

Monday Night Raw – January 10, 2011: HBK is Back

Monday Night Raw

Date: January 10, 2011

Location: Bridgestone Arena, Nashville, Tennessee

Commentators: Jerry Lawler, Michael Cole

We've reached the time period leading up to the Rumble and have the world title set. Tonight we'll likely see more about Miz vs. Orton and the beginning of the build to the Rumble itself which is in just under three weeks. This time is usually about establishing dominance for the Rumble and possibly qualifying matches. Also we might see the next steps for the now CM Punk led Nexus. Oh and Cena might be back tonight. Let's get to it.

Theme song opens us proper.

Tonight we find out the first entrant into the 2011 Hall of Fame and Cena will address the WWE Universe.

Santino and Kozlov are here to defend the titles but Nexus and Punk hit the ring to destroy them. Punk says that the title match is postponed. Nexus is now stronger than ever and all five of them can shine. Punk reminds us that Cena addresses the Universe tonight, but the days of Hustle, Loyalty and Respect are over. There will be an initiation tonight for all members of the group including the leader.

Otunga says that's cool, speaking for everyone. First up is McGillicutty's initiation. He's beaten down everyone, including the Chairman of the Board. The crowd chants Cena. Punk: "Yes, he's beaten down Cena too." Michael's initiation is to receive a Nexus beatdown and Harris has to start it off. He won't do it but Otunga will. Slater and Harris add

their finishers. 450 and GTS end McGillicutty but he's officially initiated. They carry him off with him almost in a cross shape as we take a break.

R-Truth vs. Alberto Del Rio

I saw this match on Saturday night at a house show and got a good match out of it so this should be entertaining. On the way to the ring we hear more about the Hall of Fame entrant who Lawler says may be the best of all time. I'm intrigued now. Del Rio hits a Backstabber which would be a good move for him to pick up actually. Truth gets a clothesline to the floor and actually hits the floor first with a thud. They slug it out on the floor but Rodriguez distracts Truth and it's a countout at 1:50. Rodriguez shouting WHAT'S UP over and over was rather funny. No rating of course.

Alberto says that that was another victory but you already know that. He makes fun of American music including hip hop, Justin Bieber and worst of all, country music. Remember that we're in Nashville here. He says that he'll show us music in the form of Mariachi. It's going to be Ricardo singing though as he belts out La Cucaracha, which is the Mexican national anthem according to Roddy Piper. This was...uh...yeah.

Cena is next.

Morrison vs. Sheamus tonight also.

And never mind on the Cena thing as the rewind is of Miz jumping Lawler. Lawler says Miz is a coward while Cole says he should just apologize to Miz. We get an E-Mail saying that the GM supports Cole, even though he's a jerk, self-centered and various other insults. Apparently he's just kidding and Cole is awesome and various other nice things. Cole Miners are great too.

Lawler says hold it and that the WWE Universe has spoken and they're sick of Cole and that Cole is a coward. According to Cole if Lawler touches him he's fired. Lawler slams the laptop and we get another E-Mail. "It still works!" The GM says that Cole and Lawler aren't cowards. Tonight it's Miz/Riley vs. Lawler/Orton.

Off to Punk in the back and it's Harris' turn for initiation, if he accepts it that is. Punk has a strap in his hand and every member is going to give him three lashes. Husky accepts and takes the position. Punk says take the shirt off and Harris is fine with it. Otunga drills him as does Gabriel. Those are some LOUD shots so if they're being faked they're incredibly impressive. Harris starts to fall after Slater's shots so Punk says get him up. Punk goes off on him, laying in probably 8 or 9 shots as we go to break. I guess Harris is initiated as well.

Daniel Bryan/Mark Henry vs. Ted DiBiase/Tyson Kidd

I've always been a fan of throwing together two feuds into a tag match like this. Tomorrow night on NXT there will be a double date with Derrick Bateman (Bryan's NXT rookie) and Bryan with the Bellas. Bryan fires away with kicks in the corner to DiBiase but nefarious double teaming gives Ted control. The following clothesline doesn't work though and Kidd and Henry both come in. Henry destroys everything in sight and the World's Strongest Slam ends Kidd in 2:40. No rating again for these short matches.

Big Show is here.

Back with a recap of Novak being eliminated, thank goodness.

Show wants to talk about Barrett, who already got knocked out of Nexus and he's going to get knocked out on Friday as well. Second up is the Rumble which he's serious about winning. Cue

Nexus, now four strong with Punk, Gabriel, Otunga and Slater. Apparently this is Otunga's initiation as he walks to the ring alone. Otunga slaps Show and I think you can figure out what the result of that is.

Otunga is thrown over the table and destroys Cole's chair. Big slap to his stomach and a slam with a thud on the floor. Show shouts that he isn't someone to play with. David goes into the steps and then back into the ring. The fans chant KNOCK HIM OUT. They'll settle for a chokeslam instead I guess. Actually Show isn't done yet and Otunga takes the punch while he's being held up by Show. The other three Nexus members salute Otunga.

Cena is still happening later tonight.

Morrison vs. Sheamus next.

John Morrison vs. Sheamus

This should be good and also interesting in that we might get to see if Morrison has lost momentum after last week's loss and if so how much. Morrison is now the Prince of Parkour. We get a highlight package of the WWE Title match last week which makes Morrison look like a star. They keep teasing the Hall of Fame inductee and how great he is, which makes me think Shawn.

Sheamus gets a headlock to start. He hammers away on Morrison who is still a bit hurt from the brutal match last week. John fights back but takes a big running elbow to the face to end that. Rollup gets two for Morrison but he can't get a backslide. Here comes Johnny Boy with a leg lariat to take over. Sheamus ends that quickly and goes for the knee. Morrison's response is to kick Sheamus in the head. Why do something too complex I suppose.

Morrison sets for Starship Pain but gets shoved off the top as we take a break. Back with Sheamus holding a loose Crossface Chickenwing. We get a replay of Morrison crashing to the floor before the break which sounded great. The impacts on the floor tonight have all sounded good. Morrison may have a bad arm now. Sheamus gets a powerslam for two.

Back to a modified Chickenwing but Morrison fights back. Flash Kick misses but Sheamus charges and lands on the floor. Pescado eats knee though as Sheamus counters. These two have great chemistry together and this is another fine example of it. Front suplex onto the stairs has Morrison reeling. Back into the ring and Sheamus sets for the Brogue Kick but Morrison kind of falls down instead.

Sheamus changes his mind and puts Morrison on the top. Morrison fights him off and drops Sheamus head first onto the post. The running knee to the head ENDS Sheamus clean at 12:06. So much for the push being dead I'd certainly think. That knee looked sick too.

Rating: B. Another good match from these two as that seems to be all they know how to do. This is very much like the Rude/Warrior chemistry from the late 80s where for no apparent reason they clicked together perfectly and every time they got in the ring together the matches worked. That's what you're getting here with Sheamus and Morrison and it's very entertaining.

We recap the Nexus initiations tonight before we go to the back. Punk is holding a pair of kendo sticks before Slater and Gabriel. He's not going to beat them with the sticks but rather the two of them are going to beat each other until Punk tells them to stop. Punk's manipulation here is awesome. They stare each other down but can't bring themselves to do it.

Punk says if you're not in then you're out so you better swing

for the fences. Slater still can't do it and neither can Gabriel. Punk says do it but they look at Punk instead. He says go ahead and closes his eyes, saying good. The former champions can't do that either and throw the sticks down before leaving. Punk has a half mad half happy look on his face.

The Hall of Fame inductee is next. I'm really curious about this now.

Back with Lawler in the ring to announce the first member of the Hall of Fame. He talks about how important it is to get into the Hall of Fame and how this inductee has earned the respect of the fans. And it's....SHAWN MICHAELS! After a nice video about him, SHAWN IS HERE! He gets a mic and the fans chant one more match...and here's Alberto before Shawn can say anything.

The fans chant HBK as Del Rio more or less says that Shawn is old news. The people cheer him now apparently. Alberto again says that he's going to win the Rumble and then a world title and then will be the new Mr. Wrestlemania. There's a running theme with music tonight with Alberto. Earlier tonight he talked about country music, and here he experiences some Sweet Chin Music. Shawn poses but never said a word. He steals the scarf and leaves. That kick was great.

Back with Miz and Riley getting ready. Riley is all fired up but Miz keeps looking down at the belt. He's upset because people are talking about Orton and not him. Riley tries to calm him down but Miz says it doesn't matter until after the match tonight.

It's Cena time but Cole wants to talk first. Punk, on the top of the Titantron no less, talks about the initiations tonight. This is his initiation though and he implies he's going to jump. Josh is on commentary now. His sacrifice is the ultimate one and he hopes that through it he'll prove that

not only was he a member of Nexus but that he was their leader as well. The visual on this from a long shot is great.

He asks the fans if he should dive off the tron. Wow he's not beating around the bush with innuendo at all. He asks if he should injure himself and then holds his arms up like a cross. He has one more question first though: how gullible are all these people? He has a harness on and has two spotters. This was the initiation for the fans, as he's not jumping of course. This was way more intense than it sounds.

The three initiated members come down, looking like they've been through the wringer. Punk comes down to the ring and says if anyone believed he was going to jump off the tron they were stupid. He has a harness on as he showed us earlier. Anyone that would dive like he threatened to is mentally challenged but he's mentally superior. Punk says he doesn't need an initiation as he's the leader of the new Nexus.

Punk says Cena isn't here because he got rid of him. Cue Cena on the screen and not in the arena. He goes through a list of insults about Punk and says that he's wasting everyone's time. Cena wants to know what the point of the initiations was because he already beat them all up. He wants a piece of Punk and wants it next week. Punk says it's on. Cena says everything Punk has said is true but next week he gets dealt with and gets all serious. He can turn it on at the drop of a hat like few others. Next week isn't about t-shirts or armbands but about Cena kicking Punk's teeth in. Great segment but no way that's the blowoff.

The Miz/Alex Riley vs. Jerry Lawler/Randy Orton

Cole is in his element here as he says Miz belongs in the Hall of Fame already and that Lawler has to steal the spotlight again. It seems that they're trying to shift Matthews into Lawler's spot by having Lawler in the ring more often which is

fine. Riley vs. Lawler to start us off. Lawler goes off on Riley and beats up Miz on the floor, sending him into the steps.

Off to Orton who half kills both Riley and Miz. He gives Miz some hard stomps including one to the face. Back to Lawler now who gets run over by Miz. The corner clothesline hits...and we take a break at 11:04. Wow indeed. During the break it occurs to me that there are only four matches tonight. That's low by Raw standards but even still it's been good so I can accept that.

Back with Riley holding onto Lawler. Lawler ducks out of the way though and Riley hits the post. Orton gets the tag but Miz has the referee. Oh darn the luck. Miz sets for the Finale but Orton comes in with an RK0. Cole freaks out, shouting NO NOT AGAIN! Riley saves though but it's hot tag to Orton. He takes over on Riley with all of his old favorites. Elevated DDT has Riley mostly dead.

Miz teases coming in to take down Orton but gets stared down. Riley tries to sneak up on Orton but Orton is all like oh no you didn't and kills him with the RK0. Off to Lawler who hits the strap down punch off the middle rope for the pin as Orton stares down Miz even more at 11:35.

Rating: D+. Pretty disappointing here as it didn't add much to the feud at all and was going through about as many motions as you could possibly go through in a single match. I'd assume they're going somewhere with this Miz vs. Lawler thing but each week I lose a bit of confidence in that theory. Not a terrible match but pretty worthless for the most part.

Overall Rating: B+. The lack of wrestling is all that's holding this back. You certainly can't say this was more of the same although I'm sure people will anyway. Shawn was a nice surprise to add on to the main story tonight. Obviously the point tonight was Nexus and the initiations, all of which were cool. There was an adult feel to them and it worked

incredibly well. This was a more serious show tonight that was meant to drive storylines and it certainly did that. Good stuff here.

Results

Alberto Del Rio b. R-Truth via Count Out

Daniel Bryan/Mark Henry b. Ted DiBiase/Tyson Kidd – World's Strongest Slam to Kidd

John Morrison b. Sheamus – Running knee to the head

Jerry Lawler/Randy Orton b. The Miz/Alex Riley – Middle Rope Punch to Riley