

Monday Night Raw – January 27, 2014: It's A Long Way Down The Wrestlemania Road

Monday Night Raw

Date: January 27, 2014

Location: Quicken Loans Arena, Cleveland, Ohio

Commentators: Michael Cole, Jerry Lawler, John Bradshaw Layfield

It's the night after the Royal Rumble and the big question is what happens to Daniel Bryan. The fans hijacked the show last night in their support of Bryan but it seems that he doesn't have anything to do at the moment. Batista won the Royal Rumble for the shot at the WWE Title at Wrestlemania, but a lot of people can't see that being the final match at the biggest show of the year. Let's get to it.

Here's the Authority to open Raw because that's how WWE works nowadays. On the way to the ring we get some stills of Lesnar mauling Big Show last night. Stephanie starts her schtick and the audience immediately cuts her off with a YES. Stephanie: "Yes, yes it was one of the most satisfying Royal Rumbles in history." HHH mocks the fans for not getting what they want and talks about how awesome last night was, including bragging about Batista's win. Stephanie mentions one more stop at the Elimination Chamber where Orton will defend the title inside the Chamber....AND HERE HE COMES!

Daniel Bryan comes out and starts the YES chant but asks the fans to calm down for a second because the Authority doesn't care for it. Things calm down a bit before Bryan talks about what a great match he had last night. HHH calls it a good little effort and Stephanie agrees. This takes Bryan to the biggest disappointment last night, which of course was him not being in the Rumble. There's a YES Movement going on and even though Bryan asked the Authority to be in the Rumble, all he got was a NO.

Stephanie says Bryan has been through a lot lately and didn't want him to be in jeopardy. Bryan brings up all of the handicap matches against Shield and the Wyatts and all the handicap matches, but HHH says that's why they didn't want to do it again. Daniel accuses them of being out to get him instead of doing what's best for business so Stephanie says Bryan is being selfish. "Do you think these people are only here to see you?" Fans: "YES! YES! YES!"

Bryan polls the audience about various people they might be here to see but Bryan seems to be the popular choice. Stephanie can't make out what they're saying so Bryan cuts to the chase: he wants in the Elimination Chamber and threatens HHH with violence if he doesn't get what he wants. HHH says that sounds good but Bryan has company and here's the Shield. Daniel immediately grabs a chair but the numbers take him down. Sheamus tries to make a save but gets taken down as well, leading to Cena making the save. I'd bet on a six man for later.

Rey Mysterio/Sin Cara vs. Real Americans

The six man is set for later tonight and the winning team all qualifies for the Chamber. As for the four man tag, I'm surprised it took them this long to get to this match. Mysterio, dressed like the Flash here, sends Cesaro down with a flying mare before it's off to Cara who is in gold tights with red boots. Swagger is sent to the floor and into the announce table off a dive where Colter yells in his face. Colter says he's not listening and slaps Swagger in the face. Jack goes back in and runs Cara over as we take a break.

Back with Cesaro elbowing Cara in the face as we look at Swagger being aggressive during the break. Cara comes back with a spinning DDT to Jack and backdrops Swagger to the floor before getting two off a victory roll to Cesaro. Antonio comes back with a powerslam for two and it's back to Swagger who misses the Vader Bomb.

Cesaro isn't sure what to do because Cara isn't there for the double

stomp, allowing Cara to make a hot tag to Rey. Things speed up with a top rope seated senton and the sitout bulldog for two on Cesaro. Everything breaks down and Rey sends Swagger to the floor, only to have Cara dive into the European uppercut followed by the Neutralizer for the pin at 9:50.

Rating: C-. The idea of pushing the Real Americans is fine but I have zero confidence in the company to follow through on it. Besides, it's not like anything is going to matter if the teams wind up chasing their tails all over again, which has been the case for months now. The match was fairly sloppy too, but that's to be expected with high flying.

Here's Bad News Barrett on his podium with the gavel. He has some BAD NEWS for the viewing audience: tonight we have to watch Dolph Ziggler vs. the Miz in the Battle of Cleveland. This is a problem as Cleveland is full of nothing but losers.

Video on the Monday Night War series on the WWE Network.

Fandango vs. R-Truth

Xavier Woods is on commentary and complaining about not being in the Rumble. Emma is dancing in the crowd again as Truth takes over with a shot to the back and a jumping shot to the head. Fandango rolls to the floor for a breather but Truth quickly follows, only to get distracted by Summer (no shame in that), allowing Fandango to run him over. Back in and Fandango grabs a chinlock for a few seconds before Truth comes back with some clotheslines. The suplex into a Stunner gets two and Little Jimmy connects for the pin at 3:32.

Rating: D-. This was pretty awful for the most part and came off as nothing but filler. It wasn't a long match or anything so it wasn't that much torture to sit through, but I'm getting sick of these matches of guys with dancing gimmicks. I have no idea what the appeal is supposed to be of having guys with the same style working together but it's a trope

of wrestling.

Here's Brad Maddox to introduce Randy Orton for his big speech. Orton says the champ is here and doesn't care that people are calling it a hollow victory. Then he got to work this morning and found out he has to defend the title inside the Elimination Chamber. He asks Brad whose idea this was because he's the face of the WWE, but here's Batista to argue. Batista congratulates him for the win, but reminds Randy that he's back to win the title at Wrestlemania.

Batista doesn't care who he faces at Wrestlemania (including Bryan) because his goal is to be WWE Champion. On April 6, he doesn't care who likes it because he's walking out of Wrestlemania WWE Champion and nothing can change that. This brings out Brock Lesnar with something to say. Heyman introduces himself to Maddox and says that Brock's patience is running thin. Tonight the Authority has two choices: have Orton defend the title against Lesnar tonight, or put Brock against Batista for the title shot at Wrestlemania. Either pick one, or else. Batista stares down Brock as Orton is ticked off.

The Miz vs. Dolph Ziggler

It's the Battle of Cleveland so they're both in jerseys. Miz has new orange trunks and it's a feeling out process to start. A headlock gives Miz control but he goes up top, only to dive into a dropkick for two. There's a sleeper by Dolph as the announcers rip on Cleveland. Miz comes back with an uppercut for two and has to fight off the running DDT. Ziggler breaks up the Reality Check but gets caught in the Figure Four. He FINALLY makes the rope so Miz goes back to it, only to be rolled up for two, followed by the Zig Zag for the pin at 4:08.

Rating: D+. Not the worst match in the world but neither guy came out of it looking anymore more than average. It wasn't a bad match, but it shows how much both guys are in need of something to do. They're both just floating around at this point and it's getting sad to see them like this.

Ryback/Curtis Axel vs. Usos

The Goldberg chants start up because they're still a thing. Jey ducks a forearm to start but gets driven into the corner over and over before bringing in Axel for his variety pack of stomping. A dropkick sends Jey into the ropes and Axel celebrates a bit before bringing in Ryback for a delayed vertical suplex. Jey gets in a few right hands but it's quickly back to Axel for some chops in the corner.

Axel breaks up another hot tag attempt but Jimmy gets in a shot from the apron, allowing for the Twins to make a tag. Jimmy cleans house on Curtis with the referee pulling him out of the corner. The Samoan drop puts Axel down but Ryback comes in off a blind tag. He loads up Shell Shock on Jimmy but Jey superkicks him for the save. Quickly back to Jimmy and the Superfly Splash is good for the pin at 5:42.

Rating: C-. Another fine but uninspiring match. The Usos continue to look great but they need to win the titles at some point. They've been the same team for years now and it never seems to lead anywhere at all. Still though, good enough match here, even though they need to do something better soon.

Kofi Kingston vs. Alberto Del Rio

New gear for Kofi as well as he's got long purple tights and white boots, making him look more like the Joker than anything else. Back and forth to start with Del Rio going for his strikes but Kofi coming back with his right hands in the corner. Del Rio kicks him down for two but misses a charge to send him outside, allowing Kofi to hit a suicide dive. Alberto comes back by kicking Kofi in the head on the way back in before sending him into the barricade for two.

A lot of standing around ensues but let's stop for JBL to get a chant and a standing ovation. Alberto yells at him so there's one for Lawler as well. Kofi is put on top but they both fall to the floor as we take a

break. Back with Del Rio in control after kicking Kofi in the head during the break. Kofi fights out of a chinlock with a jawbreaker and gets two off a sunset flip, only to get caught in a wicked German suplex for two.

Kingston comes back with a clothesline and some right hands but Del Rio hits him in the leg. A rollup gets two for Kofi but Del Rio bails to the apron to avoid Trouble in Paradise. The SOS gets two and the tilt-a-whirl backbreaker from Alberto gets the same. Another Trouble in Paradise attempt misses and Del Rio hits the Backstabber for two. Alberto gets crotched on the top but comes back with something resembling a double stomp to the chest from the top. The low superkick is good for the pin on Kofi at 13:37.

Rating: C+. The match was good but I have no desire to see these two fight anymore. Unfortunately I have a bad feeling there's going to be another two matches between the two on Smackdown and then Raw next week so they can have a rubber match. It's not like WWE has any other fresh ideas for us.

Tag Titles: New Age Outlaws vs. Cody Rhodes/Goldust

The Outlaws are defending after winning the titles in a big surprise last night. Road Dogg actually quotes Selena Gomez before doing the full entrance, which is a full face version. Before the match, Roadie talks about becoming champions because they're the best at what they do. This might hurt, but the Brothers just weren't good enough last night. Cody and Goldust knock them to the floor before the bell and the Outlaws think they shouldn't have to defend.

Gunn tells Goldust (not wearing gloves which is a weird look for him) to suck it to start, earning himself a clothesline and armdrag. Billy rolls to the floor where Road Dogg cools him down with JBL's hat. Back in and Goldust chases Roadie into the corner where Dogg shouts about what's going on here. Off to Cody who grabs a headlock on Dogg before loading up the moonsault press, sending Dogg to the floor for a breather.

Back in again and Cody puts on an armbar before it's off to Goldust for the same. Billy comes back in and kicks Goldust's head off as we go to a break. We come back with Goldust powerslamming Billy to put both guys down. Road Dogg comes in again but gets caught in a quick sunset bomb out of the corner for two, cutting his head open a bit as well. The hot tag brings in Cody who cleans house but misses the Disaster Kick, allowing Billy to clothesline him down for two. Not that it matters as Brock Lesnar comes in to lay out Cody and Goldust for the DQ at 12:00.

Rating: C-. The first part of the match was more strange than good with the Outlaws trying to hide instead of have the match. That's fine for a story, but it was still very awkward, which seemed to be what they were going for. Not a bad match though and I can't imagine the Outlaws holding the titles much longer.

Heyman says the Authority have picked Option 3, which is Lesnar has no match tonight. This is what happens when Lesnar doesn't get what he wants, meaning the Rhodes Brothers get the chair treatment.

Bella Twins/Funkadactyls vs. AJ Lee/Aksana/Alicia Fox/Tamina Snuka

Aksana and Cameron start with some catty yelling at each other before it's off to the Bellas for dropkicks to the back. Off to Alicia who gets caught in a facebuster from Nikki but she comes back with a tilt-a-whirl backbreaker for two. The fans are silent for most of this. Off to AJ for the only reaction of the match and a chinlock.

A neckbreaker gets two on Nikki and it's back to Aksana who is basically in a one piece purple swimsuit. Tamina comes in for a hard slam and a chinlock of her own before Nikki finally avoids a charge in the corner and Naomi comes in off the hot tag. Naomi comes in and jumps around a lot with her purple lipstick flying all over the place. The other six girls fight over a triple suplex until Naomi is able to pin AJ after the Rear View at 5:40.

Rating: D. This felt LONG and was the kind of Divas match that gets annoying in a hurry. First and foremost: Naomi looked ridiculous. She had on bright purple and gold with purple lipstick and looked more like she was going out for Halloween than being in a match. The Bellas continue to be the Bellas and everyone else sucked for the most part, leaving this as a very long nearly six minutes.

Video on the history of Wrestlemania show on the WWE Network.

Christian returns on Smackdown.

John Cena/Daniel Bryan/Sheamus vs. Shield

They have a lot of time for this and the winners go to the Chamber. Cena and Ambrose get things going as the dueling Cena chants begin. It's quickly off to Rollins as Cole starts spouting off Rumble stats. Rollins grabs a quick headlock but Cena fights up and punches Seth in the mouth to take over. There's the tag to Reigns and you can hear the fans get fired up. We even get a Roman Reigns chant.

Sheamus gets to face Reigns in a power vs. power match and the Irishman takes him down with a neckbreaker for two. Back to Rollins who gets kicked in the back to send him to the apron for the ten forearms. An Ambrose distraction lets Rollins take over on Sheamus before Dean comes in to stomp away legally. Sheamus comes right back with power to drag Dean into the corner for the tag off to Bryan. Daniel starts cleaning house with the kicks and a hurricanrana off the top gets two.

There's the surfboard to pop the crowd a bit more before it's back to Cena who charges into an elbow for two as we take our last break. Back with Rollins stomping away on Cena before getting two off a Blockbuster. Reigns hits a dropkick from the floor to the side of Cena's head as it's draped over the bottom rope to keep John in trouble. The Superman Punch knocks Cena down again and is treated like a signature spot. Cena sidesteps the spear and Reigns falls to the floor where he comes up

limping.

It's not too bad though as Reigns gets right back in and breaks up the tag before making a tag off to Ambrose. Dean stomps away and talks more trash before it's back to Rollins for a double suplex for two. We hit the chinlock on Cena for a bit before a snap DDT is good for two for Ambrose. Cena hits an AA out of nowhere to set up the hot tag to Bryan, with Cole using the term YES Movement as the latest buzzword. Bryan fires off the kicks and FLYING Goat to Rollins before the YES Kicks are good for two.

Reigns comes back in with the spear to Bryan and Cena (Cena's hit him in the knees) but Bryan dropkick Reigns down. Rollins tries a rollup on Bryan but Daniel is out at two. Bryan flips out of a German suplex but gets caught in a buckle bomb for two. Rollins hits a quick splash in the corner but misses the top rope knee. Bryan hits his own release German suplex but misses a running dropkick in the corner, allowing Seth to roll him up but Bryan counters into the YES Lock, only to have Ambrose make the save. There's a Brogue Kick for Dean but Rollins takes Sheamus down with the knee to the head.

Bryan avoids another splash and a double crossbody puts both guys down again. Cena is up on the apron again and it's hot tag to John and Reigns. Roman is quickly caught in the STF but he BREAKS CENA'S GRIP...as the Wyatts interrupt things. They show up on Cena and that's a DQ to send Cena/Bryan/Sheamus to the Chamber at 24:00.

Rating: A-. Great six man here with everyone looking good and that Rollins vs. Bryan segment stealing the show. There was no way they couldn't put Bryan in the Chamber after last night and it was either here or in one of the last two spots. This was great booking as everyone gets to look good and a lot of stories are advanced. Really good stuff here and the results they needed.

Shield throws a fit to end the show.

Overall Rating: B-. It was a good show for the most part as things calmed down a lot. The crowd was nowhere near as big of a factor and that helped the show. Brock wanting in on the title scene heading into Elimination Chamber makes things very interesting as I could see Brock vs. Batista for the title shot at the PPV, which leaves a lot of doors open. I wouldn't call tonight damage control, but they showed us that there are ways around the predicaments they've found themselves in. The wrestling tonight wasn't great but it did what it needed to do to give us a solid show.

Results

Real Americans b. Sin Cara/Rey Mysterio – Neutralizer to Cara

R-Truth b. Fandango – Little Jimmy

Dolph Ziggler b. The Miz – Zig Zag

Usos b. Ryback/Curtis Axel – Superfly Splash to Ryback

Alberto Del Rio b. Kofi Kingston – Superkick

Cody Rhodes/Goldust b. New Age Outlaws via DQ when Brock Lesnar interfered

Bella Twins/Funkadactyls b. AJ Lee/Aksana/Alicia Fox/Tamina Snuka – Rear View to AJ

Sheamus/Daniel Bryan/John Cena b. Shield via DQ when the Wyatt Family interfered

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