

Monday Night Raw – July 25, 2011 – I’m Digging This New Regi... PUNK IS BACK!!!

Monday Night Raw

Date: July 25, 2011

Location: Hampton Coliseum, Hampton, Virginia

Commentators: Michael Cole, Jerry Lawler

It’s the first week without Vince McMahon at the helm and the first day of the HHH run WWE. This should be a rather change heavy show in theory but it’s possible that said changes will be slower and more subtle. Also tonight is The Miz vs. Rey Mysterio for the vacant WWE Championship in the tournament final. It’ll certainly be eventful. Let’s get to it.

We immediately open the show with the WWE Championship match! Not a bad way to get going.

WWE Championship Tournament Final: Rey Mysterio vs. The Miz

Most of the roster is watching in the back. Big match intros occur as they should. Feeling out process to start and Rey takes over with some speed. Miz counters a rana to launch Rey into the top turnbuckle to change momentum. It’s probably a good thing that they waited a week to let them rest up. Corner clothesline gets two for Miz. Knee to the ribs gets the same.

Miz sends him to the floor and adds a baseball slide to keep Rey down. The fans are totally behind Rey here as is probably expected. With Rey on the apron facing down Miz misses a kick but gets sent into the steps shoulder first. Both guys are down as we take a break. Back with Miz holding a chinlock and the third anti-politics line from the announcers. Miz takes him to the corner but Rey fights him off and goes up.

Seated senton hits and Rey speeds things up. Springboard spinning cross body gets two. Miz drills him in the ribs but a sunset flip doesn't work. Rey can't kick him in the head with that swinging kick and Miz grabs a DDT for two. A big boot gets the same. It's been about 80-90% Miz in this match. Victory roll gets two for the masked man. A dropkick to the knee looks to set up the 619 but Miz ducks.

Miz tries a powerbomb near the ropes but Rey counters into another rana attempt. That doesn't work as Miz hits a pretty sweet slingshot sitout powerbomb for a close two. Miz loads up the Finale but Rey climbs up onto the corner and elbows his way out of it. He gets caught in the Tree of Woe though and Miz drives in some knees. A charging knee hits the buckle though and Rey hits a rana to set up the 619. Top rope splash gives Rey the title clean at 13:20.

Rating: B-. Not bad here but it wasn't quite epic or anything. This felt like any TV main event. It's a good match but Rey just hit his finishers and won the title. I did like the selling of the knee from last week which is a very nice touch. Either way, good stuff here and fine for a TV title match.

Post match Rey gets kneed in the back and HERE'S ALBERTO TO CASH IN! Rey dives on him though and Alberto picks up his case and runs. That wasn't a cash-in he says due to the bell never ringing. That's true so it makes sense.

HHH will give a State of the WWE Address tonight.

The roster congratulates Rey in the back and he gets champagne poured on him. Cena, who looks like a foot taller than Rey, shakes his hand and says good job. Rey says it was worth it and that he's going home to his family with the gold.

We get a shortened version of HHH and Vince last night.

Dolph Ziggler vs. Evan Bourne

Dolph has a new somewhat slower rock version of his theme. Pretty sure this is non-title. Yeah it's non-title. Bourne gets a shot to the head to send Dolph to the floor for a bit. Back in the ring Dolph avoids an enziguri and hits a Fameasser for two. Dropkick gets the same and we're off to a chinlock. Splash misses in the corner and here comes Bourne. Jerry makes what is I believe the fourth political/Obama reference of the night. Shooting Star misses and there's the Zig Zag. No cover though as he puts on the sleeper and we're done at 3:27.

Rating: C. This was fine. This is also what Zigler needs: wins over guys that he should be able to beat where he has to work a bit to get them. Not every match with a midcard champion has to result in an upset. You get an ok match out of it and Zigler looks a bit more credible. Nothing to complain about there.

Kofi vs. Alberto tonight.

The Keith Stone beer guy hits on the Bellas and uses a marker to tell them apart. The other isn't happy and now there's a full tattoo on his arm.

Maryse/Melina vs. Kelly Kelly/Eve Torres

At least they all look good. Eve and Maryse start and Eve hits a downward spiral and then dances before trying a standing moonsault for two. Maryse gives her a Stinkface and Kelly comes in. Everything breaks down and Melina misses a charge, allowing the K2 to end it at 2:51. Thank goodness I don't have to rate it. Match was AWFUL but the girls looked good.

R-Truth is talking to HHH and we can't hear what's being said. The Address is next and there's a major return promised.

Cee Lo Green will be performing at Summerslam. Because all the other concerts at wrestling events have gone so well you know?

Here's HHH and it's time for the State of the WWE Address.

This place is awesome and let's thank Vince for it. However he's not here to talk about the past but rather the future. Tonight there's a new WWE Champion and his name is Rey Mysterio. However, tonight there's going to be ANOTHER WWE Championship match tonight. Rey is going to defend against...John Cena. Oh dear.

Also there has been someone who the WWE Universe has been asking about all week. Cue CM Punk's chant. Someone is coming back to Raw tonight...and it's not Punk. Cue JR of all people who is back on Raw. Cole throws down his headset and stands on the announce table as JR is next to King. Cole talks to HHH and says JR is the walking dead, not the future. He's done everything the company has asked for but the one thing he won't do is sit there with this hayseed. He makes fun of JR and asks why he's here. JR is fat and his restaurants failed don't you know.

HHH asks if Cole is done. His first inclination was to fire Cole and bring JR back. The problem is that Cole has a huge severance package so it's not worth it to fire him. However, if Cole wants to leave that's cool but he'll be in breach of contract and will forfeit all future earnings. Cole has the rest of the night off and he has until Friday to decide. If he's on Smackdown, he'll keep his job but if he's not there then good luck in your future endeavors. Cole sits down and says he doesn't quit. HHH says not so fast because you have a match tonight.

Cole is told he's next and that his gear is in the back. Here's R-Truth who says it's out with the old and in with the new. He says HHH has been part of the conspiracy since Day One and now HHH is the man. Little Jimmy cost him his match at Capitol Punishment and spiders and heights cost him MITB. Truth wants to know what the boss is going to do about the conspiracy. HHH wants to know who Truth is talking to: him, or the guys next to Truth.

Truth keeps talking to people that aren't there and HHH does the same. Now the invisible people are about to fight. Truth calls HHH crazy and the crowd gets a good laugh out of it. Truth says HHH is the Game but he's not playing. Truth drops the mic and leaves. HHH: "Hey all of you stop!" HHH says he re-signed another guy and he wanted a piece of Truth. Heeeeeere's Jomo, for some reason not in a shirt. Wait was Morrison fired or something? They fight on the ramp and Morrison takes over, hitting Starship Pain to stand tall.

Here's Michael Cole in HHH attire, complete with King of Kings as his music and a bottle of water. Oh my oh my. He even does the water spritz. And his opponent is....

Michael Cole vs. Zack Ryder

Oh my again. JR actually calls Ryder an internet sensation. Rough Ryder and we're done in 28 seconds.

Kofi Kingston vs. Alberto Del Rio

This is a rematch from the tournament last week where Kofi got the clean upset win. Ricardo is back now. Alberto is in white now. He takes Kofi down almost immediately and gets a dropkick to the back of the head for no count. Kofi tries to speed things up and gets a crucifix into a sunset flip position for two. Alberto is sent to the floor and runs as Kofi teases a dive. Kofi is all fired up as we take a break.

Back with Alberto working on the arm. We get a clip from the break of Alberto hitting the running enziguri to Kofi while he was on the top, injuring the arm. Kofi starts his comeback and hits some kicks and a jumping clothesline to set up the Boom Drop which hits. Trouble in Paradise misses and there's the Codebreaker to the arm for two. Pendulum kick by Kofi sets up a victory roll for a VERY close two as Alberto grabs the rope. I thought that was it. Del Rio heads to the floor but catches Kofi with a guillotine over the top. Cross armbreaker goes on and we're done at 7:18.

Rating: C+. Pretty decent little match here with Del Rio looking dominant again. Last week was a fine example of how you can lose and not lose your heat. Alberto looks fine here and him beating Kofi here is a nice rebound win for him because he did it clean. I hope that's a sign of HHH's time on Raw because sometimes (not always) clean wins are far more helpful than cheating ones.

HHH will be on Smackdown. Awesome.

Miz wants to know why Cena has a title match tonight. He says Cena got all of us into this situation in the first place. Miz thinks things have gone from bad to worse with Cena around now and that Cena should have been fired last week. The face of the WWE has no face. Oh and Miz will be on George Lopez on Wednesday. HHH has made mistakes and Miz isn't thrilled with them.

Raw World Title: John Cena vs. Rey Mysterio

There's a bigger border on the belt now. Cena comes out post break. There's a Divas Battle Royal next week on Raw. Rey gets a kick to the leg to start and there's a second one. They're kind of feeling each other out to start. There are three more of them but Cena runs Rey over with a shoulder block for two. Rey gets a sunset flip kind of move for two and grabs a headlock.

Cena gets a belly to back to escape and gets two at the same time. Rey goes for the knee again but Cena dodges. He misses a charge though and hits the buckle chest first, falling to the floor. The dueling chants begin and Rey hits a springboard flip dive to the floor. Rey speeds things up but gets his head taken off by a clothesline. Back in and Cena gets a waistlock but Rey gets up and hits a DDT for two.

STF doesn't work as Rey gets to the ropes. 619 is caught and Cena tosses him onto his shoulder for that sitout powerslam for two. Here comes Cena's ending sequence but Rey fires off a

dropkick to block a shoulder. Nice counter and it's remarkable how few people have blocked that before. Rey tries to speed it up but his spinning cross body is caught in an FU attempt which is also reversed.

Both guys are down and Rey drop toeholds him into the buckle. Seated Senton hits but Cena tries to roll through into the STF. Rey counters into an STF of his own. Cena gets up on one leg into an AA position but the leg gives out and Cena collapses, right into 619 position. It hits this time and Rey goes up top for the splash but it eats knees. Rey tries a rana out of the corner but Cena shoves him off in something resembling a powerbomb.

Cena loads up the top rope Fameasser but it turns into a leg drop on a standing Rey which only gets two. The fans are WAY into this too and I can't blame them as it's been a solid match. Cena sets the AA but Rey elbows out of it. Another 619 is set up but Cena catches him in the AA and is champion again at 12:47. I can live with this I think.

Rating: B+. Solid stuff here as Cena got to show off his power and how effective it could be. I'm not sure what more they could do given the amount of time they had. Rey's STF was a cool addition which we haven't seen before on Cena, or at least not that I can remember. Good stuff here as both guys usually bring it in big matches.

Cena helps Rey up and celebrates with the title but some music starts up. It's a song called Cult of Personality.....PUNK IS BACK! Cena holds up his title. Punk holds up his title. They stare it down as the show ends with Cena leaving.

Overall Rating: A+. This was a pretty excellent episode of Raw. We had history making stuff, a new champion, a pair of returns, no truly bad matches (the Divas make up for their weak wrestling) and a good HHH segment. I like where things are going here and things worked well here. This was one of

the better Raws in awhile and I liked it quite a bit.

Results

Rey Mysterio b. The Miz – Top rope splash

Dolph Ziggler b. Evan Bourne – Sleeper

Kelly Kelly/Eve Torres b. Melina/Maryse – K2 to Melina

Zack Ryder b. Michael Cole – Rough Ryder

Alberto Del Rio b. Kofi Kingston – Cross Armbreaker

John Cena b. Rey Mysterio – Attitude Adjustment