

Monday Night Raw – May 31, 2004: Too Much Of A Fun Thing



IMG Credit: WWE

Monday Night Raw

Date: May 31, 2004

Location: Bell Centre, Montreal, Quebec, Canada

Commentators: Jim Ross, Jerry Lawler

We're up north this time with a show that is likely to contain at least one Montreal Screwjob reference. Bad Blood is in less than two weeks and Chris Benoit is going to be defending against Kane. At the same time though, Kane has something going on with Lita, which we might get some more details on this week. It evens out though as Benoit will be defending the Tag Team Titles with Edge against La Resistance tonight. Let's get to it.

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

Memorial Day video with Vince narrating in the proudest voice I've heard

from him in years.

We recap HHH vs. Shawn Michaels being set up for the Cell, again as the World Title is left in the midcard scene.

Opening sequence.

Tag Team Titles: La Resistance vs. Chris Benoit/Edge

Benoit and Edge are defending. Lilian: "The first match on this special edition of Monday Night Raw is for the World Tag Team Titles!" That's rather specific. The champs get a nice reaction but La Resistance gets a strong pop. Conway and Edge get things going with Edge grabbing the arm to take over and hand it off to Benoit. The champs keep taking turns chopping away in the corner until Conway gets a boot up to stop a charge.

Grenier comes in to a very nice reaction and it's off to Edge's arm for a bit. Even an armdrag gets a reaction as the announcers talk about Quebec being very different than anywhere else. An armbars goes on as Lawler becomes an advocate for the metric system. Edge clotheslines Grenier and makes the hot tag to Benoit, who puts the Sharpshooter on both Grenier and Conway. A save attempt earns Conway some rolling German suplexes but Benoit misses the Swan Dive.

This time it's Edge making a save and the Crossface has Conway in trouble. Grenier makes a diving save to a big reaction (that's still weird to see) and we take a break. Back with Grenier holding Benoit in a chinlock stomping away for bad measure. Benoit's attempted enziguri hits Grenier's shoulder and it's Edge coming in to a pretty weak pop. His flying forearm and sitout gordbuster get slightly better reactions and everything breaks down. Edge spears Benoit by mistake and Au Revoir gives us new champions to an eruption.

Rating: C. There's nothing wrong with this as Benoit and Edge were beating everyone in sight for the last few weeks and La Resistance beat them clean to a big reaction. It's the right choice to go with it here as the fans wouldn't have cared otherwise but it makes perfect sense to go with the title change in front of their home crowd. The match wasn't half bad but the important part thing here is getting Benoit out of the tag

scene when he has more important things to do.

The celebration heads into the crowd and is actually quite the moment.

Randy Orton doesn't think Shelton Benjamin is in his league and couldn't beat Orton on his best day. We see a clip of Benjamin pinning Orton last week in a tag match so Orton shouts about that being a fluke. Orton is getting awesome in this role.

William Regal is in Eric Bischoff's office and praises him for the matches made tonight. Eugene comes in and Bischoff recaps his story so far. Bischoff is so impressed that Eugene can have another match tonight against a friend. Coach comes in but that's not who Bischoff means. Actually Coach is going to have to apologize in public in the middle of the ring. Regal: "That's one for the books isn't it Eugene?" Eugene: "WWE Unscripted is a book."

Here's Coach in the ring for the apology but first he invites Eugene to join him. Eugene stumbles to the ring and Coach says he knows they don't like each other. Coach insults him again before offering the handshake. That goes nowhere so Coach talks about all the friends Eugene has, like the Rock and Chris Benoit (Eugene imitates the headbutt). Even all the people here are his friends.

Coach actually knows one more of Eugene's friends...and here's Kane. With Eugene terrified, Kane offers him a hug...and we actually get one. Coach decks Eugene so Kane glares at him...and then chokeslams Eugene in the most obvious moment ever. Coach is literally on the ground in laughter.

Post break Coach is still laughing in Bischoff's office when Regal storms in with threats of violence. Bischoff threatens him right back with his firing and makes Eugene vs. Kane for tonight.

Victoria vs. Jazz

Non-title and Victoria is still dancing a lot. I have no issue watching Victoria dance, but it's not exactly the kind of character you have as a long term champion. Jazz takes her down with ease and cranks on the neck. Back up and Victoria tries to drop down in front of her but gets elbowed

in the back of the head for her efforts.

Some kicks in the corner are shrugged off so Victoria can hit the spinning middle rope crossbody for two of her own. Jazz is right back with an STF so Victoria has to slowly crawl to the ropes. A powerslam looks to set up the dancing moonsault but Jazz grabs a rollup with tights for two. Jazz tries a suplex but gets reversed into a suplex to give Victoria the pin.

Rating: D-. This was completely lifeless with nothing redeeming. The women's division has died again as you have the one woman with the title and everyone else rotating in and out of title shots. There's no story anywhere to be seen and it leaves everything and everyone feeling like a bunch of not very good filler.

Randy Orton vs. Shelton Benjamin

Non-title again and Orton has Batista in his corner. Benjamin takes him down with ease but Orton pounds away with forearms to the back. Back up and the pace quickens with Orton hitting a dropkick to stop a running Benjamin. A cheap shot from Batista lets Orton send him outside and that means the classic Orton pose, including Orton taking off the turnbuckle pad.

Before that can be used though, it's a collision of the heads for a double knockdown with Orton being busted open just a bit. As the referee looks at Orton, Batista sends him head first into the exposed buckle. That's only good for two and we take a break. Back with Orton holding a chinlock with an arm trap for a bonus. Shelton fights up but gets low bridged out to the floor as he just can't get around the numbers game. This time Batista gets caught though and that's an ejection.

Orton brings Shelton back in for a whip into the exposed buckle as Lawler is losing it over Orton bleeding. The chinlock goes on until the comeback starts with right hands and a backdrop. A powerslam gives Benjamin two with JR being perfect at making the big spots and near falls seem epic. Shelton rolls through a high crossbody for two more but Orton gets in his backbreaker for the same. Orton teases leaving and suckers Benjamin in for a right hand but walks into the exploder for the clean pin.

Rating: C. They did exactly what they were shooting for here but I'm not often a fan of having the singles match to set up the exact same match down the line. Shelton is getting a heck of a push but at some point he needs to win something that matters. The Intercontinental Title would be a great place to start, though I'd be a bit surprised if they actually took it off of Orton at the moment.

Stacy Keibler recaps the Diva Search concept and doesn't do the division much good while explaining what a Diva does.

Here's HHH for a chat. There won't be a sneak attack this week because Shawn Michaels isn't here tonight. That's a shame too as if he was, HHH could put him away for good. Now he has to wait until Bad Blood in the match designed for the purpose of finishing this once and for all. HHH talks about how evil the Cell is and gives us a video on it, set to a cover of Time To Play The Game, which I'm pretty sure was used at Wrestlemania XVIII. Not bad. Certainly better than the nothing between Kane and Benoit.

Bad Blood rundown.

Bischoff tells Johnny Nitro to get Eugene.

Matt Hardy vs. Garrison Cade

Lita is here with Matt, who gets elbowed in the face to break up his early hammerlock. A hot shot gives Cade two and he starts in with the rights and lefts. The chinlock goes on as Lita starts playing cheerleader. It seems to work as Matt gets up and knocks Cade to the floor. That means a slingshot dive and a backdrop back inside, followed by the middle rope legdrop. The Twist of Fate finishes Cade.

Rating: D+. How weird is it to see a completely clean win in a match that isn't a squash and only lasts a few minutes? Maybe it was expecting Kane to interrupt every few seconds but this was almost a weird one to watch. Cade has most of the tools that you need to be a perfectly acceptable wrestler, except the whole being named Garrison thing.

Smackdown Rebound.

Eugene comes in to see Bischoff, who tells him he knew what would happen with Kane earlier. It was just tough love you see, because Eugene doesn't belong here. Eugene can prove him wrong tonight though, so he gives Bischoff a very sad hug. Bischoff just stares straight ahead, almost looking like he realizes what has to be done.

Clips of the European tour.

It's time for the Highlight Reel but instead of Chris Jericho, it's Trish Stratus and Tyson Tomko. Since Jericho is still injured, Trish will be hosting tonight. That means making a bunch of jokes about the French fans before we get to the highlight: Jericho being destroyed last week as Tomko put him through the announcers' table. Trish wants to look at it again but here's Jericho to beat up Tomko and put Trish in the Walls. Tomko makes a quick save and gorilla presses Jericho bad ribs first onto a chair. The chair is used to choke Jericho and Trish has a seat to make it even worse.

Kane stares at the camera without saying anything.

Kane vs. Eugene

Eugene ducks a few right hands to start and manages to take him down for one. That's not cool with Kane, who blasts him with a clothesline so we can start down the expected path. A sunset flip doesn't work either but Eugene does manage a drop toehold. Eugene's top rope ax handle is uppercut out of the air and Kane gets three straight near falls.

Kane gets another two off a suplex and it's time to choke. A headlock doesn't help Eugene that much so Kane...chinlocks him. Eugene gets sent face first into the buckle to start the Hulk Up and slugs away, followed by a dropkick to put Kane on the floor. Kane throws in a chair and throws the referee down for the DQ as Eugene gets in a DDT on the chair.

Rating: F. Just a thought, but it might be a really bad idea to have the NUMBER ONE CONTENDER facing what is mostly a comedy character and not being able to pin him in a six minute match, eventually losing to him when the comedy guy lays him out at the end. Kane already has two stories going on and doesn't need a third with less than two weeks to go before

the title match. This wasn't even that terrible of a match (it was really slow, but I've seen worse) but it was a really stupid way to go with Kane's title shot, which has had almost no build so far, coming up.

Post match a furious Kane destroys Eugene but Benoit comes in before he can use the chair. The Crossface doesn't work so Benoit grabs a chair to chase him off.

Overall Rating: C. This was far from a really bad show but you can tell that things have changed in a bad way after the last few weeks of great stuff. I don't know if it's Benoit turning into a glorified midcarder or WAY too much Kane and Eugene this week (you had to know it was coming as Eugene was getting over) but there was something missing here. It's like they've lost the focus that was making the show work and that's a bad sign.

Just a few weeks ago, you had Benoit and company vs. Evolution, who are the big bads around here. With Benoit shifting to Kane, it feels like he's just being given something to do and that's a big downgrade. Eugene is fun as a non-serious act but he was one of the big focal points here and that's going to wear out his welcome in a hurry. The fans still like him, but that kind of an act doesn't have a long shelf life overall and using so much of it in one night isn't a good idea.

The problem they have isn't likely to get better with next week as the go home show and I'm almost scared of what they'll do after the pay per view is over. It's still not bad and the show is more than watchable, but something is clearly missing and I think that's going to get worse before it gets better. There's about as much good as bad here, but the bad stuff here will make your head hurt.

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