

Monday Night Raw – July 18, 2011 – Why Do One Night Tournaments Suck So Hard? Oh and Vince is Fired.

Monday Night Raw

Date: July 18, 2011

Location: Resch Center, Green Bay, Wisconsin

Commentators: Michael Cole, Jerry Lawler

This is a very different era for Raw as Punk is now world champion but has apparently left the company with the championship. Also we have Alberto Del Rio as the Money in the Bank winner who didn't cash in officially last night because the bell never rang. This should be a very interesting show so let's get to it.

Here's Vince to open the show. Nice to see them going straight into the big story. Johnny Ace is with him. Vince's punk jacket isn't quite as manly as something Bret would wear but most men aren't Bret Hart. The locker room is all watching on a monitor in the back. The fans chant for Punk and Vince says he'll never say that name again. Punk is an ingrate apparently and walked out on the fans, the locker room and everyone that has ever been in this ring.

Vince says no one is bigger than the WWE and lists off a bunch of names. There will be a new WWE Champion crowned tonight in an 8 man tournament. Ziggler vs. Rey is one of the matches. Swagger vs. Truth. Kofi vs. Del Rio and Miz vs. Riley...again. He addresses Cena not being in the match because Cena let everyone down last night. Cena will face unmentioned consequences. Vince promises we'll always remember tonight so enjoy the show.

We talk about Cena tweeting that he's been fired and if that's hot it is, Cena is sorry to Rock.

WWE Championship Tournament Quarterfinals: The Miz vs. Alex Riley

Miz is limping but the fact that he's out there is a great sign after how bad his knee looked. Riley's entrance and the bell are after the break. Here we go and Riley goes after the bad knee which is rather smart. He has psychology at least. A kick to the knee puts Miz down and he works it over a bit. Miz's knee goes around the post and Riley gets two back in. Riley's shoulder goes into the post and here comes Miz.

Miz throws on a cravate to slow Riley down. You have to win by pinfall or submission so there are no DQs or countouts. Riley manages to ram Miz's neck into his knee to take over. Spinebuster gets two. The inverted DDT and the Finale don't work so Miz goes up. He jumps into a really bad Texas Cloverleaf (called a Sharpshooter by Cole) but manages to get a rope. Alex hammers away and Miz is staggering. And never mind as Riley walks into the Skull Crushing Finale for the clean pin at 4:57.

Rating: C. Nice to see Miz get a clean win over Riley as he was starting to look far too weak. A deep run in this tournament could help him a lot as this win did. Pretty average match here but for a TV match in a tournament that needs to have relatively quick matches, this was perfectly fine.

Video on John Morrison who is coming back soon from his neck injury apparently.

WWE Championship Tournament Quarter-Finals: R-Truth vs. Jack Swagger

Swagger grabs a headlock to start us off. Truth keeps talking to himself as they circle each other a bit more. Apparently Big Show will be out for two months. Truth gets a victory roll for two as Truth does his weird pelvic thrust dance. Belly to belly gets two for Swagger. Swagger beats on Truth a bit more before the Vader Bomb gets two. Double chickenwing goes on Truth as the crowd doesn't care. Truth starts his comeback but misses the Axe kick. It's countered into the ankle lock but Truth counters into a rollup for the pin at 4:20.

Rating: C-. This was a weird one as the heel vs. heel dynamic was kind of all over the place. Truth was moving around fast like a face would do but since both are heels it's kind of hard to call. Either way it wasn't anything all that special but with just over four minutes and no feud to work off of, how good can you really get?

WWE Championship Tournament Quarter-Finals: Alberto Del Rio vs. Kofi Kingston

Alberto is VERY fired up about being Mr. Money in the Bank. He talks about trying to cash in last night but Punk ran away. Alberto has a surprise and RICARDO IS BACK! Why this is exciting is beyond me but you have to shout at a return!!! The bell rings after a break and Del Rio gets a fast seated dropkick to the back of the head for two. Alberto goes after the leg of Kofi which is a change of pace for him.

Kofi starts his jumping around and hits a back elbow to take Del Rio down. Rock apparently has begged Vince not to fire Cena. This match seems kind of rushed. Del Rio is sent to the floor and Kofi hits a sweet dive to take Alberto down. Kofi takes too long to come back in and gets caught by an enziguri for two. Off to a chinlock which doesn't last long

at all. Another kick gets two.

Elbow drop gets the same and we're back to the chinlock. Kofi starts his comeback and the crowd finally reacts. Boom Drop is avoided though and Del Rio gets a tilt-a-whirl backbreaker for two. Cross armbreaker is countered into a rollup for the pin out of nowhere at approximately 5:00.

Rating: C. Rather surprised by the pin here but Alberto losing makes things more interesting as far as surprise winners could go. I didn't like the match itself for the most part as it seemed kind of rushed but the ending helped it a bit. Nice to see Kofi get an actual big win for once too.

Summerslam Recall is from 1992 where Bulldog beat Bret.

Kofi says he's excited and tonight is a new opportunity. That's one down and two to go.

WWE Championship Tournament Quarter-Finals: Rey Mysterio vs. Dolph Ziggler

Ziggler trabs him to start but Rey speeds things up to escape. Rey is tossed to the floor and takes a nice flapjack to put him down again. In the ring that gets two as does a big elbow drop. Off to a stump puller which is an old school submission. Dolph takes him down to the mat and has been in control for most of the match. Splash in the corner misses though and Rey gets a quick two count.

Seated senton off the top hits but Ziggler gets a sunset flip. They exchange some kicks, resulting in Dolph getting a two count. Clothesline misses for Dolph and the sleeper is countered. Rey counters into a 619 attempt but Dolph ducks and hits a reverse slam for two. 619 hits on the second attempt and a top rope splash pins the US Champion clean at 5:00.

Rating: C. Not bad again here but at the same time it was kind of boring again. These five minute matches can only be so good because they have to fly through everything instead of letting a match build itself up. That gets really annoying quickly and it certainly has in these four matches so far. Still though not bad.

Jerry calls Punk the former champion.

Updated brackets:

Mysterio vs. R-Truth

Kofi vs. Miz

Vince is talking to Johnny Ace about the tournament.

Face Diva Team vs. Heel Diva Team

Like I'm listing off 12-14 Divas for a two minute match. Beth vs. Rosa to start and they botch something badly. Slingshot suplex hits and everything breaks down within about 15 seconds. Glam Slam and we're done at 1:02. About as good as I was expecting. Anything with Kelly in those tiny white shorts is never a bad thing though.

WWE Championship Tournament Semi-Finals: Kofi Kingston vs. The Miz

Kofi immediately goes for the knee and Miz is having to fight through the issues. Kofi does his reversal off the ropes with his hair. They horribly botch a dropkick as Miz falls before it even hits. Double stomp gets two for Kofi but he gets crotched soon after that. Slingshot elbow gets two for Kofi but Miz rolls through a top rope cross body. He hits more or less a Stunner to the knee and loads up Trouble in Paradise,

only for Miz to head to the apron to escape. Miz gets put into a rollup for two but gets a modified Snake Eyes and hits the Finale to end it at 3:45. Miz is bleeding from the mouth a bit.

Rating: D+. Didn't feel this one at all. The quick endings are crippling this thing but having seven matches in two hours and all with clean endings is probably asking too much. Not a horrible match I guess but at the same time this was way too rushed as they were trying to get too much in there. As with almost all these matches, they would be better with more time.

Truth says he should be champion and there's a conspiracy. The Little Jimmys better close their eyes because the title is gonna get got.

Video on Andy from Tough Enough who grew up in a very bad neighborhood apparently, complete with a meth lab.

WWE Championship Tournament Semi-Finals: Rey Mysterio vs. R-Truth

Truth takes over to start and pounds Rey down, hitting a suplex for two. They collide which of course goes badly for Rey, resulting in another two count. Off to a front facelock by Truth and a knee to Rey's ribs stops him again. After a body scissors Rey gets some momentum, including a bad looking arm drag to put Truth on the floor. Rey hits a suicide dive and we take a break.

Back with Truth holding a chinlock. Apparently Rey tried two top rope moves during the break and was $\frac{1}{2}$ with them. Truth gets an extra spinny forearm for two. 619 attempt is countered by a forearm for two. Back to the front facelock as it seems like both of them are spent. Truth charges at Rey in the corner but goes into the middle buckle instead. Rey still can't keep any momentum going and Truth hits his suplex into

the stunner for two. Rey goes to the apron and hits a headscissors to set up the 619. Top rope splash puts him into the finals at 12:48.

Rating: D+. Not a horrible match but there was WAY too much laying around. This show is just draining and it's the same problem as there always is in one night tournaments: the uniqueness of seeing each person goes away quickly because we're going to see the finalists three times in one night which is just way too much. Not bad but rather dull at times.

Rey stays in the ring for the main event which is next.

And before the bell here's Vince in that pink jacket again. Miz isn't even out there yet. Vince sounds like he calls it the WWF Title. I'm pretty sure he did. He has to hurry though because there's something else he needs to do. No title match? Apparently not as Vince says this is bigger than Rey. Sadly enough he doesn't make the required joke. Yep the match is postponed so no match here.

Vince reiterates that no one is bigger than the WWE, including John Cena. There's a CM Punk chant. Vince talks about how this isn't about his ego and how he did what was right from a business perspective. This was a long term decision and in time, the fans will thank him. Let's get this over with apparently and here's Cena.

Cena says he isn't going to go through some big rant or tirade and he knows what's coming. He isn't going to go through what Shawn Michaels went through. Apparently this is about Montreal somehow and how Shawn had to go through the constant reminders of how he screwed Bret. Cena doesn't want to be remembered as the guy that screwed CM Punk.

Last night was about Vince wanting to keep his bubble intact because no one can embarrass Vince. Vince needed a patsy but

Cena wasn't going to play ball that way. Cena tells Punk that was a great match. He wasn't going to take the title that way because it would have made it look meaningless. That's true to an extent. Cena says Vince now has about 8 months to find a new opponent for Rock. Somehow he's sure Vince can pull it off though so it doesn't really matter.

Cena says that we should just get to it. He says if Vince has to fire him here tonight, he'll keep doing it on someone else's TV show...Brother. Hokey smoke we just got an actual Impact reference. Cena starts to walk but Vince stops him. And.....it's time to play the game? Here's HHH of all people in a suit. Vince is all happy to see him but HHH isn't thrilled.

There was a board of directors meeting this morning and he says that twice for some reason. The board is concerned about the current situation. HHH wants to take this to the back so it doesn't have to be in person. The board however is about Vince. It's true that Vince built all this, but at the same time they're worried about Vince's "extremely questionable decisions" as of late.

HHH again offers to take this to the back but Vince says do it here. The board has asked HHH to come here to tell Vince that there's an injunction against him with a vote of no confidence. Vince laughs it off but apparently the family agrees. On top of that, the board has appointed someone to take over the day to day operations. That would be.....HHH apparently. Cena IS NOT fired and HHH is about to cry. Vince is officially relieved of his duties (HUGE pop for that) and HHH breaks down. He loves "pop" and he's sorry. Vince stands in the middle of the ring and HHH walks out. A thank you Vince chant ends this.

Overall Rating: C+. What a difference 15 minutes makes. I had this all ready to go with a bad grade and then they spring this Vince is fired thing on me. HHH as the new Mr. McMahon could work incredibly well as he's someone we're familiar with

and he could even jump in the ring once in awhile. I liked the ending a lot and I'm very interested in where this could go. The first two hours were pretty awful but the ending is awesome stuff indeed. Good ending to an otherwise bad show.

Results

The Miz b. Alex Riley – Skull Crushing Finale

R-Truth b. Jack Swagger – Rollup

Kofi Kingston b. Alberto Del Rio – Rollup

Rey Mysterio b. Dolph Ziggler – Top Rope Splash

Kelly Kelly/AJ/Kaitlyn/Gail Kim/Beth Phoenix/Eve Torres/Natalya b. Rosa Mendes/Tamina/Bella Twins/Maryse/Alicia Fox

The Miz b. Kofi Kingston – Skull Crushing Finale

Rey Mysterio b. R-Truth – Top Rope Splash