

Smackdown – November 8, 2013: The Formulas For Success

Smackdown

Date: November 8, 2013

Location: Time Warner Cable Arena, Charlotte, North Carolina

Commentators: Michael Cole, John Bradshaw Layfield

Back to the blue show tonight which might mean another Cena appearance. Last week's show was definitely an upgrade over what they had been doing lately but it's hard to say where things go from here. If there's one thing WWE is notoriously bad at doing it's keeping momentum going, with the third hour of this week's Raw being a prime example. This show has to be better than the Orton vs. Big Show segment, which we'll likely see five or more times tonight. Let's get to it.

A video on the Wyatts cuts off the opening sequence. It's a recap of the Family being creepy and targeting Punk and Bryan over the last week and a half.

Here's Punk with something to say. He talks about how Best in the World can mean a lot of things to a lot of different people. Apparently to the Wyatt Family it means the target of a three on one beatdown. No one has been brave enough to go ask the Wyatt Family why they're coming after him, but tonight Punk is here to fight instead of talk. He's been outnumbered before but he squashed the biggest rat in the WWE named Paul Heyman. Punk is going to be here all night long so come get him.

Instead Punk gets gets Curtis Axel who says Punk needs to shut his mouth. Axel doesn't care about the Wyatts because they can wait in line. The two of them have some unfinished business because Punk got rid of Paul Heyman, so Vickie Guerrero has granted him a match with Punk right now.

CM Punk vs. Curtis Axel

In case you haven't seen Punk beat him up enough yet. Axel stomps him down into the corner to start but charges into an elbow to the jaw. A top rope ax handle puts Curtis down again and a neckbreaker does the same. Punk kicks Axel in the leg to flip him upside down and they head to the floor. CM drapes him ribs first over the barricade and we take a break. Back with Punk fighting out of an armbar but not being able to hit the GTS. Axel bails to the floor and whips Punk into the barricade to take over.

Back inside and a backbreaker sets up a middle rope elbow for two on Punk. Axel charges into a boot and gets caught by a middle rope cross body for two but Curtis comes back with a clothesline for a near fall of his own. CM grabs a belly to back suplex and there's another neckbreaker for two. The running knee to the face looks to set up the Macho Elbow but the Wyatts look to interrupt. There's no sign of them but Axel gets in a cheap shot and the PerfectPlex is good for two. Punk gets bored though and hits the GTS to end Axel for the pin at 8:22 shown of 11:52.

Rating: C-. Man, when the distraction trick can't even get you a win, just give up. This is one of those pairings where there's no point in watching because the ending is never in doubt. Axel's status has just been crushed by this point and unfortunately for him, a lot of that isn't his fault. There's no reason to care about someone when they never win a match, which Axel barely ever does anymore.

Post match Bray pops up on screen but blows out the lantern without saying anything.

3MB vs. Usos/R-Truth

The good guys do a cool mix of their entrances with the Usos doing their chant and jumping to start the pyro which sets off R-Truth's song. JBL: "Truth and I are like Lil Wayne and Eminem." Cole: "You lip sync?" Slater

gets chopped by both Usos but Mahal makes a blind tag and hits a running knee to Jimmy's face for two. A knee drop gets another two and it's back to Slater.

There's a double slingshot suplex to set up a triple team spot from 3MB with McIntyre and Mahal lifting Jimmy up so Slater can hit a running neckbreaker. We get a chinlock instead of a cover though, allowing Jimmy to fight up and hit a spinning kick to the face. Mahal comes in but walks into a Bubba Bomb, allowing the hot tag to the hometown Truth. The Lie Detector gets two on Jinder and everything breaks down. The Usos hit the stereo dives, leaving Truth in the ring to hit Little Jimmy on Mahal for the pin at 3:58.

Rating: C+. That's probably high but this was as fun of a short match as I've seen in a very long time. This was a basic formula tag match and it worked like a charm. You had one Uso get beaten down by some nice double team moves until the hometown guy came in to clean house. Throw in a nice spot with the double dives and the match gave the crowd something to cheer for. Fun stuff.

Funkadactyls vs. Tamina Snuka/AJ Lee

On the way to the ring AJ "plugs" Total Divas before saying let's focus on the actual wrestling. Our top heel in this division for whatever reason ladies and gentlemen. Tamina shoves Cameron down to start but the funky one comes back with a sloppy looking headlock takeover out of the corner. The Funkadactyls drop Tamina with a double dropkick before low bridging her out to the floor. Tamina pulls Naomi out to the floor and clotheslines her down to take over for the first time.

Off to AJ for a guillotine choke but Naomi fights out and hits a LOUD enziguri to put AJ down. The hot tag brings in Cameron who isn't the girl you want to clean house. A cross body gets two on AJ but Cameron misses a charge into the corner. Back to Tamina who gets caught in a sitout bulldog for two. Cameron's hurricanrana out of the corner is caught in a

powerbomb for two as everything breaks down. Naomi drills AJ with a solid forearm but Tamina clotheslines her down even harder. AJ is all ticked off so she comes in and puts Cameron in the Black Widow for the submission at 4:32.

Rating: C+.what the heck was that??? I can't believe I'm saying this but I liked this match quite a bit. All four of the girls looked good out there and played their rolls perfectly, but on top of that everyone was crisp and hitting their spots perfectly. Nothing looked stupid or heavily choreographed and the match was as good of a Divas match as I've seen in MONTHS.

Here's Alberto Del Rio with something to say. Alberto talks about being a great Mexican athlete which makes him better than anyone else in the world, including all of the gringos here. His title was stolen from him by John Cena, who is only cheered because the fans are stupid. Cena is a thief, walking around with something he doesn't deserve. The fans don't know this but Del Rio went in to the Cell PPV sick and with a bad knee, elbow and neck. JBL: "That's true." He fought anyway because he had Mexican pride, and after the rematch, he'll be able to say el campeón esta aqui (Spanish for "the champion is here)!

This brings out Cena who says he isn't here to fight because Del Rio is sick. Therefore, we need to give him a gift. Maybe some Edible Arrangements (a good one, not the best one), a card that plays Cena's theme song, and a card saying sorry for taking the world title, hope you feel better, make sure to watch the JBL and Cole Show.

Alberto wants Cena to be serious (Gorilla Del Rio?) and get out but Cena says make him, because the world champion is two feet away from him. Cena wants the rematch right now and Alberto says he'll break Cena's arm tonight. Vickie says not so fast and makes the match for Survivor Series. However, both guys will be in action tonight. It's Cena vs. Ryback and Del Rio gets Great Khali, with the latter being right now.

Alberto Del Rio vs. Great Khali

Khali hits a forearm to the head to start before firing off elbows in the corner. A hard chop to the chest knocks Del Rio out of the ring and Khali sends him into the barricade for good measure. Del Rio kicks the ropes as they come back in to put Khali down, allowing Alberto to stomp away. Alberto cranks on the arm but Khali fights up and kicks Del Rio out of the air. More loud chops in the corner have Alberto in trouble but he grabs an armbreaker over the ropes to stop Khali in his tracks. Khali shoves him out to the floor but gets caught by the enziguri in the corner. The cross armbreaker gets the submission at 5:10.

Rating: D+. The match wasn't horrible, but it's the same problem that so many people in WWE have: no one believes Khali is going to win, no matter how much he dominates Del Rio throughout the match. It gives me no reason to get interested in the match, as the action is nothing special and the ending is already a given. Why should I care under those circumstances?

Daniel Bryan vs. Luke Harper

Bryan has a taped up shoulder coming in but goes right after Harper before the bell. Harper pounds him down into the corner and goes after the bad shoulder to take Daniel down. There's the Gator Roll to keep Bryan on the ground but he's still able to send Harper to the floor. The FLYING GOAT connects but Bryan's bad shoulder lands on the barricade. Harper gets up first and sends Bryan shoulder first into the barricade again as we take a break.

Back with Harper firing off elbows in the corner and throws him across the ring with ease. We hit the chinlock as the announcers talk about Dr. Phil for no apparent reason. Bryan tries to fight up but a single shout to the shoulder puts him back into the corner. Some kicks to the leg have Harper staggered a bit and there's a dragon screw leg whip to put him down.

Bryan ties up Harper's legs in a hold before driving in hard shots to the face, firing up the crowd in the process. Harper gets up a right hand in the corner to knock Bryan backwards, but Bryan backflips over him in the corner and hits the running clothesline. The kick kick to the head is countered into a sitout powerbomb but Bryan gets up at two. Bryan counters the discus lariat into the YES Lock but Rowan comes in for the DQ at 6:30 shown of 10:00.

Rating: B-. They're sticking to formulas tonight and they're working incredibly well so far. This was a good example of power vs. speed/technical abilities and Harper looked AWESOME in there. Bryan bounced all over like a pinball and the ending keeps both guys looking good. Solid effort out there, which is the point of having Bryan and Punk feud with these guys.

The beatdown is on but as Bray gets into the ring, Punk comes out for the save.

We go back to Raw to recap that infernal closing segment. Good grief we get it already: Big Show vs. Orton is awesome and we'll praise its name forever. Just don't make me sit through this anymore.

The weekly sitdown interview with HHH says Kane is the new Director of Operations, because if there's one more thing WWE needs, it's ANOTHER person with authority. The powers are yet to be revealed, but Kane has been tweeting about vigilance, which HHH translates as Kane being more than one dimensional.

John Cena vs. Ryback

Non-title. Cena comes out, goes to the back, and comes out again because the first pop wasn't loud enough. Ryback grabs a headlock to start before running Cena over with a shoulder block. Back to the headlock but Cena counters into one of his own. Not the most exciting opening two minutes to a match. Cena fires off right hands in the corner but Ryback easily

throws him off to block a bulldog.

In a very impressive power display, Ryback gorilla presses Cena over his head for probably fifteen seconds before dropping the champion down onto his face. Cena avoids a charge to send Ryback into the post as we take a break. Back with Cena countering a Boston Crab into an STF attempt but Ryback kicks him away. Ryback chokes Cena with his boot before whipping him hard across the ring for two.

Off to a front facelock by Ryback which is quickly switched into a bearhug. Cena fights free and shoulders Ryback down but Ryback counters the Shuffle into a spinebuster. Shell Shock is countered into a DDT to put both guys down but it's Cena up first. The AA is countered and Ryback's Jackhammer (called a suplex by Cole) gets two. Ryback charges with the Meat Hook but gets taken down into the STF. He gets to the rope in a nice false finish and hits Cena with a weak spear for two.

The Shell Shock is countered again and Cena grabs a full nelson, only to lift him up and pull Cena down into a neckbreaker for a close two. A high cross body puts Ryback down but he comes right back with a powerslam (Cole: "Shades of the Bulldog!" He references the British Bulldog but can't remember what the Jackhammer?) for two. They slug it out in the middle of the ring but Ryback scores with the Meat Hook. The Shell Shock is countered again and this time it's the AA for the pin on Ryback at 11:55 shown of 15:25.

Rating: B. There's something awesome about letting two power guys beat the tar out of each other for fifteen minutes. The counters in this were getting very good by the end and Cena was busting out some great stuff out there. Ryback looked like he had Cena if he could hit that one big move but Cena kept countering in a nice story. This was a good contrast to Khali vs. Del Rio: Ryback was clearly going to lose, but here the match was hard hitting and entertaining to make up for that. Really solid main event here.

Post match Del Rio comes in to pound away on the arm. After a few moments of that, he actually goes after the bad arm by wrapping it around the post. Cena comes back with some right hands and Del Rio runs to end the show.

Overall Rating: B+. If we didn't have that ridiculous ten minute long recap from Raw (which thankfully was cut to highlights on the American version), this was one of the best Smackdowns in months. The worst match was just five minutes long and the second worst was far from horrible, leaving us with good to very good matches to fill in the rest of the show. Really fun two hours of wrestling here with nothing new being stupid. Good stuff.

Results

CM Punk b. Curtis Axel – GTS

Usos/R-Truth b. 3MB – Little Jimmy to Mahal

AJ Lee/Tamina Snuka b. Funkadactyls – Black Widow to Cameron

Alberto Del Rio b. Great Khali – Cross armbreaker

Daniel Bryan b. Luke Harper via DQ when Erick Rowan interfered

John Cena b. Ryback – Attitude Adjustment

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