

Monday Night Raw – August 23, 2004: Unlike Anything I've Ever Seen

Monday Night Raw

Date: August 23, 2004

Location: Arrowhead Pond, Anaheim, California

Commentators: Jim Ross, Jerry Lawler

Hey it's another request that I'm finally getting to. This is a fairly big week as Randy Orton was thrown out of Evolution last week and it's time to hear not only why (shouldn't be that complicated) but what happens next. On top of that we have Kane and Lita getting married in another step in a bizarre story. Let's get to it.

We open with a quick recap of Orton being thrown out of Evolution.

Opening sequence. I miss Across the Nation as the theme song.

We start things off with the Raw Diva Search and they're all in swimsuits to really hammer the point home. If nothing else this really shows the difference between ten years ago and what we see today as this would NEVER be allowed on Raw today. They get right to the point with Tracy (like most of their names matter) being eliminated in sixth place.

Now for tonight's task: everyone will have two minutes to talk about how great the Coach is but Coach thinks five would be more appropriate....but here's the Rock to interrupt in a surprise. Rock gives Coach five seconds to get out and he barely gets out at four and a half. That leaves Rock and the five remaining Divas and Rock seems to approve. He also thinks the women are all wet (with perspiration) before saying that Lillian Garcia (looking even better than usual tonight) is a Raw Diva. She used to have a real job at the sperm bank but got fired for drinking on the job.

Rock asks which one is Carmella (while slipping in a line that he hasn't

been watching the show) because the rest of the girls hate her. Back in the day no one liked him either so she needs to stick to her guns here. Not that it matters what she thinks of course. Rock mocks a contest a few weeks back where the girls had to make ice cream cones because no one wants to see them do that. What Rock wants to see is these women eating pie.

This brings out Tajiri with some pies, which he just happened to have on hand. Now we have a table and it's going to be a pie eating contest. Everyone has twenty seconds to eat pie in whatever way they want, but first Rock mocks some fans and asks Tajiri what is his favorite type of pie. Fan: "SUSHI!"

This just keeps going with Joy going first and insulting Carmella instead of eating. Amy goes second and Rock won't even let her near a mic. Instead she slowly licks the pie out of the pan and keeps going after the clock runs out. Carmella rubs it on herself and teases a way too excited Tajiri. Maria eats her pie with her fingers and licks it a bit, leaving a drop on her nose for effect. Last up is Christy...who sits on the pie. You can see the pain on Rock's face as he goes through this.

In case this hasn't gone on long enough, here are Coach with Raw Tag Team Champions La Resistance with promises of a Chinese beating (in honor of the Japanese Tajiri). The heels hit the ring and actually beat Rock down for a bit until Rhyno (Tajiri's partner) comes out for the save. Coach challenges Rock and gets the usual to end this opening segment after an unthinkable TWENTY FOUR MINUTES. The only entertaining thing here was Rock riffing on how stupid it was and making it clear that he doesn't actually watch Raw.

Kane, in his ring gear, arrives with his suit in a bag.

We recap Evolution turning on Randy Orton and throwing him off the team last week.

The remaining members of Evolution are in the back. Batista has delivered an ultimatum to Orton for later tonight.

Kane comes in to see a disgusted Lita and promises that nothing will ruin

this wedding tonight. The wedding will be an all white affair to signify the purity of his child. He even has a dress for her.

Intercontinental Title: Chris Jericho vs. Edge

Edge is defending and we have the first match starting about forty minutes into the show. Edge came back from injury a few months ago and it's quite as popular as he was before he left. Jericho grabs a quickly broken hammerlock to start but is easily able to low bridge Edge to the floor. Back from a break with Edge chopping in the corner but eating a top rope elbow to the jaw for a near fall. A DDT gets the same for the champ but Jericho sidesteps the spear and grabs the Walls, only to have Edge reverse into a rollup to retain.

Not so fast though as the referee caught Jericho's feet in the ropes, meaning we're going to continue after a break. Back with Jericho missing a dropkick but hitting a running enziguri. The running bulldog looks to set up the Lionsault but Edge rolls away because he's seen a Jericho match before. The Edge-0-Matic (I still love that move) gets two and sets up a high cross body with Jericho rolling through for a near fall of his own. Edge gets caught in the Walls he makes the rope for the quick break. Back up and Edge "accidentally" crotches Jericho and that's a DQ with Edge hitting the spear just after the bell.

Rating: B. I was liking this one while it lasted but it was a storyline ending instead of anything conclusive. Edge would lose the title due to an injury (I'm shocked too) soon after this and would come back as a mega heel instead of the same bland face that he had been since coming back. Jericho on the other hand would continue to just float around until he would leave in about a year.

Here's Evolution for their big address on the Orton issue. HHH says he doesn't believe in destiny because every choice you make has a consequence. Orton was someone who was destined for greatness and chose to stand side by side with the greatest talent of all time. Then he chose to go on for himself instead of just softening Chris Benoit up like he was supposed to.

That sealed his fate because the World Title belongs to HHH and everyone

knows it. Last week the confetti fell and it was just like sand in an hourglass because Orton's time was up. The beating last week was just a warning though because Orton has his choice now. Orton can come out here and lay down to make HHH the champion that he's supposed to be again. If Orton lets it go, Evolution will forget about him and let him live. There is no choice when it comes to the World Heavyweight Championship and it's as simple as life and death.

This brings out Orton to Evolution music and a referee soon follows. Orton starts to hand over the title but pulls it back and spits in HHH's face. A belt shot knocks HHH down and Orton bails before Flair and Batista and use his limbs as drumsticks. This story really should have turned Orton into one of the biggest stars in the company but instead HHH got the title back in less than three weeks, allegedly so there could be three face challengers for Taboo Tuesday. Seriously. That was the official justification HHH gave for wanting the title back so soon. Taboo Tuesday, which Orton headlined anyway.

Victoria is trying to get Eric Bischoff to call off the wedding but HHH interrupts and yells a lot. HHH gets a rematch for the title at Unforgiven. That's what you get for beating Eugene at Summerslam.

William Regal vs. Ric Flair

This should be interesting. Speaking of Eugene, he's in Regal's corner here and this is fallout from Flair interfering in the HHH vs. Eugene match. Regal runs him over to start and it's strange to see him as the (likely) stronger wrestler. Flair starts firing off some chops but gets uppercut and backdropped for his efforts. That means a Flair Flop but Ric is able to send Regal outside for more chops. Another backdrop on the floor has Flair in trouble and we take a break.

Back with Flair dropping back to back knees to the head for two. Regal fires off the uppercuts and forearms in the corner before slamming Flair off the top. Batista finally remembers he's at ringside and hits Regal in the back to set up the Figure Four. Now it's Eugene offering a distraction so Regal can turn the hold over. Batista goes after Eugene but here's Benoit to chop Batista, allowing both guys to pull out brass

knuckles. Regal is a bit quicker though and knocks Flair out for the pin and a pretty big upset.

Rating: C+. This was the kind of hard hitting match you would expect from these two, even though Flair was only doing signature stuff at this point. Regal always seemed like someone who might turn into a huge deal but he was happy to just be a cool midcarder who had almost unlimited respect.

We get a Smackdown Rebound, including JBL in a neck halo with his cowboy hat on top. Why this man isn't in the Hall of Fame completely eludes me. We also saw Rey Mysterio coming out to save Eddie Guerrero but Kurt Angle destroyed Eddie's low rider.

Coach shows us how to vote in the Diva Search.

Lita hates her wedding dress and breaks her mirror.

The ring has been transformed into a wedding venue and Kane is in an all white tuxedo. Naturally the ring bearer and flower girl are dwarfs, the former with paint under his eyes. Kane comes out with the biggest smile on his face....until he sees Lita in a black dress. The minister says we have a special guest here and it's someone very familiar to both the bride and groom.

Lita gets her hopes up but it's Eric Bischoff, also in a white tux. Bischoff reads a passage from the Bible and even gives a brief prayer before the minister says this is clearly a very unique relationship. Kane has a video of their relationship, which is basically Lita being terrified when she finds out she's pregnant and all the ensuing fallout.

That brings us to the vows, with Kane saying Lita is now his property. She will never know freedom again until the day he dies. On the other hand, Lita hates Kane more than life itself and he has no soul. She has no choice but to marry him but she will always love Matt Hardy. Well that's quite the Edgey statement. All she can hope for is to see Kane suffer a horrible accident to free her from this nightmare. Kane: "That was lovely."

We get to “speak now or forever hold your peace” and there’s no Matt. Instead here’s Trish Stratus in white lingerie (completely outclassing every one of the Diva Search contestants) to offer her services as Maid of Honor. Trish’s advice is for Lita to open her heart, just like she opened her legs.

The catfight is on for a bit until the minister gets things under control again. Cue Matt Hardy (with Lita doing a perfect damsel in distress smile) for the save from behind, only to have a wall of fire cut off the escape. A chokeslam off the stage and through a table destroys Matt. Lita is dragged back to the ring for the I Do and the forced kiss ends the show.

Overall Rating: C+. I’ve seen every episode of Raw ever and I don’t remember a single show that was all over the place like this one. From the ridiculously awful opening twenty five minutes (well as horrible as you can get with Maria, Christy and Carmella looking like that) to two good matches to the actually solid Orton segment to the so bizarre it’s great wedding (With Trish being a highlight. Just DANG.), this show somehow went from dreadful to one of the most entertaining shows I’ve seen in a long time. Fix the opening segment and this could have been a classic but that was like a knife to the stomach.

Here’s next week’s show if you’re interested:

<http://kbwrestlingreviews.com/2013/12/17/monday-night-raw-august-30-2004-total-divas-wish-they-were-like-this/>

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On This Day: July 26, 2004 – Monday Night Raw: HHH vs. Benoit For An Hour

Monday Night Raw

Date: July 26, 2004

Location: Mellon Arena, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

Commentators: Jim Ross, Jerry Lawler

So last night I spent four hours downloading a copy of this show. Then I found it all on Youtube. Anyway this is another request and it's because the main event is an Iron Man match for the title between HHH and Benoit. The only other match on the card is a battle royal for the shot at Benoit at Summerslam. Let's get to it.

We see the Diva Search girls in the back. Of the ten, five would wind up with jobs unless I'm forgetting some of them. Some blonde named Julia is gone. Michelle, Christy, Amy Webber, Joy Giovanni and Carmella are still in there. Oh and Maria so it's 6/10. Tonight, the 9 remaining ones have to verbally seduce a former WWE star.

Clip of Benoit winning the Rumble then winning the title at Mania. HHH says the games are ending and tonight it's the two of them for the title.

Theme song opens us up.

We go to the ring and it's almost full. A few more come out though. Edge is one of the few to get entrances. He's the IC Champion here. Matt gets one as well. The announcers don't know what this is. Jericho comes out to a big pop. Kane comes

out as well as JR and King are at a loss for words. Evolution (minus HHH) are in this also. Eric comes out and says it's a twenty man battle royal and the winner gets the title shot at Summerslam.

Battle Royal

Regal is put out first. Jericho and Flair chop it out before Jericho and Edge team up to put Tomko out. Edge spears Palumbo down and the Canadians throw him out. RKO to Jericho but Edge saves him from Evolution. Flair hits Edge low and we take a break. Back with JR being way too excited. Kane eliminated Val Venis and Matt Hardy during the break. Matt came back in and beat on Kane but didn't eliminate him.

Hurricane is out as are Rodney Mack, Rosey and a guy I didn't recognize. I think it was Steven Richards. Tajiri puts Rob Conway out and Grenier is out as well. We have about eight left. Tajiri tries the Tarantula on Kane and is tossed out. We have the three members of Evolution, Kane, Jericho, Edge, Rhyno and Maven for our final eight. Flair goes up top for no logically explained reason. Edge slams him back into the ring for no logically explained reason.

Jericho hooks Flair in the Walls but Batista makes the save. Edge spears Kane down but he sits up. We take a break and come back with all eight still in it. Edge almost got eliminated during the break but low blowed his way out of it. Flair tries to chop Kane which goes as well as you would expect. Kane very carefully chokeslams him and it's time for the battle of the bulls.

Batista and Kane slug it out (I remember watching this live) and Big Dave spinebusters him down but walks into a Gore to a BIG pop. Why is Maven still in there? Why is he getting to throw Flair into the corner for the (failed) Flair Flip? WHY IS HE CLOTHESLINING FLAIR OUT??? Rhyno Gores Maven and Batista throws Rhyno out. The Canadians go after Kane and everyone

gangs up on him to get him out.

So we have Orton, Batista, Maven, Jericho and Edge left. Maven sends Orton to the apron but he hangs on. Orton manages to suplex Maven onto the top rope and then dump him to get us to the final four and a PPV level tag match. Jericho and Edge manage to get rid of Batista and Jericho turns on Edge to get us down to two. Slugout is won by Orton and he hits something like a spinebuster to take over.

In a smart move he tries a slingshot but Jericho hooks the rope. He pulls himself back in and grabs Orton into a fireman's carry but Orton escapes as well. Jericho gets thrown again but he skins the cat. Orton clotheslines him to the apron again but he holds on with one arm. They do the Big Show/Benoit sequence but Orton lands on the apron. They're both on the apron now and they slug it out. Both guys get knocked down but they hang on. Orton slides back in and hits an RK0 (kind of) onto the middle rope then kicks Jericho out to go to Summerslam.

Rating: B-. I was enjoying this a lot more than most regular battle royals. These matches are always hard to rate because other than the Rumble, if you've seen one battle royal, you've seen almost all of them. This had star power and drama in it though which made this better than most. Good match and it gave us a mostly surprising winner.

Time for the Divas nonsense. What this has to do with getting a contract to be a female wrestler is beyond me but whatever. All nine of them have 20 seconds to verbally seduce a former WWE Superstar. Michelle starts first and it's Kamala. She does the whole sexy teacher thing and yeah I'm not going to comment on most of this. Christy looks good in blue though. This goes nowhere and isn't funny or anything like that. I get how it could be funny once or so but this happens NINE TIMES. This eats up like 8 minutes.

Smackdown recap.

Smackdown Your Vote at the Democratic National Convention. You'll NEVER see this today. To be fair they went to the GOP National Convention as well and this was non-partisan.

Here are the Diva Search chicks in bikinis and numbers to call to vote for them. This went on OVER TWO MONTHS.

HHH comes in to see Evolution and Orton says it'll be an honor to face him at Summerslam. He wishes HHH good luck but HHH says he doesn't need it.

Raw World Title: HHH vs. Chris Benoit

HHH is challenging and it's an Iron Man match. They do the referee instructions and they say if there's a tie, it's sudden death. Slugout to start but it turns into more of a feeling out process. Benoit takes it to the mat with a headlock and into a top wristlock with Benoit bridging out of it very nicely. Crossface is attempted but HHH rolls out. Back in the Pedigree is easily escaped and it's a standoff.

HHH tries to take it to the mat but Benoit gets the advantage. Five minutes in and HHH rolls to the floor to escape the Crossface attempt again. After a quick trip to the floor, Benoit goes after the knee. Benoit slams him at eight minutes in and stays on the knee. Chris runs into a boot in the corner and a DDT takes him down. Benoit comes back with chops but walks into the Facebuster. Pedigree is countered into a Sharpshooter attempt but that's countered too. He hooks a Crossface out of nowhere though but HHH rolls out, but Benoit rolls him up for the first fall with about 49:30 to go.

We take a break and come back with 46:15 to go and HHH in a chinlock. Snap suplex gets two. Off to an abdominal stretch as this has been almost all Benoit. HHH manages to send him over the top and Benoit hits his back on the apron. The Game rams him into the apron and starts working it over. Benoit tries a

charge but gets kicked in the face, busting his mouth open.

Benoit tries to whip him in but falls down. That's either good selling of the back or a rare botch. They try it again and HHH gets whipped over the top to the floor. Benoit tries a suicide dive but hits mostly the barricade. Both guys are down as we hear about the Pegasus Kid. We're about twenty minutes in now. We take a break with both guys down.

Back with HHH still down and thirty seven minutes to go. During the break HHH went into the steps and might have a bad shoulder now. Benoit tries a Sharpshooter (in a rare misstep of psychology) but HHH escapes. Off to a freaky modified Indian Deathlock with thirty six minutes to go. Chris stays on the leg with a Figure Four and a decent one at that. HHH makes the rope so Benoit pounds away in the corner.

HHH hot shots him out for two with thirty three minutes left. Benoit is like CANADA POWER and hits rolling Germans to take HHH down. Here's the Swan Dive but HHH rolls away. HHH sends him into the buckle chest first, which is apparently an injury from a few weeks ago. Pedigree ties us up at about halfway through.

Benoit rolls to the floor but HHH knocks him down again and front suplexes him onto the steps for a countout to make it 2-1. We take another break and come back with 25:30 to go and HHH whipping Benoit into the corner for two. Release suplex lands on the chest again and gets two. Another whip into the corner gets two. 23:20 to go. HHH starts working on the back for some reason but Benoit hammers him in the face with a forearm to put both guys down. A spinebuster out of nowhere makes it 3-1 HHH with just under 22:00 to go.

There's another break and we come back with Benoit hiptossing him at 18:30 to go. HHH loads up a Pedigree but Benoit dead weights him and goes for a Sharpshooter but HHH counters again. Pedigree attempt #2 is countered into the Sharpshooter

which this time is hooked. HHH is in big trouble as Benoit keeps pulling him back from the ropes. He FINALLY (not meant as a bad thing) taps out to make it 3-2 with 15:30 to go.

15:00 to go and HHH falls to the floor. Benoit follows him out and pounds away but HHH runs back into the ring. Back in Benoit charges into a foot but HHH jumps into the Crossface. He eventually gets his foot to the rope but Benoit immediately hooks it again and HHH taps out to tie things up with 12:00 to go.

Here come Batista and Flair and we take a break. Back with about 8:30 to go and Benoit getting sent to the outside. Eight minutes left and HHH blocks a sunset flip to send Benoit back outside. Batista sends Benoit into the post and the champ is busted open. That gets two with 6:30 to go. HHH pounds him down in the corner with 6:00 to go. Benoit ducks a punch and comes back with rolling Germans. The referee gets clotheslined and Benoit grabs the Crossface.

Batista distracts Benoit and Flair throws in a chair with 5:00 to go. Flair gets knocked off and HHH caves in the back of Benoit's head with the chair. He covers but there's no referee. Bischoff sends out another referee who counts two. Four minutes left and HHH clocks the other referee. Evolution beats on Benoit but someone comes through the crowd.

Of all people, it's EUGENE, who is still one of the most popular acts in years at this point. He cleans house, beating up Evolution all by himself. Stunner to Flair and a Rock Bottom to HHH. Bischoff gets a right hand as well and HHH gets killed with the chair. Eugene had been beaten down by Evolution two weeks before if you're wondering why he's here. Benoit comes back in with 1:20 to go. Eugene throws the referee back in for the pin on HHH with six seconds left and Benoit retains with a final score of 4-3.

Rating: B-. The match is certainly good, but I see no reason

at all here for this to be an Iron Man match. This easily could have been cut down to about thirty or even forty minutes and nothing would have been lost. The ending is ridiculous with there being nothing resembling a regular match for the last five minutes. Good match and it set up Summerslam, but absolutely no reason for it to be an Iron Man match.

Overall Rating: B. Good show with an interesting twist by having basically two angles the entire show plus the Divas nonsense. At the end of the day though, you can only complain so much about good looking women in swimsuits though. Fun show but it's not something that would work every time.

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