

Monday Night Raw – November 18, 2013: The Raw Special

Monday Night Raw

Date: November 18, 2013

Location: Bridgestone Arena, Nashville, Tennessee

Commentators: Jerry Lawler, John Bradshaw Layfield, Michael Cole

Tonight Raw goes country because WWE hates me. The only things we've been told about for tonight is the band Florida Georgia Line performing and likely being confronted by 3MB. Other than that we might get a confrontation between Oakland A's pitcher Jason Reddick and Daniel Bryan because they've been having a Twitter feud. This is what life is like on the go home show for Survivor Series in 2013. Let's get to it.

The opening video recaps last week's struggle to fill in the power vacuum left due to the Authority being on vacation.

Langston vs. Axel for the Intercontinental Title tonight.

Here's the Authority to open the show. HHH talks about how things went nuts in the absence of true authority and no one likes chaos. Those who caused things to fall apart last week, such as Brad Maddox and Vickie Guerrero, will be dealt with tonight. This brings out a ticked off Randy Orton who says that the Authority is to blame for a lot of the troubles around here.

They're the ones that gave Big Show a title match he didn't deserve and thinks he can't beat Big Show on his own this Sunday on his own. HHH gets in his face but Stephanie plays peacekeeper. Brad and Vickie interrupt with Vickie saying excuse me in a very timid voice. Brad apologizes but insists it was all Vickie's fault because that's the kind of guy he is. Stephanie doesn't want to hear this and makes individual matches for the

GM's. Vickie gets AJ and Brad gets Randy Orton. The latter of those two is right now. HHH makes it No DQ because he can. Maddox tries to leave but Kane stops him.

Randy Orton vs. Brad Maddox

No DQ. Brad bails to the floor then does it again when Orton goes for him. Maddox gets on a mic and says Orton doesn't want to do this but gets caught running away again. Orton tries to get him into the ring but Brad hits him with the microphone before sending him into the post. A DDT gets two in the ring and Orton is MAD. He throws Brad over the top rope and then over the announce table. Maddox is sent into the steps and loses his shirt before Orton posts him. The Elevated DDT on the floor knocks Maddox out cold. Back in and Orton hits him about 25 times in the head with the microphone until the referee stops it 3:50.

Rating: N/A. This was a glorified segment rather than a match so I'm not going to bother rating it. They're going to turn Maddox face at this rate which isn't a bad idea for the most part. They need someone with authority to stand up to the Authority, even though the Authority would likely just strip him of his job. The fans seem to be into Maddox too, which likely isn't a good sign for him.

Maddox was take out on a stretcher during the break. As he's being put in the ambulance, Vickie looks terrified.

Intercontinental Title: Big E. Langston vs. Curtis Axel

They treat this as a big deal with full entrances and the big match intros. Axel, the champion, is officially no longer a Paul Heyman guy. Langston easily takes him to the mat but gets elbowed in the face to give Axel a breather. Big E. easily tosses Axel around and sends him to the floor to start a chase. Back in and Langston clotheslines him down like it's nothing as this is one sided so far.

A standing backdrop gets two on the champion but he hits a quick hot shot to get a breather. Axel pounds on his back a bit and we take a break. Back with Axel getting two off a dropkick and hooking a front facelock. Langston finally gets up and just throws Curtis off of him before scoring with some clotheslines. A belly to belly puts Axel down and there's the Warrior Splash for two. The straps come down and the Big Ending gives Langston the title at 8:50.

Rating: C-. This wasn't bad but it does beg the question: if they want to make Langston into a big deal, why in the world would you job him clean to Del Rio last week in four minutes? Either way, it was definitely the right idea to switch the belt here as Axel is long past the point of mattering. A gimmick change could help him a lot at the moment because the potential is definitely there.

Orton, in a jacket of all things, is with Shield in the back. He tells them that they'll have his back because that's what the Authority wants. Reigns is cool with that, as long as Orton has their back as well. Orton doesn't say yes.

Time for our first country music bit: Divas musical chairs. The song is by Florida Georgia Line and played over the PA system. The girls don't circle the chairs and it's Natalya out first. Alicia goes next and a brawl is about to break out. JBL: "This is the dumbest thing I've ever seen." Thankfully it only lasts about two rounds until the fight breaks out. Cole: "Musical chairs has broken down." JBL: "It always does." The Total Divas actually clear the ring, likely setting up another Survivor Series match.

Big Show vs. Ryback

They shove each other around to start with Big Show throwing Ryback into the corner for some right hands and a headbutt. A hard chop and a shoulder puts Ryback on the floor for a nine count as things slow down. Back in and Ryback pounds away before taking out the knee. Some forearms

to the back and a leg drop get two and we hit the front facelock followed by a chinlock.

The hold stays on for a good while as Ryback calls a lot of spots. Show finally suplexes his way out before scoring with some clotheslines. Ryback comes back with a very nice spinebuster (all things considered) for two but the Meathook is countered into a chokeslam attempt. Ryback kicks out of it and hits the Meathook before actually hitting Shell Shock on Big Show for two. Ryback tries it again but Big Show shoves him away and hits the WMD for the pin at 7:57.

Rating: C. This is a good example of WWE not thinking more than a week in advance. Ryback hitting Shell Shock on Big Show was rumored to be a major spot at Wrestlemania, but here it's used as a near fall in a warmup match on a gimmick Raw show. Why in the world would you use it here instead of using it to make Ryback look like a big deal? Oh wait: it's time for Big Show's latest push that no one cares about. How could I forget?

Post match Orton tries to sneak in but gets speared down.

Zack Ryder is with Florida Georgia Line when 3MB comes in dressed as cowboys. They're the Rhinestone Cowboys this week and nothing funny occurs.

Orton is having his ribs taped up.

The Miz/Kofi Kingston vs. Real Americans

Real Americans vs. Goldust/Cody Rhodes for the tag titles on Friday. Miz gets caught in a quick wristlock by Cesaro before hitting the corner clothesline and the top rope ax handle for two. Cesaro catches him in a tilt-a-whirl backbreaker for no cover before sending Miz to the floor and tagging in Swagger. Jack sends him into the corner for the Vader Bomb followed by the Cesaro double stomp for two.

Off to a quick arm hold, only to have Miz fight up and make the hot tag off to Kofi. House is quickly cleaned with all of Kofi's jumps and dives, only to be caught in a powerslam for two by Swagger. Kingston spins around Jack's clothesline into a DDT before going over to Miz for the tag...but Miz turns on him, allowing Swagger to hook the Patriot Lock for the win at 4:45.

Rating: C-. The match was obvious as soon as they announced the title match on Friday. Miz turning heel is the right move as his face turn just wasn't working at all. The guy is just a natural heel and wasn't doing anything as a good guy. If nothing else maybe he'll stop using the stupid Figure Four which doesn't work at all for him.

Vickie pretends to have been attacked to get out of her match with AJ.

Stephanie doesn't buy the injury despite Vickie being loaded onto a stretcher. Could it be because Vickie looked right at the camera before pretending to pass out?

AJ Lee vs. Vickie Guerrero

Vickie is wheeled to the arena, screaming that this can't happen. I have no idea who the face is supposed to be in this thing but I'm sure I just don't get what's going on. Vickie "passes out" again and asks for some water before the bell. She tries to run again and actually gets by Tamina but AJ chases her down. Back in and the Black Widow (the only move of the match) gets the submission at 1:28.

Vickie faints again post match.

There will indeed be a fourteen Diva Survivor Series match on Sunday with the Total Divas against everyone else.

HHH makes a Broadway Brawl between Ziggler and Sandow for tonight. What

does that mean? HHH: "I don't even know."

Dolph Ziggler vs. Damien Sandow

There are a bunch of musical instruments in the ring, mainly string stuff. Sandow throws him to the floor but misses a shot with an electric guitar. Ziggler dives off the steps to take him down as the announcers reference musical acts from the 70s and earlier. Back in and Damien pounds away before getting caught by a nice dropkick to send him back outside. Ziggler goes up top but dives into a shot from an organ to the ribs as we take a break.

Back with Sandow stomping away on Ziggler in the corner as Cole talks about Lawler meeting Ronnie Milsap. Ziggler comes back but misses a fiddle shot, allowing Sandow to hit him with a guitar for two. Dolph hits a DDT and breaks the fiddle over Sandow's head before the Fameasser gets two. Sandow goes nuts again and launches Ziggler into the corner before ramming Dolph head first into a chair in the corner for a close two.

Ziggler gets thrown into the drums and hit with a guitar for two. Sandow misses a charge into the post and Ziggler rolls him up for two. A snare drum over Damien's head and a bass drum does the same, basically tying Sandow up. Ziggler grabs the only remaining guitar, struts over, and blasts Sandow in the head for the pin at 10:17.

Rating: D. Was this supposed to be funny? That's a genuine question. The announcers were treating it like a comedy match but apparently these two don't like each other. I say apparently because I don't remember them having any altercations in recent history, unless I'm forgetting some throwaway segment on Smackdown somewhere. The match was dumb as are most gimmick matches though. We're also supposed to ignore Sandow's shoulders being inside the drum and not on the mat.

We look at the opening of Raw and Big Show spearing Orton down again.

Orton goes into the Authority's office and asks where Shield was earlier. He wants to know if he has the Authority's confidence but Stephanie says they have to think about it.

Cena talks to Florida Georgia Line.

Here's Cena with his arm in a sling again, saying he's had to watch what Del Rio did to his arm on Smackdown every day since it happened. We get a clip of Cena winning the arm wrestling contest, only to have Del Rio put him through a table and lock on the armbreaker in a chair again. Cena says he came back for the fans but thinks maybe he came back too soon and shouldn't be World Heavyweight Champion. Then he looks around and feels the atmosphere which makes him know he should be champion.

A champion is made of things like determination and toughness instead of cheap shots like Del Rio. Cena says Del Rio doesn't know what he's getting into on Sunday and he'll walk out with the title. This brings out Del Rio who says we have a real superhero in the house. Cena almost made him cry, which Cena says is good because on Sunday he'll make Del Rio tap.

Del Rio asks Cena to lift up the title with the arm in a sling which Cena can't do. Alberto gets in the ring while talking about taking advantages of every opportunity. Cena says that's what champions do and pounds on Alberto before trying the AA, only to have Del Rio escape to the floor.

Rhinestone Cowboys vs. R-Truth/Xavier Woods

3MB remember and it's Slater on the floor this time. Woods is the former Consequences Creed in TNA and has been in NXT for a good while now. Truth starts with Jinder and we get some hip gyrations. Off to Woods for a dropkick to Mahal followed by a headscissors. McIntyre gets a blind tag but gets caught by a forearm to the face. Woods tries to fight both of them off and gets kicked in the face by Drew to take over.

Woods escapes a slam attempt and tags in Truth who catches Drew with a jumping kick to the head. The sitout front suplex takes McIntyre down again and the suplex into a Stunner sets up the tag to Woods. The Honor Roll (front flip clothesline) sets up the Best in the Woods (Eat Defeat though it's called Lost in the Woods in NXT) for the pin on McIntyre at 3:15.

Rating: C. This was fine. I kind of like the idea of having Woods just show up in a match instead of some big buildup. I'm not the biggest fan of Xavier but he looked good in the ring and is a good asset to the company since he's already got a masters degree and is going for his PH.D.

The winners dance post match.

The Authority says they have confidence in Orton but he has no Shield to help him on Sunday. When he wins, he'll prove to everyone that he's the face of the WWE. Orton promises to show them confidence.

Florida Georgia Line performs Round Here, the theme song of tonight's show.

Shield/Wyatt Family vs. Daniel Bryan/CM Punk/Cody Rhodes/Goldust/Usos

There's a lot of time for this. Jimmy Uso starts against Dean Ambrose with Dean taking him down with a shoulder, only to be clotheslined right back. Off to Jey vs. Reigns with Jey suckering him into the good guy corner where the tag champions work on Roman's arms. It's Goldust staying in to backdrop the now legal Rollins before hitting a quick uppercut and atomic drop. A kick to the side of Seth's head gets two and it's off to Jey, who charges into an elbow in the corner.

Rollins sends him to the floor but Harper tags himself in to get a piece. The two three man teams argue on the floor as we take a break. Back with

Goldust working on Seth's arm before bringing his brother back in for some right hands. Seth sends Cody into the buckle and the heels take over. Reigns comes in to pound Cody down before it's back to Seth. Shield is intentionally not tagging in the Wyatts.

Ambrose comes in and pounds away in the corner before clotheslining Cody down for two. Rollins comes back in but has to stop Cody from making a hot tag. Shield finally brings in Rollins who gets taken down by Cody, allowing the hot tag to Bryan. It's kicks a go-go with Bryan taking down everyone in sight. Harper is sent to the corner but Bryan has to go after Rollins, taking him down with a release German suplex instead of going after Luke. Bryan finally goes after the monster but gets caught in a running sitout powerbomb out of the corner.

The tag brings in Bray Wyatt for some hard elbow drops to Bryan. Bray looks over at Shield and asks if he can trust them before tagging in Reigns. Shield takes their turns beating on Bryan with Ambrose coming in for a modified STF. Bryan gets out and clotheslines Ambrose down but all five of Dean's partners knock Bryan's partners off the country as we take another break.

Back with Reigns pounding away on Bryan but getting caught in a DDT. The fans beg him to make the tag and get their wish as Punk comes in for the first time to clean whatever is still dirty in the house. He takes out every heel in sight, including Rollins and Ambrose with a DDT and neckbreaker at the same time. Punk hits the Macho Elbow on Ambrose but Bray distracts him from hitting the GTS.

Instead Punk slaps the Anaconda Vice on Dean, allowing the Family to break it up. Everything breaks down with the Usos hitting their stereo dives on the Family and Ambrose escaping the GTS into the bulldog driver for two. We hit the parade of finishers which goes too fast to keep up with. Punk and Bryan hit a Hart Attack on Rollins because they're old school like that. The GTS to Ambrose is good for the pin at 24:04.

Rating: C+. This was more long than it was good but the ending sequence was awesome, as almost all parades of finishers are. Again though, why does Ambrose have to take the pin? There are five other guys out there but the only champion on the team has to get pinned? Really? Still though, good stuff.

Post match the Real Americans and other heels come in for the beatdown but REY MYSTERIO returns for the save, apparently as the fifth man on the team at Survivor Series.

Overall Rating: C-. I'm thinking about officially naming this kind of show the Raw Special: it would have been a solid two hour show but the third hour dragged it back to earth. There was some interesting stuff on here like Langston winning the title and Miz turning heel like he should have been all along, but then there's the other half. Some of the stuff on here was horrid, such as the Cena/Del Rio promo, the AJ vs. Vickie "match" and Zigler vs. Sandow. At least we fleshed out some of the Survivor Series card, but that doesn't make this any kind of a good go home show.

Results

Randy Orton b. Brad Maddox via referee stoppage

Big E. Langston b. Curtis Axel – Big Ending

Big Show b. Ryback – WMD

Real Americans b. The Miz/Kofi Kingston – Patriot Lock to Kingston

AJ Lee b. Vickie Guerrero – Black Widow

Dolph Ziggler b. Damien Sandow – Guitar shot to the head

R-Truth/Xavier Woods b. Rhinestone Cowboys – Best in the Woods to McIntyre

CM Punk/Daniel Bryan/Usos/Cody Rhodes/Goldust b. Shield/Wyatt Family –

GTS to Ambrose

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