

Monday Night Raw – December 29, 2003: Ok He's Great. We Get It.

Monday Night Raw

Date: December 29, 2003

Location: SBC Arena, San Antonio, Texas

Attendance: 12,000

Commentators: Jim Ross, Jerry Lawler

We're FINALLY done with this terrible year with one last show and, of course, it's focused on HHH, who is defending the World Title against Shawn Michaels in Shawn's hometown. This will set some stuff up for the Royal Rumble, which is in about four weeks and has barely been discussed yet. Such is life in WWE, which is rarely up for capitalizing on the extra time that they have. Let's get to it.

[Here are last week's results if you need a recap.](#)

The opening recap focuses on Mick Foley walking out on the show instead of fighting Randy Orton two weeks ago. This is treated like the most serious moment in years, which actually works instead of making it feel ridiculous.

Opening sequence.

We open with Mick Foley's music...and Randy Orton coming out instead. Orton has been thinking about Foley over the holidays and knows that while Foley is a coward, he's a smart coward. Foley knew what would happen if he got in the ring with Orton but we're not quite done yet. Orton has Lillian Garcia come inside and announce him as the winner of the match and the NEW Hardcore Legend.

Cue Booker T. to say his New Year's resolution is to win the Intercontinental Title tonight. That's going to have to be delayed though as Mark Henry comes out and jumps Booker from behind, sending him into

the set. Orton accepts the challenge for later tonight like a good villain should do.

Eric Bischoff stops Henry and Teddy Long to say that was a bad idea. They're out of the building but Henry cashes in his Survivor Series favor to get to stick around. Instead, Henry can take the night off next week.

Rob Van Dam vs. Scott Steiner

Somehow this is still fallout from Survivor Series. Steiner whips him hard into the corner and we hit the pose. That just earns him some spinwheel kicks and a standing moonsault, followed by the jumping kick to the face. A crotching brings Rob back down and a belly to belly superplex gets two. The spinning belly to belly gets the same, followed by the Push Up Elbow for two more. Rob is right back with a kick to the face, setting up Rolling Thunder and the split legged moonsault for two of his own. The top rope kick to the face sets up the Five Star to put Steiner away clean.

Rating: D+. Just a match here but it's cool to see someone getting a clean pin like this. Raw needs faces near the top of the card and someone like RVD is as good as anyone else. They've never pulled the trigger on either of them and while there's no reason to believe they'll do it again here, at least we can get something to bridge the gap between Shawn and whomever is next.

Classic Shawn clip: Royal Rumble 1997. Not really a great match but the huge crowd makes up for it.

Chris Jericho and Christian argue over their friendship ending because of a GIRL. How dare Jericho?

Coach is in Stamford, Connecticut, where Vince and Linda McMahon will be arguing against and for Steve Austin's return to Raw. We're now to the point where the McMahons arguing is now one officially one of the biggest plot points on the show. At least it's not just implied now. Vince comes in and says he's pretty easily going to win because he owns the company. That's kind of the line that sums up the last six years.

Video on Tribute to the Troops, including footage from the plane ride over.

Dudley Boyz vs. Eddie Craver/Russell Simpson

Ric Flair is guest referee for the purposes of a screwy finish. Before the match, the Dudleys say they can't believe it, but Mick Foley turned into a coward last week. D-Von hiptosses and armdrags Craven to start as the fans already want tables. Bubba comes in and hits the Flip Flop and Fly...and that's a DQ.

Post match Flair gets punched as well but Batista comes in for the save.

Classic Shawn clip: Summerslam 2002.

Bischoff tells the referees that he stands for law an order in a way to suck up to the Board of Directors.

Vince has given his speech and thinks it went moderately well. What he wanted to get through to the Board was that Austin's time was great but you can't live in the past. That kind of thing has no place in WWE. As for the million fans signing the petition, Vince gives them what they want at all times and thinks of them as children. You can't just give them what they want all the time. So yes, Vince did just say he was terrible at dealing with the fans.

Trish Stratus, Lita and Stacy Keibler, all in sexy Santa outfits, imply that they had something special for Christmas. Before Lita can elaborate on that, Steve Austin nearly runs them over with his truck. He's here to wait on a call from the Board as well.

Intercontinental Title: Randy Orton vs. Booker T.

Orton is defending. Booker drives him into the corner to start and we get a nice clean break. Must be the new refereeing initiative. A headlock doesn't go very far so Booker takes him into the corner again and unloads with chops. Booker gets two off a kick to the face and a backslide is good for the same. Orton neckbreakers his way out of trouble and it's time for the chinlock.

That goes nowhere so Booker comes back with a spinwheel kick, which Lawler wants to be a DQ. JR: "For what?" This sends JR into a discussion of what kinds of kicks are illegal until Booker gets two off his forearm. We pause for a Spinrooni (Lawler: "That should be a disqualification for taunting your opponent!") but here's Kane for a distraction, allowing Orton to hit the RKO to retain.

Rating: D+. Orton going over bigger names like this is a good thing for his title reign as he doesn't have the biggest resume yet. Kane vs. Booker is far from interesting but it's better than nothing until Undertaker gets back for their next big match. Also it's not like Booker has anything going on at the moment, save for being from Texas and odds are this is some form of punishment for wrestling in his home state.

Classic Shawn clip: Survivor Series 2002. I really wouldn't point out that we're still watching HHH vs. HBK while people like RVD, Booker, Kane and Jericho are still in the midcard/upper midcard spots they were in about a year ago.

Linda is ready for her speech and says she's equally passionate about this business. They listen to the people and how can they ignore a million viewers?

Jericho gives Trish a Christmas present but she doesn't think it's going to make her forget what he's done. She recaps everything that has gone on and says Jericho only thought she was worth 75 cents after the exchange rate. Trish got something out of this: a broken heart, which she explains in tears. She fell for Jericho and was the one who made the real mistake.

This was supposed to be some big emotional scene but it's not quite as effective when she's still in the Santa outfit. You couldn't shoot this earlier and have her get changed? Oh of course not, as you just NEEDED that scene with Austin backing in earlier. Why is it so hard to figure out these details in advance to make things not look so stupid and unintentionally funny?

Speaking of so stupid, Austin's phone rings but it's not the Board. Just in case you didn't get that he's waiting and is impatient you see.

Victoria/Miss Jackie/Molly Holly vs. Stacy Keibler/Trish Stratus/Lita

They're all in Santa outfits of various levels of revealing. In a moment that Jerry thankfully misses, Stacy does her slow entrance and Lita has a look before shrugging. Stacy misses a spinning kick to Victoria's head and it's off to Molly as we hear about Victoria becoming #1 contender. Lita comes in as they're working a regular six person tag here instead of going for comedy, which is kind of nice given how bad the comedy versions become.

The fans want puppies but have to settle for Jackie breaking up Lita's rollup on Molly. Victoria pulls Jackie to the floor and sends her into the barricade, leaving Molly to crank on Lita's arms for a bit. A headscissors gets Lita out of trouble and it's Trish coming in with a Thesz press and the Stratusphere. Stratusfaction is good for the pin.

Rating: D. They're not exactly hiding the idea here but like I said, this could have been FAR worse if they had done something like a bad comedy idea or trying to do more of a theme. Trish getting back into the title scene is a little odd given how she has something of her own going on, but there's always the chance that pinning the champion means nothing.

Post match Victoria shoves Molly down and holds up the title.

Austin gets the call and is officially back on Raw but doesn't want to be co-General Manager. He hangs up and drives away.

Post break, we see the entire Austin segment again. It wasn't that impactful but that's never stopped WWE before.

Raw World Title: HHH vs. Shawn Michaels

HHH is defending against the hometown boy and they have a ton of time here. They trade hammerlocks to start until Shawn headlocks him down. Back up and one heck of an elbow to the jaw slows Shawn down but he skins the cat to take HHH outside. A little strutting brings the crowd up even more and a plancha drops Flair and HHH again. Back in and the arm cranking begins with Shawn getting the better of it off an armdrag.

Shawn wins a slugout and the whip into the corner sends HHH flying over

the top. That goes nowhere so they head back inside with HHH backdropping him to the floor in a big crash. Back from a break with HHH stomping in the corner and getting two off a backbreaker. HHH stays on the back (a popular idea for him) before sending Shawn outside and hard into the steps.

Shawn's shoulder looks to be very messed up (with a noticeable bump that might be something out of place) but he's still able to get two off a sunset flip. HHH slaps on an abdominal stretch before going even more Harley Race with a jumping knee to the face, which seems to hurt his own knee. Well to be fair Shawn's face hurts me most of the time.

Naturally Shawn goes to the Figure Four, because there are no other leg holds in the world. Flair finally sneaks in for an eye rake and we're back to even. The Pedigree is countered with a backdrop and Shawn falls head first into HHH's crotch ala the old Sting spot. They chop it out with Shawn getting the better of it and forearming his way into the nip up. The fans are way into this as Shawn drops the big elbow but Flair's distraction prevents Sweet Chin Music.

The referee gets bumped (of course) so Flair throws in the belt for a near fall. We get a second ref bump so here's Bischoff as HHH takes off a turnbuckle pad. Of course HHH goes face first into the steel for no count until Bischoff comes in to count a fair two. HHH is busted open so some right hands get two. The facebuster gives HHH two more (again, at a fair pace) but Shawn scores with Sweet Chin Music for the pin out of nowhere.

Rating: A. When these two have time to work and put something together, it's some of the best chemistry around. Shawn knows how to make people believe in him and that's what you got here in front of a crowd begging to see something historic. It's not as good as their Summerslam match but the fans were into it the whole way and the work was the level that you would expect from Shawn and HHH when they were trying. HHH taking Shawn apart piece by piece was a good story with Shawn fighting back through heart and determination. It's what got him here in the first place and they were both on fire here. Check this one out.

The big celebration is on but Bischoff announces HHH as still champion

because all four shoulders were down. The footage shows that Bischoff is right so he gets a little cocky, sending Shawn into a rage. Flair tries to come in and eats a superkick, followed by a right hand to Bischoff. Shawn goes to leave but Bischoff fires him. Cue Austin though and since he's now Sheriff Austin, Shawn is rehired and getting a rematch at some point. The Stunner to Bischoff ends the show.

Overall Rating: B. The main event carries this thing a long way but there was a lot to overcome. The stupid corporate stuff that they just love to do and everything being back to where it was before Survivor Series doesn't help things. Also, are they allergic to getting ready for the Rumble? I don't think it's been mentioned once yet and they're getting close to the show in a hurry. Anyway, great main event and pretty bad everything else but thirty minutes of outstanding more than carries things.

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