

# Monday Night Raw – January 8, 1996: The Ringmaster Era Has Begun

## Monday Night Raw

Date: January 8, 1996

Location: Bob Carpenter Center, Newark, Delaware

Commentators: Vince McMahon, Jerry Lawler

We're getting closer to the Royal Rumble and that means we'll be seeing some more names added to the card. In addition, since it's the holiday season and the company didn't want to tape too much, we're getting another match from the most recent In Your House, which is certainly a way to fill in time. Let's get to it.

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

We open with a preview of the show, promising more from Billionaire Ted. Of course.

Opening sequence.

## Jeff Jarrett vs. Hakushi

Jarrett teases playing the guitar and singing for us but opts to just not instead. An early slam lets Jarrett strut but Hakushi sweeps the leg. A top rope shoulder drops Jarrett again and we pause for him to tease walking out. Back in and Jarrett hits the running crotch attack in the ropes and we take a break.

We come back with Hakushi fighting out of an abdominal stretch and hitting a jumping spin kick. Jarrett knocks him back down for two more and we hit the chinlock. Hakushi fights out but his springboard splash hits knees, allowing Jarrett to get the Figure Four for the win at 9:19.

**Rating:** C. I always feel bad when I see Hakushi falling further and further down the ladder. He really was a different kind of star and could have been a bigger deal if he was given the chance. It doesn't help when he lost to the perfectly capable but terribly uninteresting Jarrett. While Jarrett is far from bad, it's not exactly easy to get behind him in any meaningful way. That was the case again here, as this was just a step above a squash.

We go to Slam Jam, which serves as the Royal Rumble control center. We look at various Rumble entrants, including a video on Vader Finally, "Scheme Gene" makes a cameo which, believe it or not, isn't funny.

#### Ahmed Johnson vs. Jeff Brettler

Johnson throws him around to start and hits a kick to the head. A spinebuster and the Pearl River Plunge finish at 1:51.

Post match Jeff Jarrett tries to sneak in with a guitar shot but hits the buckle instead. Johnson scares him off and breaks the guitar.

Next week: Undertaker vs. Isaac Yankem.

And now, the Brother Love Show, because that was brought back in 1996. The guest is Ted DiBiase, who is unveiling his new Million Dollar Champion: THE RINGMASTER! DiBiase presents him with his title, with the Ringmaster sticking his hand out to the screen so fans can reach out and touch greatness. He's already in the Royal Rumble so he can go on to Wrestlemania and win the WWF Title, but it doesn't compare to the Million Dollar Title. And that's Steve Austin's WWF debut.

Earl Hebner defends not stopping Bret Hart vs. British Bulldog due to Hart's blood loss. Geez the jokes write themselves.

#### Goldust vs. Aldo Montoya

Goldust takes his time getting rid of his wig and then takes

out Montoya for daring to start fast. The slow beating is on, including a running kick to Montoya's chest. Montoya fights up and hits a clothesline, only to walk into the Curtain Call for the fast pin at 2:10.

It's another Slam Jam, this time looking at Shawn Michaels' press conference from earlier today. He is officially in the Royal Rumble and he's going on to Wrestlemania to win the WWF Title. Scheme Gene pops in to say he has a hot name for the Royal Rumble but call his hotline to find out who it is. IN CASE YOU DIDN'T GET THE JOKE!

Various wrestlers give their thoughts on Shawn Michaels coming back.

From In Your House V: Seasons Beatings.

#### WWF Title: Bret Hart vs. British Bulldog

Hart is defending and Jim Cornette is here with Bulldog. Feeling out process to start with Bulldog showing off the power, leaving Hart to go after his arm. Back up and a knee to the ribs cuts Hart down for two and we're already in the chinlock. That's broken up so Cornette gets in a cheap shot with the racket, meaning the chinlock can go on again. The hard whip into the corner gives Bulldog two and yep, it's time for another chinlock.

Hart finally fights out and hits a monkey flip, followed by a bulldog to Bulldog. A quick piledriver gives Hart two and the middle rope elbow connects as we take a break. We come back with Hart getting crotched on the top and knocked outside, with Bulldog driving him hard into the post. Hart is busted open BAD and there is a bunch of blood on the floor. Bulldog gets two off his own piledriver and the not so delayed suplex is good for the same.

A top rope headbutt to the back gives Bulldog two more and he grabs a bow and arrow. Hart's quick counter into the

Sharpshooter is broken up and Bulldog shoulders him hard out to the floor. Back in and Hart slips out of a suplex to grab a German suplex for two and they're both down. Hart manages to send him outside for a slingshot dive but another is countered into the running powerslam on the floor.

We take another break and come back again with Hart crotching him on the barricade and hitting a clothesline. The backbreaker gives Hart two and he whips Bulldog hard into the corner for a change. A top rope superplex gets a delayed two and a rollup, ala Summerslam 1992, is reversed to give Hart two more. With nothing else working, Hart grabs la majistral to retain at 21:09.

**Rating:** B+. As usual, these two have some great chemistry together. It felt like Hart was having to struggle to survive against an aggressive power guy and that is where Hart tends to thrive. Bulldog could work well with almost anyone and tended to do best against someone Hart (or Shawn Michaels) sized, so the formula was firmly in play here. Great match and worth a look if you have time.

Undertaker is ready to take the title from Bret Hart at the Royal Rumble.

A woman has won the Royal Rumble sweepstakes.

Here's what's coming next week.

We wrap it up with Billionaire Ted's Wrasslin War Room, with the board trying to come up with a better slogan. The Huckster and Nacho Man are happier about avoiding steroid tests. Young Vince Russo can be seen as one of the people around the table.

**Overall Rating:** B-. I'm not sure what it means when the best match is from a pay per view, but I'll take that over the usual mess that we got around this time. Other than that, it was a bunch of short, uninteresting matches and an all time important debut, even if there was no way of knowing that at

the time. Shawn Michaels really needs to get back already, as they're only going to be able to use matches from pay per views for so long.

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