

Monday Night Raw – March 4, 2013: The Old Nostalgia Problems Are Back

Monday Night Raw

Date: March 4, 2013

Location: First Niagara Center, Buffalo, New York

Commentators: Jerry Lawler, Michael Cole

We're inching closer to Wrestlemania and the Raw World Title match is set. Rock is going to be defending against John Cena, who locked up his spot as #1 contender after winning a masterpiece of a match against CM Punk last week. That now leaves Punk without an opponent for Wrestlemania so maybe tonight we'll find out who that is. The rest of the card will likely continue to take shape as well. It's also Old School Raw II which was incredibly entertaining the first time around. Let's get to it.

After we see the new WWE logo and the old school Raw entrance from the early 90s, we hear a gong go off in the arena as the Undertaker makes his return. He appears on stage and a Wrestlemania logo appears behind him...and that's that. Ok then. Also the set is the old RAW letters.

After a quick video on the history of Raw, (and a shot of Cole in the snappy yellow blazer and King in full royal attire), here's CM Punk to really get us going. We have the old school red, white and blue ropes and the guardrail instead of a barricade. Punk talks about being cheated out of the world title last week by the fans (not exactly sure how) and if he isn't fighting for the world title at Wrestlemania, what's the point in fighting at all? Then he saw that Undertaker was back and changed his thoughts. if he can't be world champion, he might as well be the guy that makes Undertaker 20-1.

Randy Orton comes out though because he has other ideas. Orton thinks

that since he's been the dominant predator in WWE in the last few years, he should get the chance to avenge his past loss to Undertaker at Wrestlemania. Big Show adds his name into things and says it should be a giant facing the Undertaker. Sheamus thinks he should get a shot too since he's never lost to Undertaker, but Vickie Guerrero interrupts before anyone else can add their names. Tonight it's a fatal fourway between Orton, Punk, Sheamus and Big Show with the winner facing Undertaker at Wrestlemania.

Ryback vs. Antonio Cesaro

Non-title here. Ryback starts off fast and rams into Cesaro to send him flying away. Back in and Ryback hits a fast suplex for no cover, sending Cesaro to the floor again. Ryback goes out to get him this time but is knocked into the old school barricade, stopping the monster cold. Cesaro throws him back in and pounds away as we take a break. Back with Cesaro countering the Meat Hook with the European Uppercut and loading up the Neutralizer, only for Ryback to counter into the Shell Shock in mid lift for the pin at 8:01.

Rating: D+. This is getting stale in a hurry. As I've complained about on Smackdown lately, having the same match over and over again isn't interesting but rather repetitive. We don't gain anything from seeing Ryback beat Cesaro over and over again. It doesn't do anything for either guy and other than the ending, this wasn't anything interesting.

Post match Mark Henry comes out and stares down Ryback but walks past him towards the ring instead of starting a fight.

Zack Ryder vs. Mark Henry

This is about what you would expect: Ryder gets in a few punches and it's the World's Strongest Slam and the pin at 54 seconds.

The Miz vs. Dolph Ziggler

Before the match, Miz has something to say but can't get his microphone to work. Once he does, he introduces Ric Flair to be in his corner. Feeling out process to start until Ziggler takes over with some shots in the corner. Miz fights back with a shot to the face and sends Ziggler out to the floor as we take a break. Back with Ziggler kicking Miz in the leg and putting on a chinlock, complete with a fancy bridge. Miz fights up and pounds away on Ziggler before sliding through his legs for two off a sunset flip.

The Reality Check gets two and Miz goes after the knee, only to be caught in a DDT. The Zig Zag is avoided but Ziggler grabs the sleeper hold instead. Miz rolls out of it and tosses Ziggler in the air so he crashes onto the mat below. A corner clothesline by Miz sets up the top rope ax handle but as the referee is checking on Ziggler, big E. Langston attacks Miz. Flair goes after Langston to no avail, but back in the ring Miz takes out Ziggler's leg and puts on the Figure Four for the submission at 10:14.

Rating: C-. I was hoping we were away from the whole Miz/Flair thing but naturally we have to keep it going. It doesn't make anyone look better but rather just gets makes Miz look like a guy doing stuff completely against his nature. The Figure Four doesn't fit for him and it's not like the hold is a big upgrade for him or anything. I'm thinking Ziggler doesn't get the title anymore, as he becomes more of a jobber every night.

It's time for Point/Counterpoint with the Rock and John Cena so here's the WWE Champion. Rock has to wait for the fans to stop cheering before he can talk. He talks about being in Panama recently but he knew he was coming to Raw so he was packing. Apparently a woman at the airport named Donna said he needed a jacket. Rock called her Sally because it doesn't matter what her name is, but he doesn't need a jacket because of the electricity inside him.

Then he got here and SWEET GOODNESS it was COLD. Not that it mattered though because FINALLY the Rock had come back to Buffalo. He's been looking forward to this day for a long time because it means we're 34 days from Wrestlemania. Cue John Cena for an interruption, or perhaps he's the counterpoint. Cena talks about how Rock has conquered everything he's done and therefore doesn't know what it's like to fail. Last year Cena talked about how he had to win the match last year but he didn't do that.

The fans chant CENA SUCKS as Cena talks about how this is his chance to rewrite history. It was no coincidence that he won the Royal Rumble on the same night that Rock won the WWE Title or that he finally beat Punk when it mattered most. The loss to the Rock is the reason everything fell apart for him last year but he gets a chance to rewrite history and he won't let it pass by.

Rock is glad to see the fire back in Cena because Cena was the man that Rock wanted to face at Wrestlemania. The Rock knows what the WWE Championship means to Cena and that no one in the WWE locker room has the fire and desire to win like Cena.....except the Rock. As much as it means to Cena, it means that much more to the Rock. When the Rock gets to connect with all of the fans, that means more to Rock than anything.

Cena quotes WWE Hall of Famer Mike Tyson by talking about wanting to eat Rock's children. It's a shame that Tyson is remembered for that, because Tyson also said that in order to be the best man living, you have to beat everyone else. The Rock is the only thing Cena hasn't been able to conquer. At Wrestlemania 29, the Rock's time is up and Cena's time is now. Rock says his time is just getting started. He has a quote for Cena: winning is about heart, but you have to have it in the right place. That's from Lance Armstrong and he was full of nonsense just like Cena.

Cena says Rock has the same confidence that he had a year ago. In 34 days, Cena is making history by becoming the WWE Champion again. Rock says the difference between the two of them is that Cena thinks he can beat Rock but Rock knows he can beat Cena. At Wrestlemania, Rock is beating Cena again, if you smell what he's cooking.

Jack Swagger vs. Jim Duggan

Swagger gets no entrance and Duggan has Sgt. Slaughter and Dusty Rhodes with him. Jack steals the 2x4 and stands on the floor for a bit before bringing the board into the ring with him and knocking out Duggan with it. He beats up the other legends as well and I don't think the bell ever rang to end this. We'll say it lasted about 45 seconds.

Swagger puts Duggan in the ankle lock post match.

We get a trailer for Marine 3.

After a break, Swagger says this is his America, but Del Rio jumps him, triggering a brawl in the back.

Ted DiBiase Sr. is at ringside for the next match.

HELL NO vs. Prime Time Players

This is non-title and apparently if the Players win, DiBiase might be their manager. Kane and Young start things off but it's quickly off to Bryan to work on Young's arm. He fires off kicks at Darren and dropkicks him down for two. Off to Titus who runs over Bryan and suplexes Young down onto Daniel's chest. Back to Darren for some fist drops for two before it's back to Titus.

After a quick chinlock, Bryan avoids a charging Titus in the corner. It's off to Kane vs. Young now with the big man running over Darren. A low dropkick has Young in trouble and there are some clotheslines in the corner. A side slam gets two for Kane as everything breaks down. Titus is low bridged to the floor and Bryan hits the running knee off the apron to take him down. Darren goes up to the middle rope but jumps into the chokeslam for the pin at 3:45.

As Tensai (now called Sweet T) and Brodus dance, here's Honky Tonk Man. Before he can say anything though, the dancing fat guys' opponents, 3MB, takes his mic away. Slater tells him to go back to Vegas with the other Elvis impersonators and get out of the ring.

3MB vs. Tensai/Brodus Clay

It's Drew McIntyre and Heath Slater here. Drew pounds away in the corner to start but gets rolled up and pinned in 25 seconds.

Post match everyone dances and Slater gets hit with a guitar.

Kofi Kingston vs. Fandango

Fandango has a good looking ballroom dancer with him. Before the match though, Fandango says he won't debut until Justin Roberts can pronounce his name correctly. Roberts tries a few times but Fandango isn't pleased. No match.

We recap the HHH/Lesnar confrontation that opened Raw last week.

Here's HHH to address Lesnar. The name graphic says that HHH

is a superstar instead of the COO or whatever his job title is. HHH says he hasn't been in the ring since eight days after Summerslam. He talked about how he might be done but he wasn't sure if he was trying to convince us or himself. After the cast was off, he was right back in the gym training. He didn't have a goal in mind though because he was doing his day job in a suit, even cutting his hair to look the part.

Then he found himself sitting in a hospital room next to an old man that just had hip replacement surgery. HHH put aside his wife and kids crying, because now he had a reason. Then the old man got out of his bed and got beaten up by Brock Lesnar again, but it made HHH happy because now he has a reason. If Lesnar thinks they're done, reach on top of your head and feel the staples that closed the cut on Lesnar's head. HHH says it's no coincidence that he's here five weeks from Wrestlemania, because he's calling Lesnar out. It's up to Lesnar now.

Shield talks about how Sheamus, Orton and Big Show are throwing their hat in the ring to face Undertaker at Wrestlemania. Rollins talks about how Shield has an undefeated streak of their own, so maybe people trying to make history should remember that the eye of justice is always watching. Big Show isn't getting another cheap shot on them either like he did on Smackdown.

Alberto Del Rio vs. Wade Barrett

Non-title of course. Wade pounds away in the corner to start but gets caught in the Backstabber for his efforts. Swagger and Colter come out to watch on the stage. Barrett slides back in and hits Winds of Change for two before dropping some elbows for the same. Off to a chinlock for a bit but Del Rio fights up and grabs the cross armbreaker on the ropes. He has

to break at four though, allowing Barrett to hit a big boot to the face, sending the world champion to the floor.

Some knees to Del Rio's head get two but Barrett misses a middle rope elbow. Del Rio kicks Barrett in the face and some clotheslines put him down. A tilt-a-whirl backbreaker puts Wade down and a low superkick gets two for Del Rio. Alberto charges into another boot though and Barrett loads up the pumphandle slam. Del Rio easily escapes though and the cross armbreaker gets the submission for Alberto at 4:56.

Rating: C. This is another match that is rapidly joining the list of matches we've seen and don't need to see again for a long time. Again, is there ANYONE else that could be used to put Del Rio over than the Intercontinental Champion? The title is a prop now because Barrett constantly loses and he never defends the stupid belt. That's what makes it a prop: no one wanting the title. If no one wants it, why should I care that Barrett owns it?

It's time for another Colter/Swagger video. They don't like the backlash they're receiving for some of their opinions. They like the times when you could be mad about someone taking something that belongs to you. Real Americans refuse to use politically correct terms. The best thing people can do is respect them, because if not there will be real Americans that are ready to fight for them.

Here are the New Age Outlaws apparently for a match. We get a censored version of the signature entrance and you can see the younger fans confused by what they're seeing. The older ones are loving it though, which is the point of a show like this.

New Age Outlaws vs. Primo/Epico

Dogg and Epico get things started and there are the shaking punches

followed by the shaky knee drop for two for Roadie. Primo distracts Dogg though and Epico gets in a dropkick to take over. The cousins work over Roadie with Epico hitting a slingshot elbow for no cover. Off to a chinlock for a bit but Roadie fights up and the two of them collide. Hot tag brings in Billy who pounds away on both guys before getting two off a tilt-a-whirl slam. Everything breaks down and the Fameasser ends Primo at 2:58.

We recap the Rock/Cena segment from earlier.

We get some TOUTING IT OUT from the fans about tonight's events.

We have a lot of birthday cakes and cupcakes for Mae Young's 90th birthday and most of the roster is here to celebrate. Mean Gene comes out to introduce Mae and the Divas help her to the ring. Everyone sings Happy Birthday to her but CM Punk interrupts. Well that was rude.

CM Punk vs. Sheamus vs. Big Show vs. Randy Orton

I think this is one fall to a finish. There are no tags so everyone is in the ring at once. Punk heads to the floor but Orton and Sheamus go out to surround him. Punk slides back in and has to fight Big Show which goes as badly as you would expect for him. Sheamus and Orton try their luck on Big Show and are both knocked down almost immediately. Orton finally gets him to the floor, giving us Sheamus vs. Randy for a bit.

Orton hits the backbreaker and Punk tries to steal a pin to no avail. The Irish Curse puts Orton down and Punk tries to steal it again. This time though Sheamus catches him and the good guys toss him to the outside. Big Show is back though and a single shot puts both Sheamus and Orton down as we take a break.

Back with Punk in control of Orton but Randy comes back with the powerslam. A t-bone suplex puts Punk down for two but Punk escapes the

Elevated DDT. Sheamus comes back in with the slingshot shoulder for two but seems to be limping a bit. There are the ten forearms to Punk's chest but Big Show takes Sheamus down with the Final Cut for two. Punk breaks it up and fires off knees to Show's head.

Show pops back up though and knocks Punk out with the WMD. Sheamus tries to fight Show and spears him into the corner with some shoulders to the ribs. The WMD misses Sheamus and a kind of cross body takes Big Show down. The giant comes right back though, only to miss a Vader Bomb. White Noise puts Big Show down but it only gets two.

Sheamus loads up the Brogue Kick on Show but Orton catches him in the powerslam. A chokeslam puts down both Orton and Sheamus but the one on Sheamus only gets two. The WMD misses Sheamus and the Brogue Kick lays out Big Show. An RKO lays out Sheamus but Punk comes in with a GTS for the pin on Orton at 12:40.

Rating: C+. While it was pretty obvious that Punk was winning here, the match wasn't bad at all. They did the right thing by having everyone moving around quickly and the finish was nicely done. Punk vs. Undertaker is a solid match and definitely the second biggest match on the show. It wasn't Punk vs. Cena but it did what it was supposed to do.

Post match Undertaker comes out to stare down Punk to end the show.

Overall Rating: C. This was good and bad at the same time. The good stuff here was the Wrestlemania build. The card seems to be mostly set now and it's time to push towards the show. That stuff, mainly Rock vs. Cena, was good for the most part. Then we get to the bad stuff, which is the Old School stuff. As I've mentioned before, having legends come out over and over again doesn't do much for the fans other than the older ones.

If you want to do nostalgia, use people like the Outlaws or bring in Val Venis or Godfather or freaking Steve Blackman or something like that. You know, people from the Attitude Era that is now apparently the GREATEST

THING EVER in wrestling. On top of that, guys like Duggan, DiBiase, Honky Tonk Man and most of the other legends here were barely ever even on Raw other than Flair and the Outlaws. Use nostalgia correctly people. I assure you it's not that hard.

Results

Ryback b. Antonio Cesaro – Shell Shock

Mark Henry b. Zack Ryder – World's Strongest Slam

The Miz b. Dolph Ziggler – Figure Four Leg Lock

Jim Duggan b. Jack Swagger via DQ when Swagger hit Duggan with a 2×4

Brodus Clay/Tensai b. 3MB – Rollup to McIntyre

Alberto Del Rio b. Wade Barret – Cross Armbreaker

New Age Outlaws b. Epico/Primo – Fameasser to Primo

CM Punk b. Big Show, Sheamus and Randy Orton – GTS to Orton

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