

Smackdown – January 4, 2013: So If Monday Was Raw, This Must Be Cooked

Smackdown

Date: January 4, 2013

Location: Richmond Coliseum, Richmond, Virginia

Commentators: John Bradshaw Layfield, Josh Matthews

Welcome to the day of the year where more stuff happens in wrestling than any other. Whether it be the NJPW supershow or the Fingerpoke of Doom or Foley winning the title or Hogan debuting on Impact or Bret and Shawn burying the hatchet, something ALWAYS happens on January 4. Odds are not much of note will happen tonight, but things in the WWE will pick up big on Monday when Rock returns. Let's get to it.

The opening video is about Orton returning to fight the Shield tonight as Alberto attacking Big Show after Ricardo got beaten up.

Here's Orton to open the show. He says that his new year's resolution is to become World Champion again. For some reason Smackdown isn't his show anymore, so he's entering the Royal Rumble. This brings out Sheamus who enters the Rumble as well. He's also here to thank Orton for his help with the Shield on Raw. Orton says that was for himself and now Sheamus and starts talking about the Rumble again. Sheamus says he knows a bit about the Rumble since he won it last year. They say they'll eliminate each other, so here's Big Show with something of his own to say.

The champ says all the winner of the Rumble gets is a shot at his fist, which is what Sheamus has gotten every single time they've fought. If Orton wants a shot, that's fine with him so come take a shot. Cue Cesaro who makes fun of these bragging Americans. Sheamus says he's from Ireland but Cesaro doesn't really care. Orton says how about this lazy American comes and RKOs Cesaro. Booker, tag match set, end opening segment.

Kingston gets his rematch tonight.

The Miz vs. Heath Slater

Did Drew always have that cowboy hat? JBL: "Here comes the air guitar playing version of the Spirit Squad." So which one is Dolph Ziggler? Apparently this is because of 3MB being on MizTV the week before the Slammys. Feeling out process to start with Miz cranking on Slater's arm. A dropkick of all things puts Heath down and Miz works on a headlock. That stays on for a good while, suggesting this is going to be a long match.

Miz makes fun of the air guitar playing and pokes Slater in the eye. I would say it worked for Roddy Piper but Miz hasn't acted like Piper in years. Think back to the time he was champion: he ran his mouth a lot, he wasn't the best technical guy in the world, no one could seem to beat him no matter what, he had a lackey who was better in the ring than he was, and he somehow kept getting by the top guy in the company. Sound like any famous kilt wearing wrestlers?

Miz hiptosses Slater down but McIntyre trips him up to change momentum. Miz has to fight off the other 3MB guys, drawing an ejection for them and a quick rollup for two on Slater. We take a break and come back with Slater pounding away in the corner. Miz fights back so Slater bails again, only to get clotheslined down again. JBL talks about how important it was for Miz to team with Cena on Raw. Remember kids: title reigns from two years ago aren't as important as a one off tag match that opens up a New Year's Eve episode of Raw that no one watched.

Back inside, Miz misses a charge and his shoulder goes into the post, giving Slater something to focus on. After escaping a quick arm hold, Miz grabs a sunset flip for two before having his head kicked off for the same result for Slater. The sequence works so well that we do the exact same thing but with a clothesline instead of a kick by Slater. Miz comes back with a knee to the ribs and a kick to the face for two, only to have Slater send him into the buckle to stop the comeback.

Slater wraps Miz's arm around the post as JBL goes back and forth between praising Slater's abilities and blasting his non-existent singing abilities. Miz suplexes out of a headlock and both guys are down. Slater

goes back to the arm so Miz uses the good elbow to take over again. A neckbreaker gets two for Heath but Miz shrugs it off and hits his signature stuff, finishing Slater with the Skull Crushing Finale at 12:22 shown of 15:22.

Rating: C. My first guess as to why Miz isn't getting over as a face: it took him fifteen minutes to beat Heath Slater in a one on one match. That being said, I'm not going to complain about a match with a decent story in it and some psychology thrown in. The fact that Slater had nothing to be able to finish Miz off with didn't help, but I could come up with far worse ways to kill time on this show.

We recap Kofi losing the title on Monday.

Barrett doesn't want to talk about losing to Kofi in a gauntlet match on Main Event.

Great Khali/Hornswoggle/Natalya vs. Primo/Epico/Rosa Mendes

This is an excuse to show the Mae Young stuff from Raw again. You know, because THAT is something to be proud of. The girls start things off with Natalya taking over with ease. Rosa tags in Epico, who gets to fight Khali. Epico turns around, sees Khali, and tags out to Primo. Khali hits a big chop and it's off to Horny for some comedy offense. He hits a Stunner on Epico but Primo finally takes him down with a shot to the head. JBL: "Doesn't PETA have rules against that?" Horny finally tags Khali, house is cleaned, and the big chop pins Epico at 4:03.

Rating: D. I feel sorry for Epico and Primo. They aren't ever going to be the kings of the tag division, but man alive they deserve better than to have to sell for Hornswoggle's offense. This was one of those comedy matches that was lacking the comedy, but at least it was pretty short.

Kofi says this isn't about momentum because it's likely his last chance at the title. I highly doubt that.

Intercontinental Title: Kofi Kingston vs. Wade Barrett

Feeling out process to start with Kofi using his speed to escape the power brawling Barrett. Off to an armbar by the challenger which doesn't

last that long. Wade bails to the floor but Kofi follows him out and sends him into the steps to take over again. Back in and a springboard forearm to the head gets two. The champ sends him into the corner and things slow down again. It's rather interesting how the fans seemed to be WAY more interested in Miz vs. Slater than they are here for a title match. I'm sure the fans not moving during the Miz match isn't noteworthy at all.

We hit the chinlock which doesn't last long as Kofi tries some fast rollups for two each. Barrett gets backdropped to the floor, followed by a dive from Kofi to take him out. Barrett seems fine to chill on the floor for a countout while claiming an injury but Kofi will have none of that. Wade hides in the ropes again as we take a break. Back with Wade knocking Kingston down with something we didn't see for no cover.

Back to the chinlock before Barrett shifts his attack to the ribs, firing off some kicks and dropping a middle rope elbow for two. Kofi gets placed in the ropes and kicked to the floor again, drawing what appears to be legitimate heat from the crowd. Kingston gets back in at nine and immediately has to block a superplex. The top rope cross body gets two on Barrett and Kofi wins a slugout.

Kofi loads up another springboard but Barrett avoids it, only to get caught in the SOS for two. A BIG running kick to the side of Barrett's head sets up the Boom Drop. Kofi loads up Trouble in Paradise but Barrett ducks, setting off a very hot sequence of near falls for both guys. Winds of Change (Boss Man Slam) gets two for Wade but Kofi kicks his head off, sending him out to the floor.

After Kofi finally gets him back inside, Barrett grabs the rope at two. The place is really getting into this. Kingston charges into a boot in the corner but ducks the Bull Hammer, only to jump off the middle rope right into said Hammer, which retains the title for Barrett at 13:14 shown of 16:44.

Rating: B-. What is with all this wrestling tonight? That's two matches out three that broke fifteen minutes, which is almost unheard of anymore. Kofi continues to be the guy that can have a good match with anyone and

contrary to some opinions, there is absolutely nothing wrong with having that role for the next five years for him. Just because he doesn't make it to the main event doesn't mean he's a failure by any stretch. Good match here as you would expect from these two.

Layla vs. Tamina Snuka

Tamina chokes Layla against the ropes to start. Layla stares at Tamina like an idiot before getting shoved to the outside. We hit the chinlock as the crowd is SILENT. JBL makes fun of Josh's inability to talk to women as the match is dragging despite only running a minute and a half so far. Layla makes her comeback and hits a dropkick to the side of the head before screaming. When you can understand every word she's shouting, you might need to do a better job at firing up the crowd. The bouncing cross body is caught in a slam and the Superfly Splash gets the pin at 3:05. I think you can figure out the rating by yourselves.

The Raw ReBound is the really stupid ending to the show.

Randy Orton/Sheamus vs. Big Show/Antonio Cesaro

Cesaro and Sheamus start things off and pound on each other for a bit as you would expect the two of them to do. Off to Orton for a suplex for two and here's Sheamus again. Cesaro gets pounded some more as Big Show yells instructions to him. Orton comes in and pounds him in the head for a bit before Sheamus gets another tag. Cesaro finally gets in some shots to the ribs and there's the tag to Big Show.

Show puts Sheamus down and swings at Orton, allowing Sheamus to come back with a shot to the head. The good guys double clothesline Show to the floor and we take a break. Back with Sheamus sending Cesaro to the apron for the ten forearms. Show makes a blind tag and spears Sheamus down as momentum really shifts for the first time. Cesaro can be heard telling Show what to do (a recurring theme tonight) as Show gets two off an elbow drop.

The referee tells Show to let Sheamus out of the corner, but Show yelling at the referee allows Sheamus to get in some offense for a change. Show misses a charge in the corner but comes back with a chokeslam for two. I

guess that's officially just another big move for Show anymore. The KO punch misses and Sheamus kicks Show's head off to put both guys down.

Double tags bring in Cesaro and Orton and it's time for Randy's finishing sequence. Cesaro counters the Elevated DDT and Sheamus tags himself in, much to Orton's annoyance. White Noise takes Cesaro down but as Sheamus loads up the Brogue Kick, Orton comes in with an RKO. Sheamus reluctantly gets the pin at 10:36 shown of 14:06.

Rating: C+. Standard main event tag match here but it's clear that they're sowing the seeds for at least the Rumble and possibly an Orton heel turn and the world title match at Wrestlemania. They didn't have any actual contact but they didn't need to, which is something a tag match like this is good for. I'm talking about Orton and Sheamus if that wasn't really clear.

Sheamus and Orton stare each other down (not really out of rage) to end the show.

Overall Rating: B. When you have three matches that are about fifteen minutes each, it's hard to say it's not at least a pretty good show. This is the kind of stuff that Smackdown can offer as a legit different style from Raw, as there were zero backstage segments here and almost all wrestling. The quality wasn't always great, but it was nice to see a wrestling show for a change. Good stuff.

Results

The Miz b. Heath Slater – Skull Crushing Finale

Great Khali/Hornswoggle/Natalya b. Primo/Epico/Rosa Mendes – Chop to Epico

Wade Barrett b. Kofi Kingston – Bull Hammer

Tamina Snuka b. Layla – Superfly Splash

Sheamus/Randy Orton b. Big Show/Antonio Cesaro – RKO to Cesaro

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