with a sidekick drops Storm but Regal kicks the referee to the floor with the champs quickly following him out.

Back from a break with Chief Morely taking over as referee because WWE referees are the weakest human beings alive. Not that it matters

as Booker kicks Morely down, leaving no one to count the ax kick on Storm. A third referee comes in to count two and see the hot tag to Goldust as everything breaks down again.

Storm gets Goldust to charge into a clothesline as the challengers take over again. A knee to the back sets up a chinlock for all of a few seconds before it's off to Booker to clean house. Morely pulls the third ref out though, allowing Regal to KO Booker with the knuckles for the pin and the titles.

Rating: B-. Just in case you thought something might be different in the second half of the show. This puts the villains up 3-0 as the Bischoff dominance continues. At least the match was entertaining due to the talent involved. It was your usual overbooked mess of a title change but you have to expect something like that, especially with people who HHH probably thinks doesn't know how to work.

Regal and Storm thank Bischoff for the chance.

Raw Retro is Sable taking off the potato sack to reveal the swimsuit. The Raw Tenth Anniversary is next week. I'll begin bracing now.

Test vs. Christopher Nowinski

Stacy Keibler and D'Lo Brown are the seconds here, the latter due to a really bad pre-match promo. Apparently Stacy and the referees are prejudiced against an intelligent black man. Nowinski: "Tonight, can I be down with the brown?" D'Lo offers an early distraction so Chris can send Test shoulder first into the post. Test fights out of an armbar and decks Brown, followed by a full nelson slam for two. The big boot is grabbed by Brown but Test hits the Roll of the Dice to end Nowinski anyway.

Brown hits a Sky High to take Test out.

Christian tells Jericho that he's in the Rumble too, which Jericho thinks means he has an assistant. That's not exactly what Christian had in mind so tensions are teased. Orton comes in and tells them to worry about Rob Van Dam and Kane tonight.

Scott Steiner was on a bodybuilding magazine too, albeit back in

2000.

Recap of the arm wrestling contest from two weeks ago.

HHH is warming up for the posedown. He's still manly.

It's posedown time with HHH now in a jacket, which is likely covered with all the oil he was rubbing over his chest. HHH talks about how awesome it is to be World Champion and picks six fans from the crowd to be judges for the contest. They just happen to be six guys sitting in the front row and happen to look like wrestlers themselves.

Coach has to call out three mandatory poses just like at Mr. Olympia. Steiner comes out and this is somehow still going despite not even starting yet. The pose three times each with Steiner getting far stronger of a reaction, despite HHH (the bodybuilding fanatic), likely dominating if you're actually talking about real bodybuilding technique.

The judges give it to HHH unanimously so Steiner asks for a fan vote. Since HHH won't do that, we'll have a push-up contest instead. They get to about fifteen but the judges attack Steiner as HHH bails. Steiner beats the heck out of all of them to FINALLY end this segment after twenty minutes (counting the arm wrestling recap and HHH manliness segment).

Chris Jericho/Christian vs. Kane/Rob Van Dam

Orton and Michaels are in the respective corners. It's a brawl to start with the good guys clearing the ring, followed by a running flip dive from Van Dam. Back in and Rob goes up, only to have an Orton distraction allow Christian to shove him off the top. The Canadians take over with Jericho getting in a belly to back and dropping some elbows.

We hit the double arm crank for a bit so Lawler asks JR if he thinks Orton is sexy. Thankfully Rob fights up before JR has to answer but Jericho sends him outside again. Orton's latest attempt at interference earns him some Sweet Chin Music, only to have Chris send Shawn into the steps.

Back in and Rob kicks Christian away for the hot tag to Kane. A double suplex drops Christian and Jericho and the top rope clothesline makes things even worse. The Conchairto doesn't work as the chairs only hit each other, leaving Shawn to pull Jericho to the floor. Back in and Van Dam kicks Christian into the chokeslam, followed by the Five Star for the pin.

Rating: D. They didn't have time to do anything but the signature moves and a bunch of brawling here but that's what you get when you have a freaking push-up contest in the previous segment. It's nice to see some faces win for a change after a very long night of heel dominance.

Bischoff makes Regal vs. Lawler for next week but gets a phone call. Vince will be here next week.

Overall Rating: D-. This was a really rough one and one incredibly overbooked match is nowhere near enough to save the thing. It felt like I was watching an NWO episode of Nitro with heel dominance all night long, a VERY lengthy segment that set up a match with the potential to be a disaster and a lot of stuff that did nothing but fill in time. This show was really, really bad and it's made even worse by the fact that we're thirteen days from the Rumble and all of four names seem to have been announced. HHH vs. Steiner needs to happen already because the time dedicated to that really could be useful elsewhere.

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