

Monday Night Raw – March 24, 2003: Overtime with Recaps

Monday Night Raw

Date: March 24, 2003

Location: ARCO Arena, Sacramento, California

Commentators: Jim Ross, Jerry Lawler

It's the go home show for Wrestlemania but more importantly we'll be seeing the first ever Rock Concert with Rock giving us a performance for the ages. Other than that though it's time for the final push towards Seattle, which likely means we won't be seeing a lot of wrestling around here for the sake of avoiding a last minute injury. Let's get to it.

Lillian Garcia sings the National Anthem. That's quite the celebration for the twelve year anniversary of Wrestlemania VII: Stars and Strikes Forever.

Opening sequence.

Here's the unscheduled Steve Austin with something to say. He's really not cool with Rock coming out here last week and giving him a Stone Cold Stunner and a Rock Bottom. Austin isn't going anywhere until the Rock comes out here (down an aisle as there's no ramp this week) for a beating. Cue Test and Stacy Keibler with the former saying he just wants to have a match tonight. It's a Stunner for Test and Stacy runs off as Austin has a seat at ringside.

Lance Storm, who is scheduled to face Test tonight, comes in and covers with Austin counting the two. That means a Stunner for Storm so here's Eric Bischoff, flanked by cops, to issue a restraining order. After a fairly long time and threats of being shot, Austin finally leaves so Bischoff can plug the Rock Concert.

Jeff Hardy/Trish Stratus vs. Victoria/Steven Richards

The genders have to match. The guys start things off with Richards taking

him into the corner, only to get shoved right back out for the legdrop between Steven's legs. Jeff's slingshot dropkick sends Richards over to Victoria, meaning it's off to Trish for the first time. Jeff dives onto Richards, leaving Victoria to hit her spinning side slam. The Stratusphere sets up the Stratusfaction off Richards' chest for the pin.

Jeff and Trish are about to kiss again when Jazz jumps her from behind.

Coach tells Bischoff that there's a security issue that needs to be taken care of right now.

Goldust is ready to fight in the tag match tonight and says HHH sounds like a dic...dic...dic...dictator! This STILL isn't funny.

The security issue is that Austin is still in the parking lot because the restraining order only covers the arena. Bischoff has plans for Austin and threatens to fire Coach if he doesn't go deal with this.

Scott Steiner vs. Christian

Christian's gear is extra neon green here, meaning it shines rather brightly when Steiner throws him outside. Back in and it's the clothesline into the push-ups, followed by multiple reps on a gorilla press. A reverse DDT puts Steiner down for two with the kickout sending Christian flying. Christian gets in a neckbreaker and some choking until Steiner hits the first suplex. Steiner catches him on top with something like a super Angle Slam for the pin.

Rating: D. It's amazing that Steiner has nothing to do at Wrestlemania but it's really not surprising. Steiner has become as generic and slow of a power wrestler as you'll ever find and now he's going over perfectly acceptable wrestlers like Christian. Thankfully Christian has settled into a fine role as an upscale lackey like Jericho.

Coach tells Austin about Bischoff's threats but Austin doesn't say a word. I'm sure the fans who were waiting for Austin to come back are thrilled by watching him sit there stoically.

Wrestlemania Moment: Shawn wins the title.

Morely says that William Regal can't wrestle at the moment so Morely and Storm are the new champions. It's about time. WWE officially recognizes this as two reigns for Storm, which is yet another stretch for the titles' history. Kane and Rob Van Dam come up and want a title shot at Wrestlemania. Morely backs away but agrees to make Van Dam and Kane vs. the Dudleys in a #1 contenders match for later tonight.

Remember when Austin was sitting outside doing nothing? Well now he's sitting outside and playing with his windshield wipers.

HHH/Ric Flair vs. Goldust/Booker T.

All four get their own entrances to really stretch things out. Goldust, still with the bad arm, start things off and we get the traditional exchange of WOO's. Some right hands puts Flair down as JR and Lawler go over the history of the Rhodes Family. HHH comes in but Booker does the same, meaning it's time to slow things way down. A leapfrog into a hiptoss sends HHH into the corner and Lawler is panicking.

Booker kicks him into the other corner so it's off to Flair, whose chops have no effect again. HHH offers a distraction though and it's a chop block to put Booker down. Back from a break with Booker reversing Flair's Figure Four and hitting a few chops to set up the hot tag. Goldust fires away, only to have the bad arm flare up again.

A missed crossbody sends Goldust outside so HHH can send him into the steps and the fresh heat segment begins. HHH offers a distraction so Flair can get in a good low blow and choking as only Ric can do. A neckbreaker gives HHH two and it's back to Flair, who allows the tag. The referee doesn't see it of course so HHH has to charge into a boot in the corner for the real hot tag.

Booker comes in to take over, including the hard whip to send HHH sailing over the corner to the floor. Goldust and Flair fight into the crowd as Booker busts HHH open. Flair comes back in and gets caught with a spinebuster for no count as the referee actually remembers who was legal. Get that man a raise! The Pedigree is broken up and it's a catapult into the post, followed by the scissors kick for the pin.

Rating: C+. The match was long but had the right ending. Unfortunately it's also the WWE way of saying HHH is going to retain on Sunday, which would be the dumbest idea that WWE could possibly have. I'm sure this now qualifies as HHH putting someone over though, and that's all he needs to do to be the best of all time right?

Post break HHH is staring at the title while Flair gives him a pep talk.

Here's Chris Jericho for a chat. Jericho is ready to face Shawn Michaels at Wrestlemania but needs to say something to his face right now. This brings out Shawn, with Jericho saying he modeled himself after Michaels for years. Jericho has a video of the two of them side by side, showing how similar they are due to Jericho imitating him.

After all those years of being talked up as the next Shawn Michaels, he wanted to be the first Chris Jericho because he was better than Shawn. Then Shawn left in 1998 and Jericho became the workhorse and backbone of the company. Jericho is ready for Wrestlemania and slaps Shawn in the face. Shawn slaps him back and...that's it as we cut to a break.

Rock comes in to see Bischoff and has an idea for tonight: put speakers in the parking lot so he can listen to the Rock Concert.

We run down the Wrestlemania card. For some reason this isn't on the Network version.

Rob Van Dam/Kane vs. Dudley Boyz

The winners get Storm/Morely at Wrestlemania. It's a brawl to start with Kane taking Bubba into the corner for some right hands. A German suplex puts Kane down and D-Von adds a jumping clothesline, which only seems to annoy the monster. It's off to Van Dam for Rolling Thunder but D-Von comes right back with a neckbreaker to put both of them down.

The spinning kick to the head drops Bubba and it's back to Kane and D-Von. Everything breaks down and Bubba hiptosses Van Dam into a neckbreaker (cool spot). Cue Storm to kick D-Von by mistake before being chased off by Bubba. The chokeslam and Five Star send Kane and Van Dam to Wrestlemania.

Rating: D. Nothing match here but they went with the logical ending which should have been obvious the whole time. The ending just makes you think that Bubba and D-Von are about to be back to normal almost immediately, making the last few weeks even more uninteresting and a waste of time than I had previously thought. At least they got to the right ending though.

The speakers are set up next to Austin's truck.

Here's Rock for the Concert. Rock has a chair, a music stand and some fancy looking bottled water on a table next to him. He's glad to be in Sacramento because it means he can be out of here in about an hour. Rock sings about how hideous the women here are and how bad it is to live here. Eh I think I prefer Elias. We see Austin sitting in his truck and shaking his head as Rock makes jokes about the Sacramento Kings.

Now it's time to sing an Austin version of Hound Dog before suggesting that Austin smokes something funny to go with the beer. Next up it's a Willie Nelson song about beating Austin up before finishing off with some Frank Sinatra about how much pie he can get. Outside, an ambulance drives in and Austin drives the truck in to follow. Rock panics and demands the security come to the ring, followed by Austin's truck.

It's driven by Hurricane though, with Austin hiding in the back of the truck. Rock goes back to singing, allowing Austin to come in and beat up Rock as you knew he was going to do. Austin destroys the guitar as security just stands around watching. This is edited WAY down on the Network, cutting out the better part of five minutes (meaning every time Rock sang anything).

And now, here's Vince to show us the whole contract signing from Smackdown.

Since this show hasn't gone on long enough (and it's already in overtime), we go back to Smackdown to see the Angle brothers demand an apology from Brock Lesnar, resulting in Kurt injuring Brock's ribs to FINALLY end the show.

Overall Rating: D+. There's not much to talk about here save for the

extra stuff at the end, which was just a commercial for the Smackdown side of things. The few matches we got were nothing special though at least one match was added to the card. As has been the case throughout the build to the pay per view, there's nothing going on to make me want to see the show. It's just not good TV building stories that aren't great either. It could be worse but the HHH vs. Booker stuff has been a horrible second level story for the red show. Another weak show here but that's normal around here anymore.

Remember to follow me on Twitter @kbreviews and pick up the Complete 2002 Monday Night Raw Reviews in either E-Book or Paperback. Check out the information here:

<http://kbwrestlingreviews.com/2017/07/21/new-e-bookpaperback-kbs-complete-monday-night-raw-2002-reviews/>

And check out my Amazon author page with cheap wrestling books at:

<http://www.amazon.com/Thomas-Hall/e/B00E6282W6>