

Monday Night Raw – March 10, 2003 (2017 Redo): HHH Can Dream All He Wants

Monday Night Raw

Date: March 10, 2003

Location: Gund Arena, Cleveland, Ohio

Commentators: Jim Ross, Jerry Lawler

With less than three weeks to go before Wrestlemania, it's time to really start hammering things home. The big draw tonight is Rock vs. Booker T. and if Rock wins, he can either face HHH for the title or Steve Austin for pride at Wrestlemania. Why this is even happening isn't clear as there's no reason to think Rock would want the World Title but that's Raw in general at times. Let's get to it.

Eric Bischoff and Chief Morely give the midcard a speech about wanting to properly welcome Austin when he gets here. Bischoff: "NOT THAT KIND OF WELCOME!" The roster leaves and here's Rock to interrupt. Rock thinks the match with Booker T. is a waste of time (because it is) because he only cares about facing Austin. Eric understands and can go with that but Rock still has to wrestle tonight. That's cool with Rock, who will face anyone.

Rob Van Dam/Kane vs. Chris Jericho/Christian

Van Dam kicks Jericho in the face to start but eats the running forearm for his efforts. It's quickly off to Kane to clean house with the top rope clothesline getting two on Jericho. The Canadians have to fight out of a double chokeslam so Kane settles for a backdrop to put Jericho on the floor. Kane follows him out but gets set into the steps to slow him down. Van Dam kicks Christian in the face and adds the Five Star, only to have Jericho come back in with the Lionsault for the pin.

Rating: D+. The match didn't have time to go anywhere (a common problem around here) and I'm not sure why Van Dam and Kane needed to lose here.

They've been pushed as contenders to the Tag Team Titles and now they're losing clean in less than four minutes? The tag division isn't exactly deep in the first place and this isn't helping things.

Jericho goes to leave but walks into a superkick from Shawn Michaels. Shawn poses over him and says he'll see Jericho at Wrestlemania. I've always liked that bit.

Here's Booker T. for a chat. He's disappointed about not facing Rock tonight but that's not what he wants to talk about. Instead he'd rather talk about HHH calling him an entertainer instead of a contender. It's true that Booker is an entertainer but there's more to it than that. He's the youngest of eight children and he comes from a single parent household. Booker got involved in some bad things over the years, including armed robbery which landed him in jail. If HHH thinks Booker dances, come down here right now and he'll dance all over HHH, just like he'll do at Wrestlemania.

This brings out Ric Flair, to say that Booker is no Michael Jordan or Tiger Woods and he's certainly no HHH. The champ sent Flair out here to say that he's not lowering himself to Booker's level again. Next week though, Booker can carry their bags to the limo and drive them downtown, which is all Booker is qualified to do. Or he can make the mistake of a lifetime and show up for the beating of a lifetime. Booker decks Flair and goes to find HHH...who is in the bathroom. HHH throws money at him and says get him a towel. Booker lays him out too. So much for rolling back the racism angle.

Post break HHH says Booker jumped him. At least he lies like a heel.

Jeff Hardy vs. Rico

And hang on a second as we need to see Austin arriving and shoving a drink into a backstage worker's face. Back to the match (or to it to the first time really) and Jeff hits the Whisper in the Wind, only to have Jamal grab his foot. The Samoans get taken out and Jeff grabs a rollup for the pin. This was barely a minute and a half long and we missed fifteen seconds on Austin.

HHH yells at Maven and gives him a match later tonight.

Austin eats a hot dog and runs into Goldust, who stutters about Bischoff wanting to apologize for something. Since Goldust takes forever to get to the point, Austin shoves the hot dog in his mouth.

Rock is playing his guitar and singing about how Cleveland sucks when his opponent for the night comes in. It's Hurricane, who asks if Rock is ready to go toe to toe with the superhero. Rock is ready and is even willing to make it any superpowers go. The Scorpion King will bring his heat vision, x-ray vision and cable vision. What about WrestleVision?

Rock wants to know if Hurricane is going to throw a cheeseburger at him but Hurricane says "I got my Hurripowers b****!" That makes Rock a bit more serious, but he DID NOT get thrown out of the battle royal two weeks ago and he DOES NOT have a tiny ding-a-ling. Rock offers a handshake and then punches Hurricane in the jaw like he should be doing.

Trish Stratus vs. Jazz

#1 contenders match and apparently this is after a very long break due to technical difficulties. Trish sends her into the corner to start and grabs the Stratusphere, only to have Victoria come in and hit both of them (Trish first) with the belt to give Trish the DQ win. Well it should be a DQ win but we're officially going with no contest because disqualification rules only count when the story calls for them. The match was about twenty seconds long and of course we couldn't just do it next week with the proper amount of time instead of rushing it like this due to the technical issues.

Here's Bischoff to apologize for his actions last week but more importantly, he wants to apologize for firing Austin via FedEx back in WCW. Oh and sorry to JR for smashing his head with a cinder block. Bischoff deserves some credit for Stone Cold Steve Austin though because he got rid of Austin in WCW and caused him to come to WWE. They're a lot alike when you think about it though. Neither of them are ever going to be caught dead in a three piece suit, they both love to hunt and fish, and they both went head to head with Vince.

Cue Austin to get in Eric's face and ask about the desire for a handshake. Instead Austin flips him off and calls Eric boring. The threat of violence brings out the Rock, who gets Austin's attention. Austin points out the 15,000 people chanting ROCKY SUCKS but Rock wants to slap Austin in the face. That's cool with Austin but Rock won't come down there just yet. Instead he brings up their two previous Wrestlemania matches, both of which Austin won of course. Rock says Austin is nothing so Austin literally lays down in the ring to entice Rock to come to the ring right now. Rock: "Nah." JR: "NAH??? NAH???"

Rock wants to wait until Wrestlemania but Austin isn't leaving without beating someone up so Bischoff gets a right hand. Rock tries a sneak attack but Austin stares him away. The match is going to be great, though it really does feel like Austin is coasting through this. There's something missing in him and it feels like he's just acting like Stone Cold instead of being in that same place again.

HHH vs. Maven

Non-title. JR calls HHH the best in the game. So the Game is in the game? I mean I know HHH is full of himself but that's a very different way of saying it. HHH is also in the very rare red trunks this week and it still doesn't quite work. HHH jumps him to start and Maven is sent outside, followed by going into the steps.

Back in and HHH drives an elbow into Maven's head as JR casually mentions that Batista and Orton are both going to be out THREE MONTHS each. So much for Evolution until the summer then. HHH grabs a sleeper to make sure the crowd doesn't get interested in the match but lets it go a few seconds later. Maven gets in a jawbreaker and some right hands...but HHH cuts him off with the spinebuster. The Pedigree ends the dominance.

Rating: D-. And that's HHH for you ladies and gentlemen. Rock comes back in between movies and makes Hurricane look like a star. HHH on the other hand insults his #1 contender last week in a racist angle and then squashes Maven, who got in a total of no significant offense. But hey, HHH gets to look like a big deal by beating up a jobber before he goes on to beat Booker and crush his fan base at the biggest show of the year.

Such is life in HHH's WWE.

I'm not saying that HHH should have gotten pinned by Maven and I'm not saying Maven should have given HHH a run for his money. I'm saying there's really no reason for this match to have happened. HHH just randomly started yelling at Maven backstage and then beat him up in a nothing match. This doesn't really boost HHH and it's really just a way to fill in time with HHH having one of his usual boring matches. How does that help anyone, other than maybe HHH?

Post match HHH wraps the ropes around Maven's neck to choke him out. Al Snow runs in for the save and eats a Pedigree too. Did you get that HHH is amazing? I didn't know if that was coming through yet or not.

Bischoff rants to Morely about his issues. Morely says Bischoff went even further than Vince did to make amends with Austin, which gives Eric an idea. Vince isn't going to be paying attention to Raw because he has to deal with Hulk Hogan going into Wrestlemania. Therefore, next week it's Austin vs. Bischoff II under Bischoff's Rules. Not only is this not the best idea, but good job on saying that Vince isn't going to be watching Raw for the next few weeks.

Stacy Keibler calls Test, who is at South Padre Island, and hears a girl in the background. She's not happy.

Austin is with Scott Steiner and laughs off the idea of facing Bischoff. Steiner didn't get to say a word and really could have been a cardboard cutout here.

Chief Morely/Lance Story vs. Dudley Boyz

Hang on a second as Morely says this is going to be a handicap match and if D-Von loses, the team is still suspended. So is this like on Smackdown where Brian Kendrick keeps wrestling but doesn't officially have a job? Bubba goes to swing at Morely but D-Von cuts him off, earning Bubba an ejection.

Chief Morely/Lance Storm vs. D-Von Dudley

D-Von slugs them both down and grabs a rollup with trunks for two on

Morely. The Chief gets sent outside and D-Von hammers on Storm with a flapjack getting two. Morely gets in a cheap shot from the apron though and a leg lariat sets up the Money Shot for the pin on D-Von in short order.

We look at Shawn Michaels getting beaten down last week.

And now, a wet t-shirt contest to promote the Girls Gone Wild show. Naturally Lawler gets to host and he's got a Super Soaker. Lawler promises puddles on the puppies but here's Stacy to interrupt. She's going to handle the soaking actually but Lawler says don't shoot prematurely. He introduces each one and Stacy sprays them down in turn.

The fans are about to pick a winner but Stacy cuts them off. She'll be at the show too and has Lawler spray her shorts to end this waste of time that made me long for the PG Era. I get that the women are good looking and I certainly get what they're going for but this has NOTHING to do with wrestling and the #1 contenders match was cut to 21 seconds. That sums up the issues that the women have had to fight through, which Trish has brought up for years.

The Rock vs. Hurricane

No DQ and JR suggests that you send the women and children to bed. We just watched HHH vs. Maven, D-Von in a handicap match and hyping soft core films but we shouldn't watch the Rock? Come on JR. Rock doesn't think much of Hurricane to start so Hurricane knocks him outside to give Rock a breather.

Back in and a Samoan drop puts Hurricane down but stops to put on his cape. Rock pretends to fly so Hurricane slugs away, only to eat a hard clothesline. We hit the chinlock for a good while until Hurricane fights up and hits a jumping clothesline. This sends JR into a rant about how this is AMERICA and we never give up on anything. That's why we needed to send the women and children to bed?

A Shining Wizard and a high crossbody give Hurricane two, followed by a Blockbuster for the same. Rock gets in a DDT for a breather but stops to pose again, allowing Hurricane to kick him low. The chokeslam gets two

more but Hurricane walks into the spinebuster. The People's Elbow is loaded up and heeeeeere's Austin. Hurricane rolls up the distracted Rock for the pin while Austin's music plays to end the show.

Rating: D. The match was junk but this is a great example of someone being unselfish in wrestling. Rock doesn't lose a thing by putting Hurricane over here because he knows he's getting Austin at Wrestlemania in one of the show's main events. This was hardly Rock laying down for the chokeslam and losing clean. He had Hurricane beaten, got distracted, and was pinned on a fluke.

The loss doesn't hurt him in any way because he'll cut a promo next week and no one will remember this. Hurricane on the other hand can now say he went toe to toe with Rock on the mic and then pinned him. Compare this to HHH squashing Maven and you'll see why Rock is just that much more awesome (among the other obvious reasons).

Overall Rating: D-. The wrestling is horrible and boring for the most part, the women are treated more like sex objects every single night, HHH is a MAN and Austin isn't acting like himself. That leaves us with the Rock, who is trying his hardest to make this work but you can only have him do so much. He's trying so hard to get people over but when you have HHH and the sledgehammer of dominance, even Rock's greatness is limited. Setting up Rock vs. Austin is what matters, but sweet goodness they're trying hard to ruin the Wrestlemania buzz.

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