

Monday Night Raw – April 15, 2013: Bad Night To Be A Champion

Monday Night Raw\

Date: April 15, 2013

Location: BI-L0 Center, Greenville, South Carolina

Commentators: John Bradshaw Layfield, Michael Cole, Jerry Lawler

After last week's bizarre show with the most interesting crowd in years, we're now in a far different kind of city in front of a far different kind of people. The main story is that Ryback turned on Cena last week to presumably set up a match for the title at Extreme Rules. Other than that we have Ziggler as the new world champion and Sheamus appearing to feud with Mark Henry. Let's get to it.

We open with a recap of Ryback turning on Cena from last week. Punk is also here tonight.

Randy Orton/Sheamus vs. Big Show

Sheamus starts and is immediately sent back into the corner. He tries to fight out of it but his headlock is countered by a belly to back suplex from Big Show. A hard chop sends Sheamus to the apron but he comes back with some shoulders to the ribs and the forearms to the chest. A top rope shoulder gets two for Sheamus but the Brogue Kick is easily blocked and Sheamus is sent to the floor. Back in and Show chops Sheamus' chest half to death before getting two off the Final Cut.

Off to a quick nerve hold but Sheamus fights up, only to be caught in a side slam for two. Show loads up the Vader Bomb but Sheamus counters in an impressive looking electric chair. There's the hot tag to Orton who pounds away with everything he's got. A nice dropkick sends Show to the

apron for the Elevated DDT. The RK0 is countered but Sheamus breaks up the chokeslam with a Brogue Kick. RK0 finishes Show at 6:10.

Rating: C-. Well that happened. Seriously I don't know what else there is to say here. Big Show was at a disadvantage and got beat relatively cleanly. You would think that there was a feud for months between these guys but Orton and Sheamus had no animosity here and Big Show lost like it was no big deal, so I guess we're just moving on.

We look at 3MB interrupting HHH but getting beaten up by Shield.

3MB says they're calling out Shield.

Here's 3MB to do just that but instead of Shield, they get Brock Lesnar for a big old beating of the band. Slater gets two nasty F5's onto the barricade until Heyman comes out to call off the monster. Heyman says that Lesnar is ready for a fight and wants one with Triple H. At Wrestlemania, HHH knocked out Brock Lesnar which proves that HHH is a real man. Brock however doesn't see things that way. Now the rivalry is 1-1, so we need a third match at Extreme Rules. Since it's going to be extreme, we'll make it an old fashioned steel cage match.

US Title: Antonio Cesaro vs. Kofi Kingston

Cesaro gets a mic and yodels all the way to the ring. Kofi gets a quick rollup and backslide for two each but misses a splash into the corner. A hard clothesline puts Kofi down and there's the gutwrench suplex for two. Cesaro hooks a quick chinlock but Kofi comes back with some strikes of his own. The Boom Drop hits but Trouble in Paradise is ducked, allowing Cesaro to hit the big European uppercut for two. We take a break and come back with Cesaro pounding away with headbutts and punches in the corner.

Kofi comes back with the SOS for two and Trouble in Paradise sends Antonio to the floor. Back inside and Kofi gets two before going up top.

His cross body is caught in a tilt-a-whirl backbreaker for a VERY close two but Cesaro charges into a boot in the corner. Kofi tries a springboard cross body but gets caught in the Neutralizer position. They trade some VERY fast near falls until Kofi hits Trouble in Paradise for the pin and the title at 9:25.

Rating: B-. The early part was dull stuff but that pinfall reversal sequence was awesome. The problem here is simple though: we've seen this like five times now from Kofi. Kingston is good in the ring and will give you a solid performance every night, but he's not going to do anything special with the belt, primarily because he's not going to be given the opportunity to do so. Either way, decent match here.

Kofi says he brought the US Title back home.

We look at Ziggler cashing in last week to win the title. By that I mean they show us the entire match.

Here are Ziggler and company with something to say. Ziggler talks about how great a moment his win was last week but now he needs to top himself. He's going to start by being better than anyone else ever and not caring about the fans booing him. You show off when you're better than everyone else, but he backs it up every single night. Ziggler talks about the perks that come with being champion but here's Del Rio to interrupt.

Del Rio says he'll get his title back because he wants his rematch right now. Vickie comes out and says the match is starting RIGHT NOW. Alberto is barely able to walk here.

Smackdown World Title: Dolph Ziggler vs. Alberto Del Rio

Before the bell rings, here are Swagger and Colter to interrupt. Colter says that it was because of Swagger that Ziggler won the title, so it should be Swagger getting the title shot. Alberto decks Swagger but as he

turns around to face Ziggler. Jack pulls Alberto to the floor and wraps the leg around the post. The Patriot Lock messes up the ankle even more so no match.

HELL NO vs. Prime Time Players

Next week it's Bryan/Kane/Taker vs. Shield from London. Bryan and Titus start things off with the hard kicks to O'Neal's chest for two. Young comes in and has some better luck, allowing him to take over on Bryan. Back to Titus for a fall away slam before it's back to Young for a chinlock. Bryan fights up for the hot tag to Kane who cleans house and gets two off a side slam. The top rope clothesline gets two so it's the chokeslam to set up the top rope headbutt for the pin at 3:32.

Rating: D+. This is one of those matches that I never need to see again. We get it: the champions can beat up the Players and can beat them in about four minutes no matter what disadvantage they may be at. I know this because I've seen it happen about eight times now. Nothing to see here other than the champions on TV as usual.

Ryback (not even in the arena) talks about how Wrestlemania was the greatest night of Cena's career and the worst night of his own. Cena could only go down and Ryback could only go up. We get a clip of the beatdown last week and Ryback says he wasn't going to wait at the bottom of the ladder anymore after everything he had been through. Ryback talks about Cena giving Ryback his title shot when he was injured.

It made Ryback feel like he belonged but a promise of friendship from Cena is just a guarantee to sit in the backseat. Ryback talks about how Cena left him alone as we see clips of Shield destroying him over the last few months. We see Cena eliminating Ryback to win the Rumble and then Cena leaving Ryback alone to fight Shield and give up the pinfall because Cena had his title shot at Wrestlemania already. Last week Ryback waited for Cena to mention him but it never came, so it's time for Ryback to step out of Cena's shadow.

R-Truth vs. Wade Barrett

Non-title here. Barrett pounds away to start but Truth comes back with a side kick to the face. Barrett shrugs it off and puts Truth on the top rope before pounding away on the chest. Off to a seated abdominal stretch before Truth fights up and hits some clotheslines. The ax kick misses but Little Jimmy hits for the pin at 3:02.

Rating: D. Not that this means anything because there's a battle royal on Main Event for the #1 contendership. It also doesn't help that one of Barrett's finishing moves is basically the same thing as taking a Little Jimmy, so the ending was kind of confusing. Also, is there a point to Barrett having the title anymore? He's lost twice in 8 days as champion now.

Teddy Long comes in to see Brad Maddox and Vickie Guerrero and suggests Swagger vs. Ziggler tonight. Apparently it's happening later.

Great Khali/Santino Marella vs. Rhodes Scholars

The Scholars talk about being dwarfs on the shoulders of giants on the way to the ring. Sandow and Khali start things off with the giant hitting a loud chop in the corner. Off to Cody who wants and gets Santino. Rhodes takes over and pounds away before bringing in Damien for more of the same. There's the Wind-Up Elbow for two but Santino makes his comeback with the usual. The Cobra takes down Sandow but Cody bails to the floor. Hornswoggle hits him in the ribs with a mini Cobra to no effect so Khali steps in for the save. During the distraction, Sandow rolls up Marella for the pin at 3:19.

Rating: D+. Just a quick little tag match here as we try to give the Scholars some credibility after losing for so many months on end. If nothing else their characters are still almost perfect, which is more than you can say about most people in the company today. Also, it's REALLY nice to see some random teams like Santino and Khali. WWE has such

a huge roster so it's nice to see them use it once in awhile.

Jerry is in the ring and shows us a video of people Fandangoing around the world over the last week. This actually has become a popular trend at the moment. Fandango and his chick come out and dance for a bit before cutting Jerry off during the interview attempt. Fandango asks how Lawler's hips feel.

He asks if some fans want to go Fandangoing but since this is South Carolina, most fans don't seem interested. Before they can do it though, the fans have to pronounce his name correctly. He leads them in a pronunciation and the fans sing the song again. Fandango decides they can't say his name so they can go Fandango themselves.

Cena says he'll be in the ring if Ryback wants to come see him tonight.

Jack Swagger vs. Dolph Ziggler

Non-title again. Swagger pounds him into the corner to start so the champion slaps him. Dolph runs to the floor and jumps Swagger as he comes back in. A big boot puts Dolph down though and some knees in the corner have him in trouble. Dolph gets an elbow up in the corner and takes Swagger down with a neckbreaker for no cover. The Patriot Lock is escaped but Jack manages to crotch Ziggler on the top rope as we take a break.

Back with Swagger going shoulder first into the post and a small package getting two for Dolph. The running Vader Bomb hits the champion's feet and Ziggler makes his comeback. A dropkick and the jumping DDT get two but the Fameasser is countered into a powerbomb position. Swagger drops Ziggler back onto the top rope and gets the quick pin at 9:57.

Rating: C. This match wasn't half bad until the STUPID ending. I can't stand this concept of making the champion lose to get someone into the title hunt. You know an easier way to do this? Have Swagger in control

and have Del Rio come out for the DQ. Ziggler doesn't get pinned, Swagger can claim he had the match won, and we get the same result. But hey, why do that when we can just job the champion who has the stigma of being a glorified jobber already?

Post match Alberto pops up and beats up Swagger, putting him in the armbreaker over the stage.

Mark Henry attacks Sheamus again in the back.

Here's Punk with something to say. The fans chant for Punk in one of the few reactions of the night. Punk doesn't say anything for a bit before saying he couldn't enjoy his 434 days as champion because he was always looking around the corner. He wanted that next challenge and found it in the Rock. After that he went after the one that that could be bigger than the title he loved by going after the Streak at Wrestlemania. We get dueling Undertaker/CM Punk chants from the crowd as Punk looks sad. Punk hugs Heyman and walks away beneath the Titantron.

Booker is annoyed at Teddy in the back and makes Ziggler vs. Del Rio vs. Swagger in a triple threat,, presumably at Extreme Rules.

Kaitlyn vs. Nikki Bella

Kaitlyn shoves her around to start and then out to the floor. A baseball slide puts both Bellas down but Kaitlyn is sent into the apron a few times. Back in and Nikki stands on Kaitlyn's hair as Jerry talks about one Bella being larger than the other. Off to a chinlock for a bit until Kaitlyn fights back with some shoulder blocks. The gutbuster hits but we get Twin Magic, allowing Brie to send Kaitlyn into the ropes for the pin at 5:09.

Rating: D-. The Bellas looked hot and that's about it. The Twin Magic thing has been done so many times already, but now that one has a double

D cup and the other is maybe $\frac{1}{4}$ of that makes it REALLY difficult to buy as a finish. Then again this is the same company that said Ax and Smash were impossible to tell apart so this is easier to believe.

Sheamus/Orton vs. Big Show/Henry on Smackdown. Should be good.

Here's Cena to call out Ryback. The monster comes out a few seconds later and Cena says he isn't shaking in his boots. He says he issued an open challenge last week to any WWE Superstar but instead of coming at him like a man, Ryback waited to come at him when his back was turned. For some reason we cut to the Shield in the back as Cena talks. Production glitch I'm assuming.

Anyway, Cena says that earlier tonight Ryback made us sit through a highlight reel of excuses. There shouldn't be any excuses though because Ryback should be standing on his own feet. The things Ryback is lacking is something between his ears and something between his legs, not help from Cena. The champion gets ready to fight and they get in each others' faces, but Ryback walks away. With Cena alone in the ring, here's Shield. The announcers keep saying it's 3-2 but Shield only goes after Cena. Ryback just watches as Cena is beaten down and hit with the TripleBomb. Shield stands tall to end the show.

Overall Rating: C-. Let's see: World, Intercontinental and Divas Champions all get pinned, Fandango is WASTED, and we're getting HHH vs. Lesnar III when no one even wanted to see a second one. This was one of those shows where there's good stuff but the bad stuff makes you shake your head so much that you don't even remember the good. I don't know if this was some kind of bizarre punishment for last week or what, but it's REALLY stupid on a lot of counts.

Results

Sheamus/Randy Orton b. Big Show – RKO

Kofi Kingston b. Antonio Cesaro – Trouble in Paradise

HELL NO b. Prime Time Players – Headbutt to Young

R-Truth b. Wade Barrett – Little Jimmy

Rhodes Scholars b. Santino Marella/Great Khali – Rollup to Marella

Jack Swagger b. Dolph Ziggler – Powerbomb into a jackknife

Nikki Bella b. Kaitlyn – Clothesline into the middle rope

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