

Monday Night Raw – March 17, 2003 (2017 Redo): The Bad Road

Monday Night Raw

Date: March 17, 2003

Location: Savvis Center, St. Louis, Missouri

Commentators: Jim Ross, Jerry Lawler

We're less than two weeks away from Wrestlemania and...yeah I'm not really caring that much yet. The show just isn't looking interesting and I'm not sure how much tonight is going to help. This week's big attraction is Steve Austin vs. Eric Bischoff II for no apparent reason, though a lack of logic has never stopped WWE before. Let's get to it.

This show is dedicated to the United States military, who would be heading into Iraq later in the week.

Here's Bischoff under a spotlight to start things off. He gets straight to the point: tonight's match with Austin is now a lumberjack match.

Opening sequence.

Chief Morely/Lance Storm vs. Kane/Rob Van Dam

If the Dudleys interfere, they're fired. Kane shoulders him down to start and hammers away in the corner as JR wants William Regal to get back so they can lose the Tag Team Titles. Rob comes in for his stepover kick to the face and the cartwheel moonsault gets two. A shot shot cuts Rob off and Storm adds a hot shot for good measure. Morely's spinebuster doesn't do him much good as Van Dam comes back with an enziguri. There's the hot tag to Kane to clean house with the top rope clothesline taking Storm down. Morely comes back in for a double DDT but Rob kicks him in the chest. The chokeslam ends Storm.

Rating: D+. Not enough time to mean much here but JR is right: they need to just make Storm and Morely the official champions already as Regal is

nowhere to be seen at the moment due to his injury. I'd assume Van Dam and Kane would win the titles at Wrestlemania, or at least that would make the most sense.

Post match here are the Dudleys...to turn heel and put Kane through a table with a 3D.

Back from a break with Morely and the Dudleys in the back. Apparently they sided with Morely and Bischoff because they have families to feed and can't do that while they're suspended. They're not happy with it but they don't have a choice. That's shockingly logical and I'm not sure how to handle that.

Here are HHH and Ric Flair with the champ running down Booker T. for attacking him last week. HHH wants Booker out here right now but gets Goldust instead. Lawler: "Booker T. is probably in jail somewhere." Goldust stands up for his friend...and the whole thing is immediately ruined as Goldust talks about HHH not having it down in the "cock....cock....cock....COCKLES of his heart."

HHH and Flair bust out laughing at the whole thing with Goldust's stutter getting worse and worse. The beatdown is finally on until Booker T. comes in for the save. Booker can't quite hit the ax kick on Flair as HHH makes the save. This likely sets up a tag match later, but that would be in a place that made sense. I'm betting on HHH squashing Goldust instead.

Post break, HHH is livid and demands to face Goldust later tonight. And there it is.

Maven vs. Rico

Maven grabs an armdrag to start...and let's cut to the back to see Rock arriving. Back in the ring (Can we go back to watching Rock walk?), Rico hits a kick to the back of the head. Jamal gets in a cheap shot from behind because people need help against Maven. Rico keeps kicking and stomping away as he doesn't have the most varied offense at this point. We hit the neck crank for a bit but Rico misses a middle rope backdrop. That means a Maven comeback with a middle rope bulldog getting two. Rosey grabs Maven from the floor, which has no effect as Maven gets a backslide

for the pin.

Rating: D-. 3 Minute Warning has fallen to the point where they can't even manage to put Maven away. I've seen grub worms that could give Maven a run for his money and now two monstrous Samoans can't beat him? Rico deserves WAY better than this, though it still might be an upgrade from the stylist stuff. Terrible match of course.

Shawn Michaels goes in to see Austin and tells him that Bischoff has made him a lumberjack tonight. Austin doesn't really care, nor does he mind that Rock will be a lumberjack too. Every time he and Rock get in the ring together at Wrestlemania, Rock winds up losing. Why should this year be any different?

Rock is walking through the back when he runs into Teddy Long, who hides a WWE Magazine. Rock takes it away and finds....Hurricane on the cover. Teddy says not to worry because Rodney Mack is dealing with Hurricane tonight. Oh and don't worry about losing to Hurricane last week because it was just a conspiracy by the man. Rock isn't pleased and looks kind of surprised when Mack comes up. They're seeming to have a lot of these filler scenes tonight and that doesn't bode well.

Wrestlemania Moment: Andre the Giant beats Big John Studd in the Bodyslam Match and throws his winnings to the crowd.

Hurricane vs. Rodney Mack

JR talks about how great Mack has been since he came under Teddy's guidance, including being undefeated. He had one match a month ago Jim. Hurricane bounces off of him with a shoulder and Mack follows up with a hard shoulder off the middle rope. Mack misses a charge in the corner though and gets caught with a neckbreaker. A high crossbody sets up the Blockbuster but here's Rock for the DQ because Rodney Mack can't get pinned.

Rock hits Hurricane low twice and beats him down with a chair.

Trish Stratus/Jazz vs. Victoria/Steven Richards

King gets in two bad lines by saying you can't see Trish and not have any

hard feelings and also referring to Jazz as James Earl Jones Jr. Jazz and Victoria start things off as the announcers aren't sure why this match is happening, but seem to blame Bischoff's booking. They take turns whipping each other into the corner before Jazz gets in a dropkick to the back. It's off to Trish for some forearms and a Chick Kick for two as Richards hasn't been a factor yet.

An electric chair is broken up and Trish goes face first as King says he'd always hook Trish's leg. JR: "I'm sure you would tiger." Richards finally comes in and gets hit low, setting up a hurricanrana out of the corner. Trish avoids the flip legdrop and Richards crotches himself, only to have Jazz walk away from the tag attempt. Richards adds a Sky High and the Widow's Peak ends this.

Rating: D. I really didn't like this one but the story has been a mess which has gone on far too long. Victoria is a good heel champion but the lack of depth in the division has caused the story to drag on to the point where it stops meaning anything. They're also finally fighting over the title at Wrestlemania, but that doesn't make up for the weeks of trading wins that didn't advance anything.

Stevie loads up the DDT on Trish but Jeff Hardy runs in for the save. The villains leave and Jeff kisses Trish, who seems both confused and disgusted.

Video on Shawn Michaels putting in the best possible effort at every Wrestlemania. Like at Wrestlemania V, when he was completely hung over.

Chris Jericho says he used to believe in Shawn but now his dream is to end Shawn at Wrestlemania. Christian comes up to say they have a match against Test and a surprise partner next.

Stacy Keibler comes up to Test as he's reading Raw Magazine. She'll see him out there for the tag match and leaves. Test is actually looking at Torrie's Playboy. He has good taste.

Test/Scott Steiner vs. Christian/Chris Jericho

Test charges straight at Jericho to start and elbows him in the jaw.

Jericho gets thrown onto Christian and it's off to Steiner for an Oklahoma Stampede. It's back to Test who gets taken down by some Canadian double teaming as Lawler makes sex jokes about Stacy. Test shrugs it off without too much effort though and Steiner comes back in for the suplexes. Christian grabs the referee though, allowing Jericho to hit Steiner low.

Scott is fine enough for a belly to belly on Jericho, allowing the tag back to Test. The pumphandle slam gets two on Jericho with Christian making the save. A powerbomb is good for the same sequence and Stacy gets on the apron for no logical reason. Jericho knocks her right into Steiner's arms, meaning Lawler gets to make jokes about seeing her underwear. The distraction lets Jericho roll Test up for the pin.

Rating: D. The fall of Scott Steiner amazes me. To go from where he was to working with Test in less than a month is remarkable but also completely deserved after how bad those two matches were. The match itself was as good as Jericho and Christian slowing down to Test and Steiner's level was going to be, though at least the right team won.

HHH vs. Goldust

Non-title with Flair and Booker as the seconds. A right hand to the jaw annoys Goldust and more jabs make it even worse. Goldust's bad arm (another electrocution casualty) flares up and HHH sends it into the post. It's time to work on an armbar for a bit before the spinebuster plants Goldust again.

The Pedigree is countered into a rollup for two and Goldust makes his comeback with his usual. HHH sends him outside and Flair gets in some cheap shots until Booker makes the save. Cue Randy Orton through the crowd to break a crutch over Booker's head, leaving Goldust to load up Shattered Dreams. The affliction cuts him off though, allowing the jumping knee and Pedigree to put him away.

Rating: D. So now Goldust losing to HHH because he was electrocuted is the best thing they have for a rub from HHH? I've never been a fan of these two facing off (their Royal Rumble 1997 match is one of my least favorite matches ever) and this was no exception. This wasn't any good

but it was also overbooked and built around a bad story. That's not a good combination.

Limp Bizkit is excited to perform at Wrestlemania.

Rock is with Bischoff as he warms up and thinks we should have a Rock Concert next week. Bischoff loves the idea and tells Rock he'll see him out there as a lumberjack. Actually Rock has another idea though: drop the lumberjacks and just make it No DQ so he can interfere freely. So they book a stipulation earlier tonight and then cut it out later in the night? That's WCW style and that's about as bad as it gets.

Pay per view rundown. It still doesn't excite me based on the last few weeks.

Steve Austin vs. Eric Bischoff

No DQ. Bischoff bails to the floor to start and hides behind Chief Morely, who gets taken down with a clothesline. Austin takes him inside and stomps away before grabbing a Boston crab of all things. A low blow from Morely finally gives Bischoff a breather and he chokes on the ropes a bit. Not that it matters as Austin hits a Stunner on Bischoff and tosses Morely, only to walk into Rock's Stunner. That only gives Bischoff two so Rock comes back and misses the People's Elbow. A clothesline puts Rock on the floor and the second Stunner ends Bischoff.

Rating: D-. How else can I really rate this? It's barely a match and they flat out said that there's only having the match for the sake of Rock interfering to attack Austin. I'm not completely sure why Bischoff set this up for himself in the first place but why bother with logic when you can get to a big ending?

Rock gives Austin the Rock Bottom and steals a beer to end the show.

Overall Rating: F+. I don't remember a single good thing about this show. Between setting up a stipulation and then canceling it later in the night, the still dull Women's Title situation, complete with Richards and Hardy being added in for no apparent reason and Goldust being one of the dumbest characters I can remember in a good while, this is completely

missing the point as we head towards Wrestlemania. Rock is on the verge of carrying the Raw half of the pay per view on his back but it seems to be too much even for the Great One. Awful show this week as things are actually getting worse.

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