

Monday Night Raw – January 24, 2005: Bad, But Because It Was Good



IMG Credit: WWE

Monday Night Raw

Date: January 24, 2005

Location: Ford Center, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

Commentators: Jim Ross, Jerry Lawler

It's the last Raw before the Royal Rumble and since it's Batista's match to win, he has to qualify tonight. Other than that, we should get more not too bad promos from Randy Orton and HHH before their World Title match on Sunday, which will be a lot worse than the buildup. Let's get to it.

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

We open with a look back at Kane chokeslamming Gene Snitsky off the stage last week. The conversation they had on the ground is omitted.

Opening sequence.

Shawn Michaels/Chris Benoit/Chris Jericho vs. Edge/Christian/Tyson Tomko

Well if you insist. Shawn headlocks Christian to start and an early Edge

distraction doesn't work. Benoit comes in and slides between Christian's legs but it's off to Tomko. That's fine with Benoit, who takes him into the corner for the chops and a tag to Jericho. Tomko keeps shoving him out of the corner so Jericho drop toeholds him and starts a little dance. Must be a Canadian thing.

The threat of the Walls makes everything break down and Christian gets launched over the top and onto his partners as we take a break. Back with Benoit in trouble as tends to be the case when you come back from a commercial. Benoit gets over for the tag to Shawn, who is quickly low bridged out to the floor. Christian's neckbreaker gets two and Tomko drops a fast elbow.

The chinlock goes on (with Christian's back to the camera, which changes...well very little actually) but Shawn fights up and hits a Thesz press. It's still too early for the hot tag though as Edge is more than willing to come in with Shawn down. Christian goes over to yell at Jericho, drawing him in so the referee can't see a small package.

Shawn gets in a double clothesline and they're both down. The hot tag brings in Benoit for a barrage of suplexes, including one to Edge onto Christian. The rolling German suplexes drop Christian and it's the Swan Dive into the Sharpshooter. Edge breaks that up in a hurry but Shawn superkicks Tomko into a rollup to give Benoit the pin.

Rating: C+. Nice match here with the right person taking the fall. We even got a few tastes of Edge vs. Shawn before their big match on Sunday for a nice bonus. The rest of the people don't exactly matter as they'll be in the Rumble, so this was almost all bonus stuff and it went quite well.

Smackdown Rebound.

Here's Stacy Keibler for a chat. Jerry: "Wouldn't you like to be her thigh master?" Apparently the Governor has declared today Jim Ross Day in Oklahoma and here's Danny Hodge, who at 72 years old is able to jump over the top, to help celebrate it. We see a clip of the Jim Ross Day event, which really is a cool honor. Back in the arena, Stacy even throws in a kiss on the cheek. JR talks about how much he loves being from Oklahoma

and how much he wishes his parents could be here, but he knows they're watching.

Cue HHH and Ric Flair to interrupt though and I don't see this ending well. HHH says this would bring a tear to a glass eye because Oklahoma is celebrating JR Day. HHH: "Are you guys that big a losers that you have nothing going on but JIM ROSS?" Flair talks about the Oklahoma Sooners getting crushed against USC earlier in the month and HHH busts out laughing.

HHH sends JR and Hodge packing, thankfully before Hodge can take him down and remove a variety of his limbs. Stacy gets to stay though as HHH grabs her wrist and hits on her. JR actually stands up to HHH because that's what a man does. This might be a bit better of a John Wayne moment if he didn't have lipstick on his cheek. HHH says if JR doesn't leave, he'll be sooner dead.

Flair hits him low so Hodge decks HHH in the jaw, setting up a double beatdown. Stacy gets dragged back to the middle of the ring because HHH wants a kiss. Actually he has a better idea and loads up a Pedigree, drawing out Randy Orton for the save. Thanks for coming when the announcer and 72 year old man were getting beaten down Randy. I just want to see more Danny Hodge looking awesome.

Post break HHH and Flair are in the back with HHH pulling up Candice Michelle's skirt. They head into their locker room and find Batista, who didn't see what just happened. HHH recaps everything but Batista doesn't exactly seem impressed, mainly because Hodge is seventy years old and Keibler is tiny. Flair: "She loved it." Batista changes the subject and says he's getting in on that Royal Rumble qualifying match. HHH isn't happy but Batista says that maybe HHH loses to Orton on Sunday. Then Batista can take it back at Wrestlemania and keep it in Evolution. Flair's side eye glare at Batista is rather great here.

Post another break, William Regal comes in to see Eric Bischoff about a Royal Rumble spot. That's not happening because Regal was a jerk last year about Eugene. Coach can have it instead. La Resistance comes in but so does Batista. For some reason La Resistance challenges Batista for the

Rumble spot, apparently not being all that bright. Batista doesn't think much of them and promises to stick the flag somewhere else.

Coach is in the ring and has a change made to the following Royal Rumble qualifying match. Now it's an Over the Top Rope Challenge.

Royal Rumble Qualifying Match: Viscera vs. Tajiri

Viscera shrugs off the mist and some kicks before throwing Tajiri out to win in less than thirty seconds.

We recap Kane chokeslamming Trish Stratus last week and the ensuing chokeslam off the stage to Gene Snitsky.

Tajiri is upset that he didn't qualify for the Royal Rumble but Regal comes in with an idea about getting back at Bischoff. First though, Regal hits on Maria but gets shot down in a funny bit.

Royal Rumble Qualifying Match: Batista vs. La Resistance

La Resistance doesn't have to tag here so Batista breaks up the song. House is cleaned in a hurry but Batista misses a charge into the post. The fans get WAY behind Batista as he gets stomped down but Conway makes the mistake of slapping him in the face. That means a powerslam as HHH and Flair look on in fear. Grenier gets spinebusted onto Conway for the pin in a hurry. And that's why the Tag Team Titles are worthless.

Post match Batista plant the flag between the two of them. Flair is impressed but HHH isn't pleased. The official face turn is going to be massive.

Royal Rumble Qualifying Match: Val Venis vs. Muhammad Hassan

Daivari rants at Venis during his entrance and Hassan gets in a cheap shot to take over from behind. That sets up the variety of kicking and stomping as Daivari continues to rant on the microphone. A backbreaker sets up a chinlock, with Daivari wanting Venis' neck broken. Hassan gets in a slam to keep Venis down and it's back to the chinlock with a knee in the back. Venis fights up and hits the Blue Thunder Bomb for two but misses the Money Shot. The Downward Spiral gives Hassan the easy pin.

Rating: D-. Oh yeah Hassan is in trouble and there's not much of a way around it. This was as lame of a match as you could get with Hassan having no heat and Daivari just being annoying in an attempt to get him some. It didn't help that Hassan's offense is as generic as you can get and the fans were falling asleep in less than five minutes.

HHH tells Batista that the final spot in the Royal Rumble is going to Ric Flair, though Flair isn't sure about this one. HHH talks him into it though, saying Evolution is united.

Maven is in the ring and wants someone to put their Royal Rumble spot on the line.

Kane vs. Maven

Maven: "I DIDN'T MEAN YOU!" Hang on though as Kane is too banged up so Maven won't do this to him. He issues the challenge again.

Maven vs. Kane vs. Gene Snitsky

The monsters are both heavily bandaged and Maven has to win to get in the Rumble. Maven is smart enough to let the two of them hit each other and then steals two on Snitsky. Kane clotheslines Snitsky down so Maven goes after Kane's bad arm. That goes as well as you would expect as Kane shoves Maven away and hits the chokeslam to finish Snitsky. This was nothing.

Video on Randy Orton vs. HHH.

Recap of Steve Austin's press conference, which was about him making movies for WWE Films.

Royal Rumble rundown, featuring both sets of commentators listing off matches.

Edge can't wait for Sunday because he's sat out the last two Wrestlemanias with a broken neck. Sunday, it's time for him to beat Shawn Michaels and then win the Royal Rumble.

Chris Masters is still coming.

Randy Orton vs. Ric Flair

Batista and HHH are here with Flair. It's an energetic start for Flair as he runs Orton over with a shoulder. A poke to the eye and a chop have Orton in more trouble, meaning it's time for the chops in the corner. Orton is right back with a backdrop and the fans...don't really seem to care. Flair gets away and heads up top for exactly what you would expect to happen.

With nothing else working, HHH trips Orton but Batista gets ejected for it instead. Batista glares down at HHH, who can't look him in the eye. We take a break and come back with Flair still in trouble and being knocked out to the floor. A suplex brings him back inside for two but HHH offers a distraction so Flair can get in a low blow (a common move for him tonight).

Flair hammers away at Orton's bandaged head to bust him open again. The throat gets catapulted into the bottom rope but Orton gets fired up. The right hands and chops have no effect so Orton knocks him into the corner. HHH offers another distraction though and it's a chop block to slow Orton down again.

The ref gets bumped though, allowing HHH to come in with a belt shot to the knee. Given how unimportant this match is, what took him so long? The Figure Four goes on and the blood is flowing until Orton turns it over. HHH pulls the referee out and it's time to really work on the leg. A middle rope belt shot to the knee is blocked with a raised boot and it's the RKO for the pin. The match hadn't been thrown out yet?

Rating: D+. Not terrible but Orton couldn't be more of a lame duck going into Sunday if his life depended on it. The fans have moved on and while that isn't Orton's fault (given how bad the last few months have gone for him, it's completely expected), it's also not a surprise whatsoever. Why in the world would I care about Orton's title push when Batista is clearly the next big thing?

Overall Rating: D. Speaking of lame ducks, that's exactly what this show was due to how well WWE has built up Batista. Aside from John Cena, there is no one with any chance of winning the Royal Rumble and sitting through

a bunch of qualifying matches so we can see them have no chance on Sunday wasn't the most interesting thing in the world. That being said, the build for Batista is one of the most underrated in years as they have hit it to perfection on every point. Getting through Sunday will help, but it wasn't the easiest show to get through on the way there.

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