

Monday Night Raw – April 7, 2003: Aloha Terrible Summer

Monday Night Raw

Date: April 7, 2003

Location: Bradley Center, Milwaukee, Wisconsin

Commentators: Jim Ross, Jerry Lawler

We're in a new era now as last week saw Goldberg debut to attack the Rock, likely setting up the main event of the upcoming Backlash. Other than that we have a big tag match this week between Booker T./Shawn Michaels vs. HHH/Chris Jericho. Other than that we need to see what else is in the cards for the pay per view. Let's get to it.

We open with a long recap of Rock beating Austin at Wrestlemania and then getting speared the next night.

Opening sequence.

Women's Title: Trish Stratus vs. Jazz

Trish is defending and gets taken down without too much difficulty to start. There's a little too much trash talking though and Trish kicks her away for a breather. A Chick Kick sends Jazz outside for a Thesz press from the apron. Back in and an ax handle to the back drops Trish before the fisherman's buster (minus a lot of the busting) gets two. The STF sends Trish over to the ropes again and it's time to get fired up. Another Chick Kick is good for another two and the Stratusphere gets the same. Stratusfaction (with Jazz lifting Trish up) gets the pin though Jazz's foot is on the rope.

Rating: D. This is one of the better matches the division has at the moment (which isn't saying much given that the division is all of three people) so having them set up a rematch makes sense. The division is dying for some fresh talent at this point though and this feud is only going to get them so far without it.

Rock arrives and goes in to see Eric Bischoff. He doesn't want to talk about Wrestlemania though because his mind is on Goldberg spearing him last week. Goldberg is on his way here so Rock mocks the catchphrases and promises a beating later tonight.

Rob Van Dam and Kane are glad to have won the Tag Team Titles. Kane celebrated by taking a skunk into his basement...and I'm glad Rob cuts him off there.

Teddy Long and Rodney Mack (Jazz's real life husband) come up to Jazz and offer her a spot on the team. Jazz accepts and joins the battle against bigotry.

Rock runs into Trish (Rock: "Aloha mama.") and asks if she's sweaty and wet from thinking about him. It was just because of her match apparently and here's Jeff Hardy. Rock refuses him an autograph but Jeff would rather talk about Goldberg last week. Jeff vs. Rock is on for later in a match that would be incredibly different just a few years later.

Chief Morely vs. Rob Van Dam

Part of Morely's video is Bischoff on the phone with Morely nowhere in sight. I get that it's Morely and no one is going to pay attention but that was approved by someone on the production team? Rob clotheslines him a few times to start and gets a great looking German suplex for two. Morely's neckbreaker gives him a breather though and he rolls some suplexes for a delayed near fall of his own.

That means it's time for a chinlock for a bit before Rob gets in some kicks and the monkey flip. Rolling Thunder connects but here's Lance Storm to put a foot on the rope. Rob kicks him down but decides to dive onto Storm instead, allowing Morely to get in a DDT for the pin. A DDT? On a new champion? It really is 2003.

Rating: D. I'm still trying to get over a DDT finishing Van Dam. The ending wasn't clean but Morely can't even hit his finisher to win? Anyway, on top of a stupid finish and an annoying loss that didn't need to happen so soon, it was made even worse by the fact that the match wasn't any good. Just bad in general here.

Van Dam cleans house with no real effort.

Booker is getting taped up when Shawn comes up to say nothing of note about tonight's main event.

Ivory and Shawn Michaels went to a Naval base.

Scott Steiner vs. Christopher Nowinski

Before the match, Nowinski goes on a rant about patriotism making everyone blind to reality and how terrorism can't be stomped out by attacking sovereign nations. Steiner beats him up on the floor as the announcers distance themselves from Nowinski's comments as fast as they can. Nowinski gets slammed on the ramp and put in the Recliner with Lawler calling Nowinski's comments anti-American. I'll let you make your own comments on that one.

Video on Goldberg.

Christian comes in to see Rock and tries to get a DVD autographed. That's all cool with Rock until he finds out it's for Christian. Not THAT Christian of course but rather a friend of his. Rock suggests some tips on owning the room (Rock: "Not this room. This is the Rock's room.") and Christian dubs himself Born Again. Uh, yeah. Anyway Christian thinks the people thinks the Rock is scared of Goldberg so Rock is going to show them next.

Trish kisses Jeff Hardy for luck.

The Rock vs. Jeff Hardy

Rock doesn't think much of the paint job so he slugs away to take over. More right hands allow Rock to get in some dancing but he stops due to a ROCKY SUCKS chant. There's a Samoan drop to put Hardy down but Rock charges into a boot in the corner. Jeff scores with a middle rope dropkick as Lawler yells about Jeff wearing too much makeup.

Some clotheslines and lame forearms to the back look to set up the Whisper in the Wind but Rock is a bit too smart for that. Jeff falls down trying a reverse Twist of Fate but is able to hit his own People's Elbow.

A DDT and the Rock Bottom end Jeff. Well to be fair, Rock is no Chief Morely.

Rating: D. Egads Jeff is actually getting worse. There's no energy or pop to the vast majority of his offense and the forearms to the back were a disaster. Thankfully Rock can basically do anything at this point so it could have been a lot worse. Still though, I have no idea who can think Jeff is any good at this point, save for the preteen girl audience.

Rock calls out Goldberg post match so here he is, walking through the pyro in a cool visual. Before any violence can break out, Rock turns down a match at Backlash and leaves. Christian tries to sneak in on Goldberg but gets speared down to almost no reaction. Rock's cheap shot has even less effect and Rock bails again. Goldberg got almost no reaction at all here. JR: "I smell a chicken****!" King: "JR!"

Rock leaves and yells at Terri for asking why he's gone. Actually hang on as he will give an answer. Rock: "You want to know why? Because."

Kane vs. Dudley Boyz

Tagging is required here so Kane hammers on D-Von, then does the same to Bubba. D-Von crotches Kane from the floor but doesn't seem happy about having to do so. Kane fights back with some clotheslines and a backdrop. The top rope clothesline gets two on D-Von but the double chokeslam is countered into the 3D.

Rating: D. I can live with a great team beating a champion in a handicap match with their finisher but it still could have been done later. The match was as good as it was going to be for a three minute Dudleys vs. Kane match, though that doesn't make the story any more interesting. It's still just Val Venis/Lance Storm/the Dudleys vs. Van Dam/Kane. The division needs an interesting team and they need it in a hurry.

Van Dam comes out for the save but Storm and Morely cut him off, setting up the big beatdown with the aide of a chair. For people who are forced into being heels, Bubba and D-Von don't seem to mind the excessive violence.

Test yells at Goldust for screwing up with Stacy last week. He hasn't gotten any in a week so Goldust needs to HBO: help a brother out. Since when have Test and Goldust been brothers, or even distant cousins? Post break, Goldust tells Stacy that it was his Playboy and Test wasn't talking to Torrie. Test says he doesn't read those magazines but Goldust stooges him off again, this time about a magazine in Test's bag. This whole thing feels like a bad rib on someone that's only funny to the people writing it.

Here's Eric Bischoff coming out in Austin's truck to Austin's music. Eric, in Austin's vest, rips into Austin for hiding his medical condition and is very happy with the firing. Austin was a liability that Bischoff couldn't risk and he doesn't feel bad about anything he did. This brings Bischoff to JR's rant from last week (including the stupid line of Bischoff not being able to find anyone who could beat Austin, the night after he lost to Rock) and Eric wants JR to come up to him man to man.

JR meant every word of what he said last week and quits. Eric yells that he's fired as he leaves to wrap this up. I'm still not angry at Bischoff for benching someone who admitted they had a bad neck and back. That doesn't make him a heel, no matter how much WWE seems to think that it does.

Goldust vs. Steven Richards

Lawler is on commentary on his own so this could be interesting. Richards grabs a neckbreaker and it's a suplex into a chinlock. Thankfully Coach comes out to join commentary as Goldust fights back and gets two off something like a Sky High. The Curtain Call is broken up and Richards calls for a belt. Since she's no longer champion, Goldust uses the distraction to grab a powerslam for the fast pin. Just a match.

Ric Flair tells Chris Jericho and HHH to get along tonight.

La Resistance, the evil French team of Rene Dupree and Sylvan Grenier, are coming. This would be around the time France wouldn't fight in Iraq so FRANCE IS EVIL!

HHH/Chris Jericho vs. Booker T./Shawn Michaels

HHH is going to put Booker over here isn't he? It's a brawl to start with HHH being knocked outside and Jericho being catapulted out next to him. We settle down to Booker elbowing HHH down for two before it's off to Shawn to work on the arm. Jericho comes in and gets armdragged down as well as things break down a bit. It's too early for Sweet Chin Music or a Pedigree but Flair low bridges Shawn to the floor. And now, to the parking lot where a limo arrives.

Back from a break with HHH getting two off the jumping knee to the face. Jericho comes in and does Shawn's pose but misses an elbow. It's back to HHH for a sleeper, followed by Jericho's jumping back elbow to the jaw. Shawn finally gets in a hard shot to the face to make the hot tag off to Booker.

House is cleaned in a hurry and a DDT gets two on HHH. There's the Spinarooni and a Bookend to Jericho but HHH gets in another knee, allowing Jericho to grab the Walls. Shawn makes the save with Sweet Chin Music but HHH clotheslines him to the floor. The Pedigree is countered into a jackknife cover to give Booker the pin.

Rating: D+. Nothing special here and, of course, HHH gives up the pin in a match that means nothing, despite the fact that he already beat Booker in the important match. There's just no reason for HHH to not drop the title to him at Wrestlemania, as it's not like HHH can't just get it back in April because he must be the champion long term no matter what.

Post match the beatdown is on with Shawn being tied to the top rope. Hurricane tries to make a save but the returning Kevin Nash makes the real save. HHH grabs the hammer but Nash's chair scares him away to end the show. So there's the reason Booker isn't likely getting a rematch at Backlash.

Overall Rating: D-. So to recap: Booker T. loses in the big match but gets to win a tag match while Goldberg and Kevin Nash are heading straight to the main event. Goldberg is at least a logical move but Nash? The guy who can't go two months without a career killing injury and draws no reaction the rare times he's healthy?

Couple that with the popular Tag Team Champions getting pinned a week

after winning the belts, Test getting no sex because of Goldust and being told that if you don't completely support the military that you're a horrible person and there's not much to look forward to. It's going to be a very long summer and I have a bad feeling it's only going to get worse.

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