

Monday Night Raw – June 30, 2003: And It's Bad, Bad Bad

Monday Night Raw

Date: June 30, 2003

Location: HSBC Arena, Buffalo, New York

Commentators: Jim Ross, Jerry Lawler

We're closing out the first half of the year with the big story of Kane losing his mask. After the better part of six years with no one knowing what he looked like, Kane lost his mask last week in a match given one whole week of build up. You know, on the show that has needed back to back Kevin Nash pay per view main events. Let's get to it.

We open with a long recap of the end of last week's show, including Kane laying out Rob Van Dam with a chokeslam.

Opening sequence.

Chris Jericho is in the ring for the Highlight Reel. While everyone has been talking about Kane, let's have a beauty instead of a beast.

Therefore, his guest tonight is Stacy Keibler, who comes out with Scott Steiner, much to Jericho's chagrin. Before we get going, Steiner removes her garter. Jericho asks Steiner to leave and I'll let you figure out how that goes.

We move on to Stacy's photo shoot for Stuff Magazine and Lawler rather likes the pictures. Jericho hits on Stacy and calls himself legendary. Stacy makes references to Jericho being, ahem, legendarily small. That's enough for Jericho to bring out Test as his second guest so the beatdown can ensue. Eric Bischoff comes out to call it off and say that he's in charge tonight because Steve Austin isn't here. As for the people in the ring, it's Steiner/Stacy vs. Test/Jericho.

Here's Lance Storm to say that he is NOT boring, and he has the dictionary definition to prove it. This doesn't go far as some music cuts him off.

Goldberg vs. Lance Storm

And no match as Rodney Mack jumps Goldberg from behind. Not that it matters as a spear cuts Mack in half and the Jackhammer (Jackknife as JR says) has Teddy Long hopping mad.

Bischoff is in the back with Kane, who has a towel over his head. Eric wants Kane to address the people in the name of ratings. Kane shakes his head no so Bischoff offers him a World Title shot tonight. That's still no so Bischoff gives RVD the title shot instead. If Kane doesn't go out into the arena though, he's fired.

Women's Title: Battle Royal

Trish Stratus, Victoria, Jazz, Ivory, Molly Holly, Jacqueline, Gail Kim

Jazz is defending and this is Gail's debut. It's a brawl to start with Gail hitting a decent looking hurricanrana on Molly. Ivory is catapulted out, making the last few weeks of her defeating Jazz over and over pretty much a waste of time. Jazz gets hurt somewhere in there and is taken out by the trainers (she would be out until December with a shoulder injury, which may be why it's this instead of a regular match).

Molly and Jacqueline are out too and we're down to Gail, Trish and Victoria in less than two minutes. The Stratusphere is broken up and Trish is knocked out, leaving Gail to armdrag Victoria. A powerbomb attempt is countered into a hurricanrana to put Victoria out and make Gail champion.

Rating: D-. I'm guessing that was due to Jazz's shoulder injury and if so, that's fine. Gail winning the title was a nice little surprise, though it's not like it matters much anyway. The division isn't going to get better without something resembling a story and this isn't exactly thrilling. Somehow this is the only title Gail would win in WWE. You would have expected her to win another just by the amount of time she was around but somehow it never happened.

Intercontinental Title: Booker T. vs. Christian

Christian is defending and jumps Booker in the aisle before the bell.

They head into the crowd with Booker beating Christian around as referees can't break it up. We're joined in progress after a break with Booker slugging away and getting two off a backdrop. Christian snaps the back of Booker's neck across the ropes though and we hit the chinlock.

The second version keeps Booker down again as JR and King talk about how Test can do ANYTHING he wants to Stacy tonight because it's a wrestling match. You know, because there are no rules to a wrestling match at all. Back up and Booker misses the side kick into the ropes, setting up a backbreaker for two. Christian dives into a side kick though and both guys are down with Christian's stunned face being a nice bonus. Another kick to the face gets two but the Book End is broken up.

The ax kick is countered into a rollup with trunks for two but Booker plants him with a flapjack. But first, a Spinarooni. Booker gets crotched on top so Christian superplexes him down, right into the small package to give Booker the pin and the title. I'm not even going to bother going to the rating as Bischoff comes out to say all four shoulders were down. Therefore it's a draw and Christian retains the title.

Rating: C. This is another good example of a feud where they don't know how to just get it over with already and it's making for a bad story. Booker vs. Christian is fine for a once off but this is several weeks now with nothing being all that great in the first place. Get to something else already or just give Booker the title.

RVD goes to try and talk some sanity into Kane but Kane says he hates the fans. Rob hopes Kane doesn't hate him when he wins the title. He leaves, and Kane says he does hate him.

Stacy Keibler/Scott Steiner vs. Chris Jericho/Test

Steiner and Jericho get things going (you want to save the Test vs. Steiner money match for later) with Chris being shoved down like he's nothing. A belly to belly powerslam plants Jericho and Steiner starts in with the swearing. It's off to Test, who JR thinks has no testicular fortitude. A suplex tosses Test but he's right back with a clothesline to put Steiner on the floor.

The slow double teaming begins until Jericho misses a charge and crotches himself on the ropes. There's no one for Steiner to tag though so Test decks him again and stops for some jumping jacks. Test crotches himself though and Stacy bounces the ropes up and down for some bad measure. Jericho comes in and shoves the referee down....but here's Bischoff to say restart it as a No DQ match. A chair to the head puts Steiner down and Test forces Stacy to tag Steiner. That means a pumphandle powerslam to give Test the easy pin a few seconds later.

Rating: F. Do you get the idea yet? I didn't know if the last few weeks had explained the concept so far but WWE seems rather fine with hammering it into your head over and over. JR is getting insufferable with his SOMEONE HELP THE HELPLESS WOMAN stuff too and I continue to question why what could be a good story is being wasted on Test and Scott Steiner. This just kept going and it never approached entertaining.

Rico vs. Maven

Rico grabs a quick pinch of the trunks to start and Lawler wants to know if Maven liked it. A cartwheel earns a nose rub from Miss Jackie but Rico needs to stop and pull his room key out of his tights. With Rico taking forever to bend over and get the key, Maven tries a sunset flip, earning himself a sit on the face. Rico kisses his way out of a headlock as the beating you over the head motif continues.

In case that's not enough, we stop for some dancing with the referee. Maven finally blocks a middle rope ax handle and hits some clotheslines as JR tries to say the fans are stunned into silence. The middle rope bulldog gets two with Jackie putting the boot on the ropes. That and a shove off the top sets up the spinning kick to end Maven.

Rating: F-. Let me guess: Vince found this hilarious and the shots of Jackie split pants were enough to validate the character. This was HORRIBLE with every low level gay joke you can imagine in one match. It comes off as a case of "well, he did something similar once so let's turn it way up this time". It's a total waste of Rico and that's quite the shame.

Randy Orton vs. Tommy Dreamer

This is fallout from Orton beating up Mick Foley last week. Dreamer wastes no time in taking him to the floor for a fight, only to have Orton whip him into the steps. Back in and Orton gets two off a hard whip into the corner. Well he's no Whipper Billy Watson. The always great dropkick gets two more but Dreamer grabs a Sky High of all things for the same. There's the DDT but Flair puts the foot underneath the ropes. The tease of Flair vs. Dreamer (which sounds oddly fascinating) is enough for the RKO (I believe debuting the name) and the pin on Tommy.

Rating: D. They're clearly trying to do something with Orton and that's the right idea. He's everything you could want out of a prospect and the good finisher makes things even better. It's easy to see why he became the star he would become but he's still needing the big win to get him over the hill.

Bischoff tells Van Dam that if Kane doesn't come out, it's on Rob's head.

Post break, Bischoff sends Terri to get Kane's thoughts. She doesn't want to so Bischoff threatens another firing.

La Resistance vs. Hurricane/Spike Dudley

Non-title. Is Spike really an upgrade over fat Sgt. Slaughter? Hurricane starts with Dupree and let's hit that French dance! Some armdrags have Rene in trouble and Hurricane does a little dance of his own. It's off to Spike and we hit that BORING chant. A backdrop over the top to the floor calms them down but only gets two with JR being impressed by the kickout. Spike gets in a bulldog and the hot tag brings in Hurricane to no reaction. Everything breaks down and Spike hits a top rope double stomp for two. Grenier breaks up the chokeslam though and it's the double spinebuster to end Spike.

Rating: D-. Can you blame the fans for not caring? The French guys aren't exactly thrilling in the first place and it's pretty hard to care if you see Spike Dudley coming out for a match like this. It wasn't even any good as they had all of four minutes out there, which was hardly worth the time. You know, aside from filling out the show of course.

Terri can't find Kane.

Raw World Title: HHH vs. Rob Van Dam

HHH is defending and decks Van Dam before the bell. Some more right hands have Rob in trouble early on as HHH seems to be feeling the slow pace tonight. A monkey flip and some kicks to the head have JR way too excited. Really man we're not even five minutes into this. Calm down already. Rob gets two off a dropkick and it's time to head outside. There's a baseball slide followed by a middle rope moonsault to put both guys down. Cue Flair as we take a break.

Back with Rob stomping away and kicking him in the head for good measure. A chop block lets HHH start in on the knee though with Flair wrapping it around the post for good measure. We hit the standard package of knee work, including HHH bringing back the Indian deathlock. You know, for reasons. Rob grabs the rope so we'll try the Figure Four instead as HHH flashes all the way to 1984.

The hold is turned over and there's just no reaction from the fans. Rob fights up with more kicks and a springboard crossbody gets two. A spinning kick hits HHH's hands for two and there's the split legged moonsault but Flair breaks it up again. The Five Star connects but this time Flair comes in with a belt shot for....not the ending as Bischoff comes out AGAIN and restarts it as a No DQ match.

A quick Van Daminator on the floor has HHH down and Bischoff makes it hardcore for fun. Rob's standing moonsault on the floor gets two until Orton comes in for the save (with the referee looking for him after every count). Van Dam chases HHH to the stage and gets two off Rolling Thunder. Flair comes back though and it's a belt shot into a DDT on the stage to retain the title.

Rating: D. You know, for someone who prides himself on being a student of the game and all that jazz, HHH really doesn't know much more than one way to get through a match. This was your usual twenty minutes of interference and HHH doing boring leg work that doesn't get anyone's attention until the obvious finish. At least they didn't go with what I would have thought was the obvious Kane interference ending.

Post match Kane comes out, teases going after Van Dam, and chokeslams

Bischoff off the stage to end the show.

Overall Rating: D—. This was a rough one as Austin really does do some positive things for the show. The biggest issue here is the middle section with the lame mixed tag and the really, really bad Rico match. That stuff isn't funny and isn't going to get anyone over so we're stuck with seeing it over and over again. It's not the worst show in the world as it was mainly a wrestling edition instead of a long talking segment but the bad stuff was absolutely awful.

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