

Monday Night Raw – December 30, 2013: Daniel Bryan... .Says Yes?

Monday Night Raw

Date: December 30, 2013

Location: Richmond Coliseum, Richmond, Virginia

Commentators: Michael Cole, Jerry Lawler, John Bradshaw Layfield

It's the final show of the year tonight and the main story is that a large portion of the roster is at a house show in Toronto. There's no Cena, Orton, Wyatts, Big Show or several others tonight, meaning we could be in for a very different kind of show. There's also been a major event spoiled but I'll save it in case you haven't seen it yet. Let's get to it.

Here's Punk to open things up. He's excited for a new year but wants to reflect on what he's done in 2013. After starting off the year as the longest reigning champion in 25 years, he went one on one with the great one, stood toe to toe with Undertaker, lost a friend in Paul Heyman and then beat the tar out of him. However, this hasn't been CM Punk's year. Instead, this year belonged to the Shield.

Punk has a proposition for the Shield tonight and will present it to him whenever their paths cross. Here they are immediately with Ambrose dropping his belt as they come over the barricade. Ambrose wants a good reason why they're not ending Punk right now. Punk says he's the best, but he wants to fight the best member of Shield. Ambrose says he's ready right now but Punk was talking about Reigns and Rollins because he's beaten Dean half a dozen times.

If Ambrose is the weak link, Punk wants to find out who is the strong link. If it's Reigns, let's find out right now. Rollins says he (Rollins) is the best and he'll fight Punk tonight. Punk isn't sure Rollins is the best and neither is Reigns who gets in Seth's face. Brad Maddox returns from whatever hole he fell into about six weeks ago to make the match

right now.

Seth Rollins vs. CM Punk

Rollins bails to the floor from an early GTS attempt and we take a break 20 seconds in. Back with Rollins taking Punk into the corner but coming out with an elbow to the jaw. The announcers talk about the potential split in the Shield as Punk tries a sunset flip out of the corner but there's no Rollins there. They do the spot again with Punk swinging around the ropes to put Rollins in the Anaconda Vice. CM lets go of the hold and slams Punk down to take over.

Punk sends Rollins into the corner and tries a small package but they botch every bit of it with Rollins stumbling around instead of going down. We hit the reverse chinlock from Rollins as he stays on the back. Rollins stomps Punk down for two and it's off to a regular chinlock. Punk fights up and suplexes Rollins down but gets knocked off the apron as we take a break. Back with Punk missing a charge into the corner to injure his shoulder and stop a comeback.

Rollins goes up but misses a backsplash, allowing Punk to get two more off a rollup. Punk comes back with the running knee in the corner but Rollins catches him coming and throws Punk into a buckle bomb. The Blackout misses but Seth enziguris him down for two. Reigns slaps the mat and tells Rollins to end this so Seth loads up a GTS, only to be shoved away and hit with a running knee against the ropes. Punk tries the Macho Elbow but Rollins rolls away, only to have Shield pull Punk face first into the middle buckle.

Seth goes up but gets crotched, only to block a Punk superplex attempt. Rollins hits a high cross body but Punk rolls through into the Anaconda Vice. Ambrose comes in but makes no contact so the match continues. Punk tries the GTS but Rollins reverses into the standing Sliced Bread. The referee is with Shield so the count is delayed and just gets two. Punk backdrops Rollins onto Ambrose and Reigns but Rollins blocks a suicide dive attempt. Seth tries a sunset flip but Punk catches him on the shoulders and puts Seth to sleep for the pin at 18:12.

Rating: B-. The match was solid and continued to make Rollins look great

but there were some bad moments with the small package standing out. It's still good stuff and with so many people gone, they had to have long matches like this to fill in the time. The Shield split should be interesting to watch.

Brad Maddox talks about how important tonight is when the Authority comes in. After some sucking up, Maddox thinks he's ready to take a step forward. Daniel Bryan comes in and demands a shot at Bray Wyatt before the year ends. Maddox makes a gauntlet match with Daniel against the Wyatts. Stephanie is impressed but is going to top him by naming the main event for the Royal Rumble.

Here's Stephanie to brag about what the Authority has done. Their biggest accomplishment: crowning a single WWE World Heavyweight Champion in Randy Orton. This sets up a long video package on Orton's career to fill in more time. Stephanie announces the main event of the Royal Rumble: a traditional match with the fall coming by pinfall or submission only as Orton defends against...John Cena. Ok then.

We recap Bryan vs. the Wyatts.

HHH has an announcement of his own for later.

Curtis Axel vs. Dolph Ziggler

Ziggler still has that stupid pink streak in his hair. Also it's good to see that he's back this fast after being DDT'd on the floor on Friday. Axel quickly throws Dolph to the floor for two and it's time to choke. Ziggler reverses a whip to send Axel face first into the middle buckle before pounding away with right hands. A neckbreaker gets two for Ziggler but Axel comes back with a suplex and some trash talk. He talks so much that Ziggler pops up and hits the Zig Zag for the pin at 4:20.

Rating: D+. Well that happened. Neither guy is going anywhere at all and it's good that things only got as bad as they did this year. Axel just needs to be repackaged already while he still has something going for him at all. There's just nothing to him anymore and it's getting more and more depressing.

How to download the App.

You can pick Sandow's opponent tonight: Khali, Miz or Kofi.

Next week: Raw Old School. I'm so in.

Intercontinental Title: Fandango vs. Big E. Langston

We actually get big match intros for this one. Langston takes him to the mat with ease and actually does some amateur stuff for a change. Fandango comes back with a spinwheel kick for two and pounds away on the champion. Langston pops up and leapfrogs over Fandango before hitting a hard shoulder to send him outside. Back in and Langston charges again but hits his knee on Fandango's head. Fandango puts on a modified Indian deathlock but Langston punches him in the face for the break. Big E. misses a charge into the post though and we take a break.

Back with Fandango still on the knee and putting on a series of leg locks. Langston fights out of a chinlock and tries a belly to belly despite being on one leg. The Warrior Splash is blocked by another shot to the knee and Fandango gets two off a tornado DDT. The guillotine legdrop connects but the champion rolls to the floor. Fandango throws him back inside and kicks Langston in the face but it only seems to wake Big E. up. An overhead belly to belly sets up the Warrior Splash and the Big Ending retains the title at 13:00.

Rating: C+. Now why is this so hard? They're building up challengers of the week for Langston and having him mow them down after getting in trouble during the matches. That's how you build up both a champion and a title but for some reason it's NEVER done anymore. If they keep this up, Langston will come out looking great.

More on Bryan vs. Wyatts.

Here are Booker T, the Prime Time Players, a bunch of jobbers and the Divas for a New Year's party. We're going to get a New Year's Spinarooni but here's Bad News Barrett on a rising platform to stop the fun. Barrett says the new year is supposed to be about new beginnings but it's really just about bringing us one year closer to the apocalypse.

The reality is everyone will keep stabbing each other in the back for whatever they want while everyone else is going to pollute the environment before holding their hands out for donations once Mother Nature takes their homes away. Bad News Barrett will be here to tell us how bad it is of course.

Sandow says he'll quit if he loses this week.

Damien Sandow vs. Great Khali

Khali wins a pretty close poll with 39% of the vote. Damien fires off right hands but gets caught by loud chops. Sandow escapes a powerbomb and dropkicks Khali's knee out to take over. Some knee drops get two for Damien and it's back to the leg all over again. The fans are quickly getting bored as Sandow drops an elbow for two. Khali chops Sandow from his knees and grabs the Vice, only to have Damien roll forward and send Khali into the buckle. A rollup keeps Sandow around at 4:55.

Rating: F. They spent five minutes resolving an angle that was set up five minutes before the match. Terribly uninteresting match here, especially considering Heath Slater pinned Khali earlier this year. Sandow has the character and isn't bad in the ring but he's been completely wasted lately.

R-Truth vs. Brodus Clay

Woods is on commentary and claims to have taught Brodus how to dance. Brodus shoves Truth down to start but Truth comes back with some pelvic thrusts. A headbutt to the chest puts Truth down and there's the t-bone suplex out of the corner. Brodus throws him down again and cannonballs onto Truth's back. Off to an over the shoulder backbreaker by Clay before he drops an elbow for two. Woods gets up on the announce table and asks for the girls to come out here. Dancing ensues and Truth comes off the middle rope with Little Jimmy for the pin at 4:05.

Rating: D. Has Brodus won a match since turning heel? In case you couldn't guess, this match sucked and that's all there is to say about it.

Here's HHH for his announcement. 2013 was a great year under the Authority but next year will be even bigger. With that, please welcome back this man: Brock Lesnar, flanked by Paul Heyman. HHH shakes Brock's hand and walks out to let Heyman talk. Paul talks about the Beast being back but says Lesnar isn't here for revenge. However, Brock Lesnar is here to announce his desire to become WWE World Heavyweight Champion. That means the winner of Cena vs. Orton will have to face the self declared #1 contender.

Brock takes the mic and says he doesn't care who he's fighting because there's no one here that can stop him. He doesn't have to stand in line for a title shot because the line forms behind him. Brock dares anyone to come out here and do something about that, so here's Mark Henry to challenge. Lesnar hits a jumping knee to knock Henry to the floor and spears Henry through the barricade. An F5 on the floor leaves Henry laying as Heyman calls Brock off.

Total Divas vs. True Divas

It's the Bellas/Funkadactyls/Eva Marie vs. Rosa Mendes/Summer Rae/Alicia Fox/Kaitlyn/Aksana. Eva and Kaitlyn get things going with Eva elbowing her in the face and blowing kisses to the crowd. Kaitlyn is staggered by a kick to the chest but none of the other Total Divas want to deal with Eva. Eva finally tags Cameron in but Alicia makes a blind tag and cleans house.

Summer Rae and Rosa (dressed almost identically) take turns stomping on Cameron in the corner before it's off to Aksana for some choking. Cameron finally crawls over for a tag to Nikki who puts Aksana in the rack (get it?). Everything breaks down and Aksana hits a reverse Eye of the Hurricane for the pin on Nikki at 5:10.

Rating: D-. Yeah it sucked, but it was a bunch of good looking women in tiny outfits. That's more than the Tribute to the Troops show managed to pull off. They need to figure out where this division is going though because it's getting even worse. From what I can find, that's Aksana's first pin on TV in nearly two years.

We look at Tribute to the Troops from Saturday.

Brad Maddox tells the Authority that Khali's shoulders were up and the matter has been dealt with. Stephanie is pleased and asks about Old School Raw next week. Apparently Brad has lined up their favorites including Naitch himself. Brad: "WOO!" HHH: "Don't do that."

Daniel Bryan vs. Wyatt Family

Luke Harper the first part of the gauntlet match. Bryan fires off kicks at the knee in the corner to start before putting on the seated surfboard submission. Harper comes back with some elbows in the corner and those weird noises he makes. There's the Gator Roll followed by a headlock to kill some time. Bryan fights up but gets caught in a Michinoku Driver for two as we take a break.

Back with Bryan fighting out of a chinlock and doing the moonsault out of the corner to set up the running clothesline. Harper goes to the floor for TWO FLYING GOATS and some kicks to the chest. Back in and Bryan hits the missile dropkick and YES Kicks for two as Wyatt is looking nervous. Bryan fires off more kicks in the corner but gets powerbombed down for two.

Bray takes his hat off, making him look even more bizarre in the process. A release half nelson suplex gets two more for Harper but Luke spends too much time looking around and gets caught in the YES Lock. That's fine with him though as Harper just breaks Daniel's grip. Bryan flips out of a suplex and hits the running knee for the pin at 15:00. I'll be rating the matches as a whole at the end.

Rowan jumps Bryan to start the second match before sending him out to the floor. Bryan gets whipped across the announcers' table as we take a break. Back with Rowan driving a knee into Bryan's ribs for two. A middle rope fallaway slam sends the fans into a no chant, prompting Bryan to grab a small package for the pin 22:15. Rowan immediately goes after Bryan but Harper pulls him away because Bray wants Bryan to himself.

Bray talks a lot of trash and does the upside down look in the corner as Bryan gets to his feet. Wyatt charges at Bray but stops just short. He turns his back on Daniel but the Wyatts come in for the DQ 24:10. There was no contact between Bray and Daniel at all, which is probably the best

move.

Rating: B-. This was a good match and the main story at the end of the day is we still have Bryan vs. Wyatt down the line. The match is going to be awesome due to the buildup which is the thing we don't get anymore. It's the long term build instead of just hotshotting something and that's what this feud needed.

The Family destroys Bryan while Bray watches from the corner. He says this is where Bryan's story ends because Bray is all out of mercy. Bray puts a mic to Daniel's mouth and Daniel says Bray is right. Wyatt tells him to say it again and Daniel complies. He talks about how the machine doesn't care about him because they've ignored the YES chants and all the matches he's won.

Bryan says he's Bray's and wants to join the Family. He pulls himself up by Bray's leg and does the Bray pose, only to get a Sister Abigail without really struggling. Bray puts Daniel's hand over his own heart and says this is forever. The Family carries Bryan up the ramp but he stops and walks on his own but stops at the stage. The fans chant NO but Bray says not to listen to them. Bryan looks back but closes his eyes and bows his head before getting all angry. He calms down, drops his head, and leaves with the Wyatts to end the show.

Overall Rating: C+. This was one of those shows where they didn't try as hard to make it feel epic and the show got WAY better as a result. The main story is of course the return of Brock as you can feel Wrestlemania coming soon. Bryan getting to face Wyatt was a nice idea but that's going to be a big deal when we get the real version. Him joining the Family is going to be an interesting story but it's going to make the eventual showdown all the more interesting. This show flew by which is a good way to close out the year.

Results

CM Punk b. Seth Rollins – GTS

Dolph Ziggler b. Curtis Axel – Zig Zag

Big E. Langston b. Fandango – Big Ending

Damien Sandow b. Great Khali – Rollup

True Divas b. Total Divas – Reverse Eye of the Hurricane to Nikki

Daniel Bryan b. Wyatt Family via DQ when Harper and Rowan interfered

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