

Monday Night Raw – January 6, 2014: Out With The Old, In With The Really Old

Monday Night Raw

Date: January 6, 2014

Location: Baltimore Arena, Baltimore, Maryland

Commentators: Michael Cole, John Bradshaw Layfield

It's a special show tonight as Raw goes Old School. This has been a very entertaining show in the past but you never can tell what they're going to be anymore. WWE can be so hit or miss with their nostalgia shows so it could go in any of several directions. The main storyline coming into tonight is Daniel Bryan debuting as part of the Wyatt Family after giving in and joining the group last night. Let's get to it.

There's some distressing breaking news coming into the show: Jerry Lawler was sent to the hospital with chest pains. It appears that he's ok but he won't be doing commentary tonight.

The set is made of the big red RAW letters, we have the blue posts and steps, the old graphics and the gray metal barricade.

Here's Ric Flair to open the show. He says his catchphrases and promises to style and profile tonight but is interrupted by Randy Orton. The champion says he has nothing but respect for Flair for giving him his big break but tonight is all about Orton. Randy is sure Flair sees him as the biggest star of all time but he asks Ric to step aside because Orton has something to get off his chest.

Orton talks about Stephanie making the rematch with Cena last week and is upset that he wasn't consulted about this. Since when did the business start making decisions based on what the fans wanted? Flair thinks Orton

isn't the man but rather just crying over having to wrestle a rematch. Back in Flair's day the champion would wrestle seven nights a week because that's what a champion does.

Randy says Flair always had someone watching his back all those years, which is why he's the most overrated star in history. Ric doesn't leave because Orton is going to listen to what he has to say. Orton needs to be a man instead of the coward he's been since he got to the WWE. The champ is about to go off but here's Cena to hug Flair. Cena says Orton sinks to a new low every time he opens his mouth by blaming his problems on Ric Flair. This is Ric Flair, a 16 time world champion, meaning Orton isn't even in his league. If Orton wants to fight Cena is ready right now but Randy bails to the floor.

Cole and JBL give us an update on Lawler, saying his heart is fine. You can get updates on his health on the WWE App. Seriously?

We recap Daniel Bryan and the Wyatts last week.

Here are the Wyatts with Daniel for the first time. Bray holds up the lantern and Bryan stares him down in the dark, wearing blue coveralls ala Rowan. His face looks very defeated but stoic for lack of better terms.

Wyatt Family vs. Usos/Rey Mysterious

The referee has the old blue shirt and bowtie. Harper runs into a kick to the ribs from Jey to start but takes him down with a shoulder block. Bryan gets a tag for the first time to face Mysterio who says this isn't the real Daniel. Bryan hits a hard forearm and knees to Rey's ribs to take over. Rey counters a rollup attempt and sends Daniel to the floor as we take a break.

Back with Jey fighting back on Rowan but walking into a fallaway slam. The WWE App shows us Mysterio hitting his sliding splash and the stereo

Usos dives because why would we air those on the broadcast? Bryan comes back in for some hard kicks to Jey before tagging out to Erick. Jey avoids a charge in the corner and hits a sweet superkick to take the monster down. Hot tag brings in Mysterio for a seated senton and the 619 but Jimmy misses the Superfly Splash. Bryan tags himself in but Harper does the same with a glare to Daniel. Luke knocks Rey off the apron...and gets rolled up by Jimmy for the pin at 8:37.

Rating: D+. This was for the storyline instead of the match and that's fine in this case. In theory Bryan will be subjected to further brainwashing and reprimands for not having the right chemistry. I'm glad the usos have found a niche for themselves in matches like these and they fit the roles perfectly.

Batista will be in the Rumble.

Due to bad refereeing last week in the Khali vs. Sandow match, we're getting a rematch with the fans picking a guest referee: Arn Anderson, Bob Backlund or Sgt. Slaughter. The legends leave and Kane comes in for a LONG speech basically threatening Maddox to stop badmouthing him or the monster will return.

Big E. Langston walks through the back and sees Nikolai Volkoff singing the Russian national anthem, Ted DiBiase laughing and IRS telling him to pay his taxes. There are your pointless cameos for the hour.

Big E. Langston vs. Curtis Axel

Ryback is on commentary. Non-title in case you didn't get enough of the domination on Smackdown. Langston starts with some quick backbreakers but misses a charge into the post. Cole asks Ryback where the name Rybaxel came from because he's that much of a dolt. Axel armdrags and dropkicks Langston before sending him to the floor. Back in and Big E. shrugs everything off and finishes Axel with the Big Ending at 2:45. This was nothing.

It's time for Piper's Pit. Piper doesn't get to say much before his guests, the Shield, gets to interrupt. Ambrose: "Who gave this old man a live microphone?" Dean says it's a good thing they weren't around when Piper was in his prime or he wouldn't have made it to 112 years old. Piper says he took the mic because he wanted it and says this is Piper's Pit rather than Ambrose's Alley. Piper may have taken a few hits to the head but there's only one man that can match him on the microphone: CM Punk.

Ambrose gets in Piper's face again but Rollins interrupts. Seth says he appreciates what Hot Rod is trying to do but it's not 1985 anymore. Piper is just jealous because Ambrose is a better US Champion than Piper ever was. Roddy says he knows three things for sure: Rollins can't beat Punk one on one, Ambrose can't beat Punk one on one, but if Reigns can beat Punk tonight, doesn't that make him better than his teammates?

Aren't Ambrose and Rollins holding Reigns back? We get a REIGNS chant before Roman says he'll beat Punk tonight and gets in Piper's face. Shield surrounds Piper but Punk and the New Age Outlaws of all people come out for the save. Shield bails and Ambrose leaves the US Title behind so Piper puts it on his shoulder.

We recap Lesnar returning and throwing Mark Henry around like a paper doll last week.

Sin Cara vs. Alberto Del Rio

Del Rio starts aggressively but gets caught in a quick crucifix for one. A few more rollups get two for Cara but Del Rio comes back with a stomp in the corner to take over. The announcers are too busy bragging about Raw airing in Japan tonight as Del Rio puts on a chinlock. Back up and Cara's tornado DDT is countered but the Tajiri Elbow gets one. Cara goes to the apron and hits the enziguri but misses the Swanton, allowing Del Rio to hit the low superkick for the pin at 2:24.

Post match Del Rio says he's tired of hearing about Batista so he's going to throw him out of the Rumble.

In the back, Daniel tells the Wyatts that he came to the Family to try to learn. He was a tag team champion with a guy the size of Rowan and Harper and wants to contribute. He offers to team with either Harper or Rowan next week but instead will get to team with Bray himself.

Cody Rhodes/Goldust vs. Real Americans

Goldust and Swagger get us going with Goldie doing the big deep breath. An atomic drop sends Swagger over to the corner for a tag to Cesaro who gets caught in a double front suplex for one. Cody skins the cat to come back in with a right hand before it's time to work on the arm. Cesaro takes Goldust down to switch momentum before bringing in Swagger for a double back elbow. Back to Cesaro for the standing chinlock but Goldust bring in Cody with the springboard missile dropkick for two.

The sunset flip out of the corner gets two on Antonio but Cody has to take Swagger down with a Disaster Kick, allowing Cesaro to get in a cheap shot as we take a break. Back with the Real Americans still in control, though apparently the Cesaro Swing was shown on the WWE App. Great to know that we have to sit through a match without big spots so WWE can get people to download their latest project.

Cody backdrops Swagger to the floor but Antonio knocks Goldust to the floor. Rhodes gets to the corner but there's no one to tag, allowing Swagger to counter the disaster Kick into the Patriot Lock. Goldust FINALLY comes back in for the save and gets the hot tag to clean house. A spinning cross body takes Swagger down and Cesaro is low bridged to the floor, allowing Goldust to hit the Final Cut for the pin at 11:40.

Rating: C. The match was decent enough but I'm not sure where they're going to find good challengers to take out Goldust and Cody. The problem is the champions have taken out every team so far but thankfully they've

had good matches nearly every time. It's a very entertaining runs but I'm not sure where they can go to eventually move the belts.

Booker T runs into Diamond Dallas Page in the back and we plug Page's yoga program. The payoff is Ron Simmons for his signature catchphrase.

Damien Sandow vs. Great Khali

The guest referee is Sgt. Slaughter with 55% of the vote. Khali has Runjin Singh back with him tonight. No word on if Sandow quits if he loses here. Khali stomps away in the corner and hits some loud chops but Damien runs away from the big one to the head. Now it's Damien stomping in the corner but runs into a big boot. The huge chop is enough to pin Sandow at 1:25, even though Sandow's foot was on the ropes before one.

Damien yells and gets put in the Cobra Clutch post match. Slaughter dances with Khali and Singh in a goofy moment.

Here are Lesnar and Heyman with something to say. Heyman talks about how Lesnar doesn't like the concept of Old School Raw. Old School Raw isn't having a bunch of legends come out for one last hurrah and then leave after doing nothing. Brock wants Old School to mean the champion coming out here and standing supreme while everyone came out to challenge him. That's what people like Bruno Sammartino, Hulk Hogan and Steve Austin did in their prime, and that's how it should be today since there's only one world champion.

After the Royal Rumble there will only be one man and it doesn't matter if it's John Cena or Randy Orton. You can put the date on the back of their neck because their time as champion is short. Brock Lesnar is coming for either one of them because he's the best athlete in the world today. There is no one in wrestling, MMA or any professional sport that can compare to Lesnar and last week was proof of that.

The World's Strongest Man Mark Henry, an Olympian, came at Lesnar with no warning and Brock destroyed him with ease. Heyman reads Brock's new catchphrase off his shirt: Eat, sleep, conquer, repeat, over and over until Mark Henry comes out for the showdown. Mark is wincing but gets in some right hands to Brock. Lesnar shrugs them off and puts on the kimura to break Henry's arm.

Brock goes to leave but Big Show comes out for a staredown. Lesnar slowly backpedals towards the ring and tells Big Show to bring it. Big Show is all serious here as he gets up to the apron. Brock is all bring it on but runs to the floor instead of having the showdown like a good heel is supposed to. Heyman offers a distraction and Lesnar gets in, only to be LAUNCHED across the ring and out to the floor.

We recap the opening segment.

Bella Twins vs. Aksana/Alicia Fox

Nikki works on an armbar on Fox to start before sending her to the apron with a backbreaker. Fox flips out of something resembling a snapmare before getting sent to the floor with a monkey flip. Nikki is sent to the floor and comes up holding her shin, only to have Alicia start working on it. My goodness it's psychology in a Divas match. Aksana comes in to stay on the leg until Nikki fights up for a tag to Brie. House is cleaned but Brie misses her middle rope dropkick, giving Aksana the pin at 4:00.

Rating: D. The girls all look good in their outfits. I think you can figure out my thoughts on the match on your own.

3MB vs. Too Cool/Rikishi

This is as obvious of a match as you can get. Grandmaster and Jinder get things going with Grandmaster scoring with a quick dropkick. Off to Scotty who is still in good shape but gets punched down by McIntyre. Drew

misses a charge in the corner and the bulldog sets up the WORM. Slater robs us of our gratification though and 3MB takes over again. The announcers spend the entire match arguing over whether Too Cool can be called the Hip Hop Twins, thereby making the whole thing about them instead of the legends.

Scotty clotheslines McIntyre down and makes the hot tag to Rikishi who looks incredibly slow. He does manage a superkick to Mahal for two but Slater makes the save. Rikishi clotheslines two Band members down and the Hip Hop Drop takes out McIntyre. Mahal tries a sunset flip on Rikishi but gets sat on for the pin at 5:24.

Rating: D+. The match sucked and the commentary was annoying, but this is exactly what modern nostalgia should be about. Too Cool is an act that's old enough for people to reminisce but not old enough that they embarrass themselves in the ring. Nobody is hurt, the fans get to have a fun moment and everybody wins. Good stuff.

We get one more big legends segment with everyone mentioned tonight plus Godfather. All of them get introduced to the crowd but Bad News Barrett interrupts. Everyone has a good time but Bad News Barrett interrupts. This should be a momentous occasion but there's some bad news. Flea markets are in a frenzy today because all of these old guys aren't there to sign 25 year old photos for seven people. Barrett will take great pleasure in forgetting all of their names as soon as they leave the arena, just like all of the fans.

Randy Orton vs. Big E. Langston on Smackdown.

Before the main event here's Gene Okerlund to shill a hotline for \$5.95 a minute and kids don't need their parents' permission. He brings out the New Age Outlaws who don't want him to tell a story about the three of them, a clown and farm animals. The Outlaws head to the ring and do their catchphrases before doing the introductions for the main event.

Roman Reigns vs. CM Punk

Feeling out process to start with Punk taking him down into a headlock. The Outlaws are sticking around at ringside. Reigns comes back with a shoulder block and we take a break. Back with Reigns knocking Punk off the apron and into the barricade. Reigns brings him back inside for some shots to the head and a body vice. A headbutt puts Reigns down again but he comes back with a cross body, only to hurt his ribs even more.

We hit the bearhug from Roman before he shifts it around to a body vice. Punk tries to escape but Reigns suplexes him down, only to miss the Superman Punch and get kicked in the head. More kicks have Reigns in trouble and Punk drops him with some ax handles and a neckbreaker for two. The running knee in the corner gets two more but Reigns breaks up the Macho Elbow.

Punk breaks up a superplex attempt and drops the elbow (to Ambrose according to Cole) for no cover. The Outlaws and Shield get into it on the floor and Punk dives out to take care of Rollins, only to dive into the Superman Punch for two. The spear hits the middle buckle and Punk gets a VERY close two off a rollup. Punk snaps off a high kick for two more but Reigns escapes the GTS. Another Ambrose distraction lets Reigns spear Punk in half for the pin at 16:14.

Rating: B. This took time to get going but the near falls at the end were all great stuff. They're pushing Reigns to the moon and it continues to show how annoying these start and stop pushes can be. Look what happens when you push guys like Reigns and Langston to the moon without having them trade wins against midcarders for a change. It's like people get behind monsters who clean house or something.

Post match Shield poses but JAKE ROBERTS comes out. Punk picks up Ambrose for a GTS but gives him an airplane spin first. Jake looks better than I've seen him in years. Ambrose gets the snake treatment for old times' sake.

Overall Rating: D+. The D in this case is for disappointing. This show has potential every year but most of the time it turns into a regular Raw with a few frills to pay lip service to the theme of the night. Look at all the completely meaningless cameos and time spent on regular stuff instead of the legends. There was one match all night featuring the legends and it was the most enjoyable thing all night.

With six weeks between TLC and the Rumble, it's ok to spend a week on something fun instead of plugging your App and whatever other nonsense they've got going on at the moment. This felt like any given Raw with a few extra moments put in. I wanted to love this show a lot but instead it became dull really fast and I kept forgetting it was a special at all. That's not bad but it's very disappointing which is even worse.

Results

Usos/Rey Mysterio b. Wyatt Family – Rollup to Harper

Big E. Langston b. Curtis Axel – Big Ending

Alberto Del Rio b. Sin Cara – Superkick

Cody Rhodes/Goldust b. Real Americans – Final Cut to Swagger

Great Khali b. Damien Sandow – Chop to the head

Aksana/Alicia Fox b. Bella Twins – Aksana pinned Brie after a missed missile dropkick

Too Cool/Rikishi b. 3MB – Seated senton to Mahal

Roman Reigns b. CM Punk – Spear

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