

Monday Night Raw – May 17, 2004: What Smackdown Can't Do



IMG Credit: WWE

Monday Night Raw

Date: May 17, 2004

Location: San Diego Sports Arena, San Diego, California

Attendance: 5,600

Commentators: Jim Ross, Jerry Lawler

We're less than a month away from Bad Blood and we need a card. That can get started tonight with the naming of a new #1 contender, who will be crowned in a battle royal. The winner gets a shot at Chris Benoit and while HHH seems very interested in winning, Shawn Michaels is likely to be lurking around. Let's get to it.

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

Opening sequence.

Trish Stratus vs. Lita

Fallout from Trish being horrible to Lita last week and pretending Kane was coming. Trish feigns an apology and gets punched in the face several times. A missed charge lets Trish take her down by the hair but is back with right hands and a headscissors. Trish hot shots her down and chokes a bit, though does stop to sneer at the referee. The announcers debate Trish's levels of wholesomeness as the Chick Kick is blocked into a rollup for two.

Lita fights out of a chinlock but gets spinebusted back down into the same hold. That earns Trish some suplexes (Lita isn't a chinlock fan) and a reverse Twist of Fate but here's Kane on the screen. A few mentions of her name are enough for Trish to grab a rollup for the pin.

Rating: D+. The always stupid ending didn't help things but they were trying for the most part. These two work well together and feel like the biggest match in the division, but they haven't hit the level you would be expecting from two legends like them. That being said, compare it to Torrie Wilson vs. Dawn Marie from the previous night and you get some more of the praise.

Post match Kane says he wants Lita's yes or no tonight.

Here's Randy Orton for a chat. He beat Mick Foley twice and then last week he beat Edge. Tonight, he's going to beat Benoit and Edge to become a double champion. However, tonight is all about Evolution and HHH, because HHH is winning the battle royal with Orton's help. Orton says there is no stopping Evolution and HHH but here's Shelton Benjamin to disagree (With his music saying there's actually no stopping him rather than Evolution. I guess he thought Orton was confused.).

How can HHH be the best when Benjamin has beaten him twice? Orton says it was luck and one day, luck would run out. Shelton is no match for either himself or HHH but Shelton doesn't see it that way. The challenge is thrown out but Orton says no, because he's not soiling the title by defending it against the likes of him. Shelton beats him up for a few seconds until Ric Flair comes down and gets Orton out.

William Regal is congratulating Eugene on his win last week when Eugene steals his nose. Regal: "Very good now can I have it back?" Eugene wants another match when Eric Bischoff comes up to talk to Regal. As Eugene plays with whatever he can find in a bucket (including two bowling pins and a fire extinguisher), Regal apologizes for not having Eugene lose last week. Bischoff has an idea for Eugene tonight and all Regal has to do is make sure he's at ringside for an interview alone. Regal seems interested, though also concerned

We look back at Shawn Michaels attacking HHH last week and getting suspended. I'm sure that's going to stick.

Kane vs. Val Venis

Val slugs away to start but can't get a Russian legsweep. Kane misses an elbow but hits a big boot into a chokeslam for the pin in a hurry.

Post match Matt Hardy runs in and goes off on Kane but gets kicked in the face when trying a chair shot. That means another chokeslam and Kane ties him in the Tree of Woe for some choking with a cord. Kane wraps the chair around Matt's throat and stands on it instead of stomping but Lita runs out for the save. She says yes, even though we don't know the question yet. Kane puts his arms around her and whispers something in her ear before leaving with a smile.

There was a voter registration drive earlier today.

Tag Team Titles: Edge/Chris Benoit vs. Randy Orton/Batista

Orton and Batista are challenging and have Flair with him. Edge's headlock doesn't get him very far on Orton so he tries it again. Some forearms work a bit better and Orton is taken into the corner so Benoit can slug away as well. Orton does the same thing to Benoit though and it's off to Batista so the big man can take over. Some forearms and chops get Benoit out of trouble and Edge comes back in for the chinlock. Everything breaks down in a hurry and the champs clear the ring as we take a break.

Back with Orton cranking on an armbars and Batista coming in to take his

place. A hard clothesline gives Batista two, followed by Orton slapping on another armbar. Edge fights up and forearms away with the good arm (smart man), followed by the Edge-0-Matic for two. It's finally off to Benoit to pick up the pace a good bit, including a snap suplex to Orton. A backbreaker gets two but Benoit turns his back on Orton to slug it out with Batista.

Everything breaks down as Benoit tries to get the Sharpshooter and Orton is sent into Batista. The referee gets bumped and Batista gets sent outside, leaving Orton to take the rolling German suplexes. Flair sends in the Intercontinental Title to block the Swan Dive for a close two and Orton gets in a great shocked look. Edge is back up and spears Orton into Flair off the apron, setting up the Crossface to make Orton tap to retain the titles.

Rating: B. We're almost getting to a Smackdown Six (or whatever number it is) kind of situation around here with one very good tag match after around. It's so refreshing to have a 15-20 minute match almost guaranteed to be very entertaining on a weekly basis. Good wrestling can solve a lot of your problems and that's what's happening here.

Regal gives Eugene some last second pointers about projecting his voice. Eugene: "Do re mi fa sol la Tito Santana!" I love this guy! Regal isn't going out there with him and tells Eugene he has to be a man. Eugene: "Are you trying to tell me something?" Regal almost spills the beans about Bischoff but controls himself, albeit while looking disgusted with himself.

Here's Eugene (to a very nice reaction) for the interview with Todd Grisham (Looking even more toolish than usual this week. Get a suit boy.) but Coach cuts them off. Coach is going to be handling the interview and won't let Eugene get an answer in. He talks about people laughing at him last week and Eugene is sad. These people like making fun of him like they're booing him right now. He even smells bad!

No one here is Eugene's friend and he's probably never even had a girlfriend either. Now Eugene needs to get out of the ring and go back to wherever he came from and tell his friends that he's a failure. Oh hang

on, because he doesn't have any friends. A very sad Eugene goes to leave...and here's the Rock.

Coach panics as Rock poses and then says Eugene isn't going anywhere. But what if he wants a hot pretzel? After FINALLY, Rock wants to know how Coach can talk about the people. There's only one man who knows the people and he thinks the people like Eugene. Eugene greatly approves when they chant his name so Rock has them do it again. Now, Coach will never be Eugene's friend but Rock would love to be friends.

Coach glares at them and says Rock must be doing these things to make himself feel better. Remember Wrestlemania when Rock got beat up all over Madison Square Garden? Rock: "Is that what you think?" Coach: "Well..." Eugene: "IT DOESN'T MATTER WHAT YOU THINK!" After confirming that only Mick Foley and Eugene can steal those lines, Rock asks who is Eugene's boy. That would be Rock. Who is the People's Champ? Rock again. And who is Eugene's favorite wrestler? Eugene: "HHH!"

That confuses Rock, but apparently HHH and Eugene both like to play games. Rock isn't happy with that because HHH only likes to play Hide The Strudel. Rock: "Lilian you know about that right?" Maybe we could play a game right here and the object is for Eugene to beat Coach up.

Garrison Cade of all people runs in and gets punched all the way out of the deep water that is way over his head. The Rock Bottom sets up a People's Elbow from Eugene to really hammer this home. Eugene even gets to do Rock's pose, although with one foot on the bottom rope ala Foley.

That's one of the best one night rubs you'll ever see. Notice what Rock has done in three of his recent comebacks: let Hurricane pin him, gave Randy Orton a heck of a rub and then this with Eugene. Then HHH beat Hurricane three weeks later and Eugene and Orton later in the year, cutting the legs off of all three. But at least Rock tried and this was a great segment.

Smackdown Rebound, mostly looking at the TV show and a quick look at the PPV main event.

Battle Royal

HHH, Maven, Kane, Randy Orton, Edge, Chris Jericho, Batista, Steven Richards, Hurricane, Rosey, Rhyno, Ric Flair, Shelton Benjamin, Johnny Nitro, Val Venis, Garrison Cade, Sylvain Grenier, Rob Conway

The winner gets Benoit at Bad Blood and there are only eighteen people here instead of twenty. Everyone but Kane goes after Evolution to start but it's Richards and Nitro out early on. Kane dumps out Rosey as well as they're clearing the ring out pretty fast this time. Hurricane gets tossed onto Rosey but his feet never touch the floor.

Back from a break with 28 arms remaining as Conway was eliminated during the commercial. HHH eliminates Maven and Venis but needs Batista to save him from Jericho. Speaking of Jericho, he gets rid of Grenier, and Cade as we have ten left. Evolution of course works together and stomps Rhyno down before tossing him out. Hurricane is eliminated next but Jericho dropkicks HHH as we take a second break.

Back again with the same eight left and Jericho bulldogging HHH down. Flair puts Jericho in the Figure Four (Lawler: "I think he just wants to punish Jericho.") for a few seconds as Batista saves Orton from being tossed. Jericho is back up and clotheslines Flair out but Batista throws him over the top, with his knees crashing into the steps on the way out. Egads that looked terrible and hopefully he's not hurt.

Shelton skins the cat to stay alive and HHH's facebuster has no effect on Kane. That earns HHH a chokeslam, followed by one each to everyone not named Batista. The big slugout is on with Batista escaping the chokeslam and hitting a spinebuster. Edge is back up with a clothesline to get rid of Batista and a bunch of spears but Orton low bridges him to the floor. So we're down to Benjamin, HHH, Kane and Orton and it's Orton up first.

Now it's Shelton's turn to clean house until a HHH knee to the face cuts him off. Benjamin gets sent to the apron but hangs on by a hand, then by a leg. For some reason, HHH pulls him back in and gets rewarded by a run up the ropes into a high crossbody that takes Orton down as well. There's the Dragon Whip to Kane and Shelton eliminates Orton (there's a Bad Blood title match) to get us down to three. HHH low blows Kane to break up a chokeslam attempt and gets rid of Benjamin himself. Cue Michaels to run

in and beat up HHH, including a clothesline for the elimination to give Kane the win.

Rating: B. The important thing to have in a battle royal like this is some extra time with the potential winners in there and that's what we had here. They got rid of a lot of the people with no chance and went with the major names for an extended time. The ending wasn't the biggest secret in the world and Kane...is an acceptable choice at best but it's better than another HHH title match.

Shawn bails into the crowd as HHH screams to end the show.

Overall Rating: B+. Storyline advancement, two quite good matches, storylines that make sense and a few that make you wonder where they're going and nothing that went on longer than it needed to. It's a well done wrestling show and you don't get that on Tuesdays at all anymore. Why WWE can't get at least a decent show out of both rosters but they're still not pulling it off here. At least Raw is awesome though and this was one of the best in a long time.

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