

Monday Night Raw – June 3, 2013: Moving In The Right Direction

Monday Night Raw

Date: June 3, 2013

Location: XL Center, Hartford, Connecticut

Commentators; Michael Cole, Jerry Lawler, John Bradshaw Layfield

Back with more of the red guys here as we're back in America this week. The main story is that HHH will be back in the ring tonight to face Curtis Axel, a mere two weeks after Axel did NOT put HHH on the shelf. This sounds like more of a storyline than a match, which is fine as long as HHH doesn't kill the kid. Other than that we'll get more Ryback vs. Cena build. Let's get to it.

After a quick recap of everything that has happened to HHH in the past few weeks, here's Stephanie McMahon to open things up. She talks about HHH getting beaten up by Lesnar and then collapsing during his match (basically saying what we saw in the video) before trying to come back tonight. Despite HHH being medically cleared, Stephanie is making a business decision and not letting him compete tonight. She knows HHH wants to fight Curtis Axel, "Who quite frankly is beneath HHH." The fans chant for HHH but get Vince instead.

Vince says that HHH won't be competing tonight and says that HHH has given everything he has to this business. Do the fans want HHH's liver and spleen next? Vince reminds us that this is family entertainment and not a blood sport. Last week, Kofi Kingston was put through a table and the fans chanted one more time. There won't be one more time for HHH tonight or any night, and Curtis Axel is still beneath HHH. Vince is then cut off by....Shield?

Shield vs. HELL NO/Randy Orton

In case you were wondering what happened with the McMahons, Cole tells us that if you have the WWE App, you would have seen them leave the ring without incident. If that doesn't make you want to download the App, I don't know what does. This match is a result of Bryan cleaning house with the Shield to end Smackdown. A HUGE YES chant breaks out before the match as we start with Bryan vs. Ambrose.

Bryan hits his rapid fire kicks to the chest followed by some to the back before bringing in Kane. The low dropkick and the side slam get two for Kane as we see Tons of Funk and Ryder watching the match on the App. And it's LIVE people! Another side slam gets two on Rollins this time but a Reigns distraction lets Seth dropkick Kane off the top as we take a break.

Back with Rollins cranking on Kane's neck before bringing Ambrose back in. Dean pounds on Kane for a bit as well, only to have the monster hit a double suplex on both smaller members of the Shield. Hot tag off to Orton as the fans go NUTS. Randy snaps off some powerslams and a double Elevated DDT to Ambrose and Rollins but Seth breaks up the DDT on Reigns. Ambrose cranks on Randy's neck for a bit as the match slows down again.

Off to Reigns for a full nelson to keep Orton in trouble. Dean comes back in and pounds away before handing it back over to Reigns for a chinlock. Randy rolls out of the chinlockery but it's off to Rollins, who promptly jumps into a dropkick. The real hot tag brings in Bryan who goes nuts again, destroying everyone in riot gear that he can find. Some HARD kicks to Dean's chest keep him down and a big kick to the head stuns him.

A top rope rana sends Ambrose onto Rollins and there's the suicide dive to take out Reigns. The place is going NUTS for this. A missile dropkick gets two on Ambrose and there's the NO Lock but Reigns and Rollins make the save. Everything breaks down and Reigns spears Kane down but it's an RK0 to Rollins. Reigns shoves Orton into Bryan though and the Bulldog

Driver is enough to pin Daniel at 17:33.

Rating: B. The middle part was pretty dull but Bryan is the MAN right now and the fans are treating him as such. The ending to the match here is fine as Bryan was rolling but got beaten because of someone else on his team screwing up. As for Shield, are they actually capable of having a bad match? The more I see of them the less sure I am.

Post break Orton apologizes for costing Bryan the match, making Bryan yell at Kane. Bryan then goes off on Orton for thinking he's the weak link. He thinks neither guy respects him, so Kane tries to yell some reality into him. Bryan says one match can solidify that he's not the weak link. Since it's clear that neither of them respect him, Bryan is going to beat the respect into someone tonight. Bryan is AWESOME right now and is totally nailing this character.

HHH arrives and goes into the McMahon dressing room, saying that he's fighting Axel tonight. Stephanie tries to talk him out of it again, because Curtis Axel isn't worth it. Vince says HHH isn't being too cerebral right now and says don't do something you'll regret. Vince leaves them in the dressing room.

Usos vs. Prime Time Players

This is joined in progress after a break with the Usos (in face paint tonight) beating up Young. Off to Titus who takes I believe Jimmy down with a backbreaker before it's off to Young again. Apparently the paint is to give the Usos an edge like their ancestors. Back to Titus for a front facelock and a cravate as Cole talks about being in Hangover III. A double tag brings in Jey vs. Darren and a Samoan drop takes Young down. The running Umaga attack in the corner gets two and the Superfly Splash ends Young at 4:49.

Rating: D+. I'm a big fan of the Usos and for the life of me I have no idea why they're not on TV more often. They're young, they have a good

look, they're part of the biggest wrestling family ever, they can move in the ring, they're talented. Why don't we see them on a regular basis? Samoans have been a fixture in wrestling for years so why not put them out there? The fans always react to the Siva Tao if nothing else.

Some Special Olympians are here.

Big E. Langston vs. Alberto Del Rio

For those of you counting, this is their fifth match (with the score at 2-2) in less than three weeks. Del Rio quickly clotheslines him out to the floor but gets taken down by a shoulder. Langston throws him into the barricade and runs him over again back inside. Del Rio fires back with some headbutts but jumps into a set of three backbreakers to put him right back down. Langston misses a charge into the corner and gets caught by a low superkick for two. There's the armbreaker but Langston lifts him up and into the ropes for the break. Del Rio puts the hold back on but shifts the counter into a cradle for the pin at 4:49.

Rating: C. Del Rio continues to have chemistry with almost anyone he works with and Langston continues to show ridiculous potential. They need to get him away from Ziggler in a hurry as having him just playing a heavy is wasting a lot of his skills. The match was fine, but five times in two weeks is WAY too much.

Sheamus vs. Cody Rhodes

Sandow is doing commentary and reading a book written by Mrs. JBL. Sheamus throws Cody to the apron for the ten forearms to the chest but Cody runs to the corner to hide. Sheamus tries a kick through the ropes but gets his leg wrapped around the buckle that hooks the ropes to the post. A knee to the head gets two for Cody but Sheamus comes back with a release front suplex. The top rope shoulder puts Cody down but the Brogue Kick hits ropes. Cross Rhodes can't connect and Cody misses a moonsault press as well. White Noise puts Cody down again and the Brogue Kick

finishes this at 5:20.

Rating: D+. Remember all the complaints I've made about Sheamus vs. Rhodes/Sandow in the past? Go read one of those because it's the same stuff again. That is all.

Post match Sandow won't shake Sheamus' hand so Sheamus punches him.

HHH is leaving but he's not happy with it. He'll fight Axel next week instead.

We look at Kofi being injured by Ryback on Friday and being taken out of action for a few months.

Bryan kicks a table in the back but runs into Ryback. Ryback insults Bryan for being small and they're having a match later.

Vince comes in to see Heyman and Axel but is disappointed that we're not seeing the rematch with HHH either this week or next week. Paul is ready to leave but apparently Axel is going to have a match tonight with John Cena. It's No DQ tonight as well.

Fandango vs. Great Khali

The fans are totally behind Fandango here as both guys dance a bit to start. Khali takes him into the corner for some chops followed by some clotheslines. Fandango bails to the floor to avoid the Plunge and starts walking out, only to be cut off by Miz. Wade Barrett pops up to blast Miz with the Bull Hammer as the match just ends at about 2:00.

The Miz vs. Wade Barrett

Non-title again and Miz is fine after being laid out before the break.

Miz pounds away to start but gets taken down by a big boot to the head. Barrett loads up the big boot in the ropes but is quickly sent to the floor instead. Back in and Miz gets two off a sunset flip before going after the knee. The Winds of Change get two for Wade...and here are Fandango and Summer for more dancing. The distraction lets Miz hook the Figure Four for the tap out at 3:27.

Rating: D. To any wrestlers that might read my site, I offer you a tip: if you make it to the WWE and someone offers you the Intercontinental Title, go join the circus as there's a better future for you there. Also, can we please stop having the distraction lead to a quick win? That's such a played out booking idea that I had the finish written the second Fandango's music hit.

We recap the McMahon/HHH drama up to this point.

It's time for the Jericho/Punk contract signing for Payback. Heyman is representing Punk here as you would expect. They sit at the table with Heyman listing off Punk's accomplishments before Jericho cuts him off and finishes the list for him. Heyman signs and wants Jericho to sign so he can come to Chicago and be booed, heckled, and hated by fans that worship Punk because Punk is the real best in the world.

Jericho says maybe we should move the match to Summerslam in Los Angeles or to Madison Square Garden. Heyman says no so Jericho suggests right here in Hartford. Heyman says no to that so Jericho signs for Chicago. However he isn't sure where we should file the contract. Jericho tells Heyman to stand up and open his jacket before filing the contract in Heyman's pants.

Kaitlyn/Funkadactyls vs. AJ Lee/Bella Twins

Kaitlyn and AJ start things off. AJ backs into the corner and elbows both dancing chicks before bringing in Brie. Off to Naomi for the Rear View and a rolling senton from Cameron for two. Naomi hits the ropes with a

crossbody and the Bellas take over on her arm. Nikki stays on the arm until Naomi slugs her down and brings in Kaitlyn. The reverse DDT only gets one on Nikki but AJ drops to the floor instead of tagging. The spear finishes Nikki at 4:32.

Rating: C-. That's on the Divas scale so this wasn't half bad at all. The arm work went nowhere but when is the last time you remember psychology in a Divas match? They're to the point where they can get through a match without looking completely horrible which is at least progress. The camera shots of the girls didn't hurt either.

Kane can't talk Bryan out of facing Ryback tonight. Bryan tells Kane to stay in the back too. Kane says he's leaving and to call when Bryan has found his mind.

Video on the Wyatt Family, talking about monsters being real.

Daniel Bryan vs. Ryback

Bryan pounds away to start but gets slammed into the corner. A boot to the chest puts Bryan down but a splash hits knees. Ryback pounds him down some more, only to be pulled into a half crab by Bryan. Daniel hooks a kind of Indian deathlock and pounds Ryback's face to fire up the crowd. The moonsault out of the corner has Ryback even more confused but he clotheslines Bryan to the floor as we take a break.

Back with Bryan being slammed into the corner again so Ryback can stomp his chest. Off to a chinlock for a bit but Ryback misses a charge into the corner and hits the post. Bryan fires off some dropkicks for two but Ryback easily kicks out. A missile dropkick sets up a VERY long swan dive for two more. Bryan fires off the kicks but gets caught in a wicked powerbomb.

Ryback goes for another powerbomb but gets caught in the NO Lock out of

nowhere. He makes the rope after a VERY long time in the hold and falls out to the floor but Bryan can't follow up. The suicide dive is caught with Bryan being sent into the announce table. Ryback rams him spine first into the post over and over, knocking Bryan out cold. Instead of covering though, Ryback powerbombs him through a table for the DQ at 15:06.

Rating: C+. These two have some solid chemistry together as Bryan was doing a great job at making you believe he could somehow make Ryback tap. The one thing I didn't like here though was the commentators saying Bryan could do the impossible. Bryan has won a Triple Crown and just lost a title two weeks ago. Ryback has won a total of nothing noteworthy, so why would it be impossible for Bryan to win?

Post match Ryback loads up another table but Cena makes the save. Axel comes out for the main event as we take a break.

John Cena vs. Curtis Axel

No DQ. Cena starts fast but Heyman trips him up, allowing Axel to take over. The Hennig neck snap puts Cena down and Axel demands a chair. As you would guess it winds up hitting Axel in the back and we head to the outside. Cena loads up the announce table but has to stop for the sake of the count. Back inside and Axel gets in a chair shot to Cena's ribs and back outside we go. Another chair shot misses Cena and two more miss inside until Cena dropkicks the chair into his face for two.

Cena wedges the chair between the top and middle ropes but gets clotheslined in the back of his head to give Axel control again. Cena comes back with his finishing sequence, only to miss a charge into the corner and crash into the chair. He just beats the count back in but gets beaten down by a bunch of chair shots from Axel. The McGillicutter onto the chair gets two but the PerfectPlex is countered into the STF.

Axel can't make the rope, but Heyman hands Axel an iPad to blast Cena in

the head to break the hold. They head outside again but Heyman distracts Cena long enough to break up the AA. Cue Ryback to beat Cena down and drive him through the table set up earlier for the countout win for Axel at 13:00.

Rating: C+. This was a solid match and there was no other possible ending than the one we got. The key thing here was that Axel hung with Cena every step of the way and again Cena couldn't actually beat him. This was exactly what they should have done as you can't have Axel pin Cena, but giving him a win while advancing Ryback vs. Cena is the right call.

Overall Rating: C. This is a hard one to grade. The show certainly isn't great, but you can't really call it bad either. The main stories were advanced in a logical way, but they're not what I would call interesting. There's definitely an idea here though which is a big upgrade over some of the stuff we've been seeing lately. The in ring work continues to be good, but it's the writing holding WWE back which is a bad thing. This show grew on me as it went on, which isn't something I can remember saying in a very long time. Decent show here, but it's firmly capped at that level.

Results

Shield b. HELL NO/Randy Orton – Bulldog Driver to Bryan

Usos b. Prime Time Players – Superfly Splash to Young

Alberto Del Rio b. Big E. Langston – Cradle

Sheamus b. Cody Rhodes – Brogue Kick

Fandango vs. Great Khali went to a no contest

The Miz b. Wade Barrett – Figure Four

Kaitlyn/Funkadactyls b. AJ Lee/Bella Twins – Spear to Nikki Bella

Daniel Bryan b. Ryback via DQ – Ryback powerbombed Bryan through a table

Curtis Axel b. John Cena via countout

Remember to follow me on Twitter @kbreviews and pick up my new book on the History of the WWE Championship from Amazon at: