

Monday Night Raw – March 4, 1996: Dig That Wrestling

Monday Night Raw

Date: March 4, 1996

Location: Cincinnati Gardens, Cincinnati, Ohio

Attendance: 8,500

Commentators: Jim Ross, Jerry Lawler

We're less than a month away from Wrestlemania and Shawn Michaels is the star of the show. Michaels is on his way to the main event against Bret Hart for the WWF Title but he needs to be built up a bit more on the way there. That could mean some good matches along the Road To Wrestlemania so let's get to it.

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

We open with a preview of the show.

Opening sequence.

Shawn Michaels vs. 1-2-3 Kid

Yeah this should work. Kid charges at Michaels before the bell and gets backdropped outside, even as the music is still playing. Michaels mocks the martial arts pose and gets taken down with a headlock as we officially start. A headlock takeover out of the corner brings Michaels down and Kid gets in a kick for two more. Back up and Michaels sends him to the floor and skins the cat, followed by a rare gorilla press slam.

We get a split screen interview with Bret Hart, who says he wouldn't let Michaels get away with this stuff. Michaels grinds away on a headlock of his own but Kid is back up with a spinwheel kick for a breather. Kid sends him outside and hits

a big dive, which has Lawler rather happy. Michaels' head is rammed into the floor, which Hart doesn't like as he doesn't have any personal animosity against Michaels (A-HUH).

Back in and Kid kicks him down for two more and we take a break. We come back with Kid grabbing a chinlock until Michaels gets up, only to be kicked in the face for two more. Michaels fights up and hits the forearm as it's already time for the comeback. Back up and Michaels head fakes him on a crossbody, setting up a top rope standing moonsault press for two instead. The top rope elbow connects but Kid bails from the threat of a superkick. Kid gets back in and manages a slam, only to miss a guillotine legdrop. Now the superkick can finish for Michaels at 13:36.

Rating: B. I for one am shocked that this was a good match as you had two talented stars getting some time to really make things work. It was one of the better matches you'll see on Raw around this time, and the fact that they were friends behind the scenes is just a coincidence of course. Either way, heck of a match here.

Post match a kid gets in the ring to dance with Michaels. Eh sweet enough.

We get a Goldust film called Piper's Pit, which is Goldust, with Marlana, on the set of, well, Piper's Pit. He talks about the fantasies he had as a teenager from watching Roddy Piper on the set of the show. Stuff like the coconut bursting on Jimmy Snuka's head you see. And the skirt, which had Goldust thinking about various things. Goldust picks up the bagpipes and isn't very good at them. Yeah I think we get the idea here as they weren't exactly pouring on the subtlety.

We look back at some great Ultimate Warrior moments, because he's back at Wrestlemania.

Roddy Piper (WWF President at this point) is watching Raw in Hollywood and he needs to talk to Vince McMahon.

Hakushi vs. Justin Bradshaw

Uncle Zebekiah is here with Bradshaw, who is played to the ring by...Michael Hayes and the Raw Band. Which is actually a real thing. Ok then. Bradshaw starts stomping away as Vince talks to Piper, who says that he'll announce Ultimate Warrior's Wrestlemania opponent next week.

As Bradshaw kicks Hakushi in the face and drops a leg, Piper talks about how he fought Adrian Adonis so he knows what kind of mind games Goldust is playing. Hakushi fights up but charges into a boot to the floor, with Bradshaw hitting a dive to take him down again. Back in and another big boot sets up the lariat to finish for Bradshaw at 4:10.

Rating: C-. Well that seems to be it for Hakushi, who was more or less squashed here as the match was a backdrop for Piper talking about Goldust. Bradshaw is a fine choice for a Stan Lariat clone (minus a lot of the talent and charisma) but it's not like this is going to get him very far. Not much to see here, and that's a bad sign for Hakushi's future.

Post match Hakushi gets hogtied and branded.

Mankind is in a very dark room (we can't see his face) and talks about how he has dealt with evil for years and now it is time for others to face it as well. No one will have a nice day.

Bret Hart vs. Hunter Hearst Helmsley

Non-title and we get a clip of a fan being moved to tears by getting Hart's sunglasses at a recent live event. That's awesome. Helmsley sends him into the corner to start but charges into a boot, allowing Hart to hit a clothesline. Hart hammers away and grabs an armbar for some cranking. Cue Shawn Michaels with a chair to watch at ringside and we take a break.

We come back with Hart taking him down by the arm again and working on a hammerlock. Helmsley gets up and rakes the eyes, allowing him to send Hart outside. Hart is fine enough to knock a dive out of the air as Vince thought Helmsley and Michaels might be in cahoots together (make your own jokes).

Back in and Helmsley hammers away in the corner, setting up a rather hard whip into the corner for two. We take another break and come back with Hart hitting a bulldog into the backbreaker. Naturally the middle rope elbow follows for two but Helmsley rolls him up for the same. Helmsley goes up and dives right into the Sharpshooter for the submission at 17:21.

Rating: B-. Helmsley wasn't up to the next level yet but Hart was there to carry him far enough. It helps that the point of this match was to tease tension between Michaels and Hart, who are building towards one of the biggest matches of the year. Helmsley being in this kind of a match is a good sign for him, though he has a lot of work to do.

Michaels applauds Hart and leaves without incident.

And now, Tee Vee Trivia, which is a game show parody, featuring various quotes from Ted Turner, because this is a thing that had to happen for months on end. The one funny bit: we're asked where the Huckster (Get it?) is and we cut to an empty arena, where he is still handcuffed to the ring, as he was to close Nitro. As usual, it's just petty nonsense from the WWF, as they keep insulting Turner for daring to try to have something of his own and it went very badly for them for a good while.

Overall Rating: B. Yeah you can't argue with a show like this, as you had two long matches, both of which went well. It helped set up Wrestlemania, but there is only so much on the card outside of Hart vs. Michaels. Piper vs. Goldust isn't exactly working and there is a good chance it's only going to get worse. The stuff that worked did so rather well though and

that's a great thing to see after some less than thrilling shows.

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