

Monday Night Raw – March 7, 2011: Big Improvement

Monday Night Raw

Date: March 7, 2011

Location: American Airlines Center, Dallas, Texas

Attendance: 16,744

Commentators: Michael Cole, Josh Matthews

After last week's wrestling light show tonight we're supposed to get Cena's response to Rock which he says will be a final knockout. With Mania more or less set all we have to do for the most part is finish the build to it. There are four Raws left before then and hopefully they're better than last week's. Austin is here tonight too which should help some. Let's get to it.

We open with a clip from last week of HHH talking about how his only remaining challenge is the Streak and ending it.

In the arena Taker comes to the ring complete with Johnny Cash music. He talks about how people have been talking about how the Streak ends this year due to Father Time. Or maybe it's due to the Game, the King of Kings, Triple H. Taker says that only one can be the Last Outlaw. He shows us a highlight reel of the last two Mania matches, showing what happens to people that try to end his Streak. The match at Mania is no holds barred apparently, and at Wrestlemania, HHH will Rest in Peace.

After telling us about Austin being here tonight we see Orton fighting off someone in the back. It's Otunga and Orton is double teamed by Otunga and Ryan. Punk comes up and says McGillicutty is on the shelf. Punk gets in his face and slams his head into what looks like a metal wall or cabinet. GTS to Orton and Punk tells the two guys to take him to the ring as

we go to a break.

Back with Nexus beating on Orton and then Otunga saying he's ready for his match. Randy says ring the bell.

Randy Orton vs. David Otunga

Otunga is in control quickly due to Orton being very weakened. He pounds away and adds a slam for two. Otunga gets his spinebuster for two which more or less seals the fate of the ending here. He picks Orton up again and there's the RKO to end it at 2:00. Exactly what you would expect here.

Post match Ryan runs out after being thrown out pre-match and kicks Orton's head off. Orton fights him off and hits an RKO to leave him laying. Punk comes out for the staredown while staying outside. Orton snaps to attention and runs to the other side of the ring, punting Otunga as he gets up. He did it so fast it was kind of hard to tell actually. Replay shots the Punt looking great too.

Cole reveals his guest referee tonight.

Miz isn't here tonight due to a lack of recognition. That's very true actually as it's been about Rock vs. Cena.

Christian vs. Alberto Del Rio

Is there a reason this is on Raw and not on Smackdown? Albert has Brodus Clay with him which is always a good thing. Brodus has a mic with him so I might as well get this ready now.

Christian vs. Brodus Clay

Alberto says they're going to fight but not tonight. First

off he has to beat Brodus Clay. Yep I was right. Clay takes him down almost immediately but Christian reverses a slam attempt. Unprettier doesn't work at all and Brodus takes over with raw power. That would be opposed to Smackdown power of course.

He locks in an armbar which is very logical here. There's that T-Bone suplex but a splash misses. A pair of dropkicks takes Brodus down for two. Christian reverses a powerslam and a Tornado DDT gets the Canadian the win at 2:45. Too short to grade but this was a good power vs. speed match which is the best kind of match.

Del Rio puts Christian in the Cross Armbreaker post match.

Package on Sin Cara. They're making him out to look like a big deal which is a good sign.

The newest Hall of Fame inductee (along with Michaels, Duggan and Bullet Bob Armstrong) is Sunny. Oh yes this should be happening. She's the original Diva and belongs in the Hall of Fame. Not a bit of sarcasm in there.

Women's Title: Eve Torres vs. Nikki Bella

The bell is after the break. Gail Kim is here with Eve. Eve starts all fired up and hammers away on Nikki including a bicycle kick. Cole talks about going to be on New Year's Eve and waking up on Christmas morning. That's how he feels about introducing his referee tonight. Cole literally gets up on the table and grabs a mic, saying we need to end this because he wants to announce his referee. Eve uses the bottom rope as a springboard to get an enziguri. Twin Magic gets caught and a spinning neckbreaker gives eve the win at 3:12.

Rating: C. Even with the Cole stuff in there the whole time this wasn't bad for the most part. Eve dominated and thankfully they didn't manage to make things look stupid with the Twin Magic getting by again. It makes the referee and wrestlers look stupid so I'm glad it failed here. Decent match here and pretty good for the most part. Should be interesting to see where it goes from here too.

Snooki of Jersey Shore will be Guest Star next week. Dang it all.

It's time for Cole to introduce his referee. He has a contract and whoever signs said contract will be the referee. If that's not a way to cause some issues I don't know what is. Cole talks about how he's been a fan of this guy for years and how he's a guy that's going to call the show right down the middle. The referee Cole has picked is a legendary Texan and the fans want to cheer him so let's start the chant: AUSTIN! AUSTIN! AUSTIN! Cole says he fooled us because the referee is none other than JBL!

JBL talks about how Texas is a failure now with no championships in a long time. Bradshaw looks slim here. He talks about how until now no one has ever debuted in the main event, so I guess Lawrence Taylor and Mr. T. no longer exist. He says that he'll be an impartial referee and will return to the main event.

CUE GLASS SHATTER just before JBL can sign the contract. Cole hides behind JBL so it's a Stunner from him. Time to drink some beer! Cole sounds like he's about to cry on commentary. Austin looks down at the contract and up at the Mania sign. With Cole crying that Austin ruined his night, Austin signs the contract and is the referee. Austin goes out to Cole and shakes his hand before pouring beer on his head. Cole leaves with one of the funniest looks on his face that you'll ever

see. JBL gets another Stunner. Hilarious segment with Cole cracking me up the whole time.

Back and Swagger says he'll break Austin's ankle.

Jerry takes over on commentary.

Daniel Bryan vs. Sheamus

Sheamus charges to start but gets taken down and to the floor by Bryan where Sheamus seems to have hurt his ankle. That actually gets a countout at 1:11. Uh, ok? Sheamus grabs a mic and says he's on a losing streak but he'll end that next week by becoming US Champion. He challenges Bryan and says if he loses he'll quit.

HBK will speak again later.

R-Truth vs. CM Punk

Truth grabs a rollup almost immediately for two. Punk sends him shoulder first into the post twice and make it three times. Truth tries to fight back and manages to escape the GTS. A Rock Bottom and the Anaconda Vice (the real one, not some random hold that is called the Anaconda Vice) ends this at 2:35. Total squash so no rating.

Shawn talks some more about HHH vs. Taker. He talks about how HHH can do a lot and can go straight evil at times, taking emotion out of the equation. Evil isn't an emotion but rather a way of life I guess so that makes sense.

Vickie Guerrero comes out and we take a break.

Snooki is still coming next week. I was hoping that was a nightmare but it seems not to be.

Vickie is here and Ziggler is rehired on Raw. No real shock there.

John Morrison vs. Dolph Ziggler

Vickie is on commentary here and apparently she isn't dating Dolph anymore. Dolph dropkicks Morrison to the floor where he holds his knee as we take a break. Back with Dolph in control but Morrison makes a bit of a comeback, even hitting the Moonlight Drive. That more or less ends the comeback though as Ziggler hits the Zig Zag for the win at about 2:00 shown of 5:30.

Rating: D+. Can't grade this fairly but it wasn't much of a match. Ziggler needed a win on his first match on the show so I can't really complain much here. Not much going on here as most of it was commercial.

E-Mail says that Dolph is hired, not Vickie. She's a polarizing figure but she can have a job if she beats Trish Stratus next week. Security comes and takes her away.

We get the third clip of Rock's promo last week. Cena's reply is next.

But first, a look at The Chaperone!

After a final piece of Rock's promo, here's Cena to deliver the Final Knockout. Apparently he struck a nerve with Rock last week and Rock calls him various kinds of breakfast cereals. Cena likes the schtick but apparently Rock doesn't like rap. So tonight, Cena will do it in hip hop. I've always wanted to know what the difference is so this should be educational. He talks about how Rock was reading off a teleprompter last week and how the only thing Rock is beating is himself. Cena was here last week unlike Rock. Rock is a

disgrace and needs to just show up. He says he'll give Rock a pearl necklace, which he produces from his pocket. Cena has another pocket, this time with Rock's new shirt in it. "I Bring It Via Satellite!" That was good. Cena says not to call him out again because that's bringing a knife to a gun fight.

Cena turns around and walks into a belt shot from Miz who leaves him laying. It's aboutt ime Miz gets involved like this. He's been left out in the cold which makes me think there's no title change coming at Mania. Cena staggers up and takes another shot. Miz says he's tired of being disrespected and every time Rock and Cena go at it, Miz leaves Cena laying. Miz: "The Rock, John Cena, Randy Savage and Liz. Steve Austin and Bret Hart, they're nothing compared to The Miz." Those might not be the right names but it's the right rhyme. Miz looks into the camera and tells Rock he's the star of Mania. He says he'll take Rock's glasses, his catchphrases, his father and his grandfather and shove them in Rock. Skull Crushing Finale to Cena and a People's Elbow ends the show.

Overall Rating: B+. This was much better than last week. There was an energy here and a lot happened on this show. Knowing that next week we get a Trish match as well as potentially more Austin and Rock and JBL, this worked rather well. Mania is taking shape and it's very fun to see the people that come out of the woodwork for the build to this show. This is a show where the wrestling being light is an exception when they pack so much stuff in as almost everything had a point and wasn't rehashing already established stuff. Good show and I'm looking forward to next week, which wasn't the case 7 days ago.