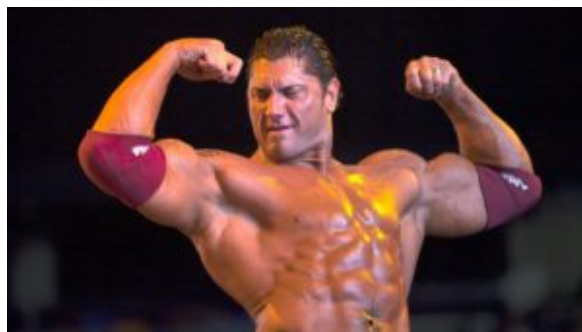


Monday Night Raw – January 10, 2005: The Split Is Building



IMG Credit: WWE

Monday Night Raw

Date: January 10, 2005

Location: Office Depot Center, Fort Lauderdale, Florida

Attendance: 7,500

Commentators: Jim Ross, Jerry Lawler

It's the night after New Year's Revolution and, of course, HHH is the World Champion again. This time isn't so bad though as it's pretty clear that Batista is waiting in the wings and will be the next big challenger as soon as the timing is right. That's the only way they can go at the moment but we have the Royal Rumble in less than three weeks to help get us there. Let's get to it.

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

Here's HHH to open things up because of course he does. During his long entrance, JR calls the place the Home Depot Center in a somewhat funny error. HHH says you can have whatever excuse you want but the truth is that no one can do what he does. It doesn't matter who it is, what show they're on or what title they hold because no one can hold a candle to him.

Last night he survived and overcame the odds to get his World Title back.

At Wrestlemania XX, everyone thought HHH was done. But now it's 2005 and one bestselling book, one hit movie and one World Title reign later, and it's clear that he's just hitting his stride. Ric Flair says they should have the fans' respect and HHH says every fan here is useless. There is someone else who is very useful though and last night, he dominated the Elimination Chamber.

This brings out Batista but before he can say anything, it's Randy Orton coming out as well. HHH: "Look guys, it's the legend killer!" Orton has no place at a celebration for winners because he's a loser so get out of here. Orton talks about eliminating Batista last night and has footage to show that HHH doesn't have Batista's back. We see a clip of HHH watching Batista get pinned in the Chamber when he had the chance to make a save.

That makes Batista take his sunglasses off but a nervous HHH says he had been in the match for 45 minutes (he loves saying that time for long matches) and lost so much blood that his knees buckled. Orton doesn't wait for Batista's explanation and shows another clip of HHH having Batista hold him up on his shoulders after the match was over. Flair gave him the thumbs up, but Orton knows that it's going to be a thumbs down when the time is right.

Now Batista's jacket comes off as Orton demands a title shot tonight. Cue Eric Bischoff to say that Orton is allowed a rematch...if he can beat Batista in a #1 contenders match tonight. This was as clear of a confirmation as you can get that Orton is clinging to popularity by his fingertips as the Batista train is pulling away. Orton was just there while the fans loved Batista, which tells you everything you need to know about their futures.

Raw and Smackdown are coming to Japan next month.

Royal Rumble Qualifying Match: Shelton Benjamin vs. Maven

Non-title and a rematch from last night where Benjamin beat Maven twice. Maven goes straight at him to start and uses a distracted referee to get in a low blow. The early neck crank goes on but Shelton is up with a backdrop. The Dragon Whip sets up the Exploder to finish Maven in a hurry. So much for that push.

Muhammad Hassan vs. Hurricane

Daivari and Rosey are here as seconds. Before the match, Hassan talks about dealing a blow to the biased American media last night. The personal revolution continues though and it's time to show what Hassan thinks of truth, justice and the American way. An early Daivari distraction lets Hassan get in a clothesline and some right hands to take over. We hit the cobra clutch but Hurricane fights up with his own clotheslines. The Shining Wizard misses though and Hassan hits the Downward Spiral for the pin. It was better than last night against Lawler but that's not saying much.

Wrestlemania Recall: Pete Rose meets Kane.

HHH tells Batista that he has his full support against Orton tonight. It would be an honor to defend the title against Batista at Wrestlemania and Batista deserves it. Batista: "Eventually, we all get what we deserve." Again: Batista sounds cool, looks cool and wrestles cool. How could he not be a smash hit?

Royal Rumble Qualifying Match: Edge vs. Rhyno

Edge is banged up from the Chamber last night so Rhyno forearm him in the corner to start and sends him hard into the corner. Rhyno charges into a right hand to the face and Edge wraps his ribs around the post. Back in and Rhyno is fine enough to hit a powerslam for two but Edge is right back with the spear. The Edgecator makes Rhyno tap.

Rating: D+. The ending wasn't quite in doubt and it's nice to have Edge come back with a win to make up for last night's loss. That being said, you can pencil him in for a big showdown with Shawn Michaels and that's only going to help him. Edge is looking like a star in the making, but he has some more work to do.

Post match Edge says he isn't happy because he wants Shawn out here to settle things once and for all. Back from a break as Edge says he knew Shawn wouldn't come out here without the cameras rolling. Edge recaps his issues with Shawn and here's Shawn in the flesh. Shawn talks about Edge complaining about everything and sounding like the world should just roll

over for him. He knows that because Shawn did the exact same thing back in his day.

Some fans cut him off with a YOU SCREWED BRET chant but Edge doesn't want to listen to him. Shawn: "What is it with you folks coming to Florida? Stay in your own country!" Edge needs to stop complaining about the past and look to the future because he can be a star. He needs to take action, like winning the Royal Rumble instead of being glad that he got a spot.

Shawn asks if this is getting through to him and that's an affirmative, as he slaps Shawn in the face and they brawl to the floor. Back from a break and they're still fighting in the back, eventually heading into a concession stand until some referees break it up. Good brawl, though the interruption from the fans took away a lot of the momentum they had going.

Here's Simon Dean to talk about how popular Florida can be. It's known for its weather and sunny beaches, but now those beaches are filled with fat people. Simon has the solution though: his fat burning pills. Unfortunately he doesn't have enough for everyone here...and here's Kane to interrupt. Kane tries a pill but spits it out, saying that they're the worst tasting things he's ever had. After shoving some pills into Simon's mouth, the beating is on but here's Snitsky to chair Kane down. Kane spits up blood as Snitsky whips him with Simon's weightlifting belt. So did last night's match mean anything?

HHH sends Flair to tell Batista he doesn't do well against Orton. Flair: "You think that'll motivate him?" The mental games continue.

Christian/Tyson Tomko vs. Chris Jericho/Chris Benoit

Benoit and Jericho are both banged up. Jericho chops Christian to start and stomps away in the corner. It's off to Benoit (pop) for some kicks to the ribs but Christian sends him chest first into the buckle. Tomko comes in and knees Benoit in the ribs to stay on the injury with a slam making it even worse. Benoit gets sent outside with Christian dropping him ribs first onto the barricade as the pain continues.

Back in and the front facelock goes on and the comeback is cut off with a

backbreaker to give Christian two. Tomko grabs a chinlock but Benoit German suplexes him down, allowing the hot tag to Jericho. Everything breaks down and it's the walls on Tomko and the Crossface on Christian for the double tap.

Rating: C-. Not terrible here, even with the four of them following the formula pretty much to the letter. It worked well enough and this was a fine example of a match that was just there for the sake of filling in some time with a decent performance. That worked well enough here and it's not like Christian and Tomko are hurt that badly by the loss.

Flair tells HHH that it didn't work and HHH isn't happy.

Your boot of the week: Lita tears her ACL.

With that devastating injury out of the way, let's have a lingerie pillow fight between Maria and Christy with Candice Michelle as guest referee. There's a bed, Christy comes out in her lingerie, Maria disrobes, Lilian and Candice get involved, they hit each other with pillows and Christy wins. This is a thing that happened for obvious reasons.

The Masterpiece Chris Masters is coming.

Next week: Benoit vs. Jericho and Kane vs. Snitsky. One of these things is not like the other.

Batista vs. Randy Orton

The winner gets HHH for the title at some point in the future. Speaking of HHH, he and Flair are watching at ringside. Orton's right hands have limited effects as Batista shoulders him down. A powerslam doesn't work so Orton hammers away again, only to run into another shoulder. The choking on the ropes begins and HHH is rather pleased. Orton sends him outside though and we take a break.

Back with Orton slugging away even more and managing to knock Batista outside again. The brawling goes to Batista though and he takes Orton inside for some right hands and more choking. They're not exactly going all that hard with the offense here. Orton goes shoulder first into the post and Batista crushes his head against the steel for a rather cruel

bonus. A neckbreaker gives Batista two and the chinlock keeps Orton in trouble. In something I can't remember seeing in a long time, Orton uses the rope to get out of the chinlock.

Batista pounds away even more as HHH is on his feet watching for a change. Now the powerslam connects for two and a spinebuster makes it even worse. The Batista Bomb is countered though and Orton grabs a DDT for a double knockdown. Orton stomps away and shoves the referee, allowing Flair to get on the apron. He's knocked right back off though and Orton hits the backbreaker on Batista. The RKO is blocked though and HHH offers Batista a chair. He doesn't need it, but the distraction lets Orton send Batista into the chair for the pin and the title shot.

Rating: C. Batista continues to look like a star and while I'm not wild on the idea of him getting pinned two nights in a row, it makes some sense to have him slowed down a little bit, especially with Orton likely getting the title shot at the Rumble. The bigger issue here though is HHH costing Batista the match, which is going to get a lot more interesting in a hurry.

Batista is furious at HHH to end the show.

Overall Rating: D+. Well last night's show wasn't very good and now they've followed it up with an only somewhat better Raw. The good thing though is they're setting up the Royal Rumble, which is one of the most important shows of the year. Orton vs. HHH can be done for good (for now) and we can get to what should be the most obvious Wrestlemania title matches in years. This show wasn't much to see though, save for Edge vs. Shawn and HHH vs. Batista heating up.

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