

Monday Night Raw – September 16, 1996: And It's Only Going To Get Worse

Monday Night Raw

Date: September 16, 1996

Location: Wheeling Civic Center, Wheeling, West Virginia

Attendance: 4,903

Commentators: Kevin Kelly, Jim Ross, Jerry Lawler

It's the last Raw before Mind Games and the big story is of course Mankind challenging Shawn Michaels for the WWF Title. Other than that, Goldust and the Undertaker are having a Final Curtain match, which doesn't sound overly interesting. Finally there's the Intercontinental Title tournament, which is only so special in the first place. Let's get to it.

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

The opening recap looks at the tournament, with the semifinals tonight. Plus Razor Ramon, Diesel and Bret Hart might be returning.

Opening sequence.

Jake Roberts chases Jerry Lawler off commentary to start really fast.

Jake Roberts vs. The Sultan

This is Sultan's debut and he has Bob Backlund and Iron Sheik with him. Backlund sits in on commentary and praises Sultan and Sheik but doesn't want to be bothered tonight. Sultan hammers away in the corner and the threat of a DDT is quickly escaped. Roberts keeps glaring at Lawler though, leaving Lawler to suggest Roberts is drunk. Lawler offers another distraction though and Sultan gets the camel clutch for the

win at 3:05.

Rating: D+. The Roberts vs. Lawler feud is pretty horrible to say the least and that's not just due to the pretty horrible subject matter. At the same time, you have the Sultan, who would have felt dated fifteen years before this, coming in and having a dull match. As usual, it doesn't help to see someone's debut lose its focus to another feud, which should tell you what to expect from the Sultan.

Post match Backlund is in a bit of a trance at the sight of the camel clutch.

Owen Hart, Brian Pillman, and now Steve Austin are looking forward to Bret Hart's return at Mind Games. Jim Ross thinks something is afoot.

Bob Holly/Alex Porteau vs. Smoking Gunns

Non-title and Sunny is here with the Gunns. Billy gets knocked outside to start as Camp Cornette comes out to watch. Bart cuts off Porteau with a raised boot in the corner as commentary, again, talks about everything they can think of outside of the match. Bart knocks Porteau down again but pulls him up at two before handing it back to Billy. Camp Cornette's distraction lets Porteau get a small package for two and it's back to Holly to clean house. That's cut off and the Sidewinder connects but Camp Cornette offers a distraction. Holly rolls Billy up for the fluke pin at 5:47.

Rating: C. This was more about advancing Camp Cornette vs. the Gunns and that's not a terrible idea. I'm not sure which of the two I'm supposed to cheer for, but Holly and Porteau stealing a fluke win is a good way to give the title feud some more steam. It's not like Holly and Porteau are going to mean anything, but I'll take this for a little change of pace.

WWF President Gorilla Monsoon makes it clear that Kevin Nash and Scott Hall will NOT be here next week because they are

under contract to another company. That sounds like covering themselves from a potential lawsuit.

Here is Jim Cornette, with Vader, for a public workout before his match against Jose Lothario. Vader has been coaching him recently so he has wrestler Tony Williams here for an exhibition. Cornette does some basic stuff but Williams keeps reversing them and even works on the leg. That's enough for Cornette to send Vader after him and Williams gets tied up in the ropes for yelling and slapping. You knew what this was going to be.

Intercontinental Title Tournament Semifinals: Owen Hart vs. Marc Mero

Sable is here with Mero and Pat Patterson (who will be refereeing the finals) is on commentary. Patterson also confirms that Razor Ramon and Diesel will be here next week. Mero starts in on the arm and gets Hart down into an armbar. That works so well that Mero does it again but Hart fights out and hits a spinwheel kick. The chinlock keeps Mero down as Gorilla Monsoon pops in to again say that Jim Ross is wrong and that Kevin Nash and Scott Hall will NOT be here next week. Ross insists that he's right and that Razor Ramon and Diesel (note the difference) will be here next week.

Hart knocks him down again and we hit another chinlock. This time Mero suplexes his way to freedom but Hart knocks him outside. Ross goes on a rant about how Hart's wrist is fine and the cast he has been wearing is completely unnecessary as we take a break. We come back with Mero fighting back, including sending Hart outside for a running flip dive. Back up and they collide so Hart takes the cast off to knock Mero silly...for two. Hart argues with the referee, allowing Mero to get in a cast shot of his own for the pin at 9:26.

Rating: C+. The match was what you would have expected from these two and Mero gets a win (albeit a screwy one, with the

referee again somehow not seeing the obvious shot), but the commentary brought it back down. This stuff with Ross about Ramon and Diesel is killing the show, as not only is it not that interesting, but Ross' rants are derailing everything going on. Just shut up about it already and save that nonsense for in between the matches, because otherwise it's one heck of a distraction.

We look at the recent tour of South Africa. During the tour, Bret Hart wrestled what might have been his final match and he calls Brian Pillman and Owen Hart liars because he has not agreed to be at Mind Games. He isn't sure about his future in the WWF and he hasn't made up his mind yet.

Intercontinental Title Tournament Semifinals: Sycho Sid vs. Faarooq

Sunny is here with Faarooq, who actually knocks Sid down to start. A powerslam does it again but Sid is right back up with a knockdown of his own. Faarooq gets a belly to back suplex for two and we go to a split screen to hear Ahmed Johnson swear revenge when he gets back. The chinlock goes on as Jim Ross is STILL going on about Razor Ramon and Diesel being here next week.

Faarooq goes up but dives into a powerslam for two, leaving both of them down. Faarooq misses a sitdown splash to the back and we take a break. We come back with Sid slipping out of the Dominator and hitting a chokeslam. That's enough for Sunny to get on the apron for a distraction, allowing Faarooq to chair Sid down for two. Sid gets up and chairs Faarooq in the back so hard that he knocks him four feet across the ring (by that I mean there was a REALLY obvious edit and yeah apparently this was filmed twice) for the DQ at 10:29.

Rating: D+. There's only so much you can get out of these two and that was fairly obvious coming in. Faarooq gets to go on to the finals, where he kind of had to be for the sake of the

story, and Sid gets an out without losing before he goes into the main event scene in a few more weeks. Not a good match, but it was all they could have done.

Undertaker swears vengeance on Goldust but it's just a stop on the way to Mankind and Paul Bearer.

We run down the Mind Games card.

Mankind and Paul Bearer are ready for Shawn Michaels. That will make Mankind the new sexy boy and women will want to rub his ear!

Overall Rating: D+. The tournament stuff is dull enough, but the bigger issue here is this Razor Ramon/Diesel nonsense, as it's dragging down everything around it. Ross as a heel isn't something that adds any positives to the show, especially when you already have Lawler as a heel commentator. As bad as it already is though, it's only going to get worse.

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