

More In Depth Thoughts On Monday Night Raw – January 27, 2014

Since the Royal Rumble extra thoughts post went over so well I figured I'd try it again with Raw. I won't be making this a regular thing unless there's a big show where a lot of stuff happens. Let's get to it.

The opening promo was absolutely awesome and did several things that it needed to accomplish. First and foremost, it caused the Authority to act like heels for the first time in a long time. For many weeks now they've been the smug semi-faces that played to the crowd and acted like they were doing something to please the fans. HHH and Stephanie came off like total villains last night and it's exactly what they were supposed to be doing.

On top of that, the promo advanced several feuds at the same time. It gave Sheamus something to do as soon as he gets back, it puts Cena in the Chamber to keep him in the title scene while keeping him directly away from Orton, and it gives Bryan the shot at the title that the people have been wanting him to have all along. It also keeps Shield front and center which is never a bad thing.

I'm going to lump all of the matches save for the main event into one big pile. Last night's wrestling really didn't do much for me and a lot of that is due to the amount of rematches we had. Usos vs. Ryback/Axel again, Kofi vs. Del Rio in their monthly meeting and Truth vs. Fandango because they're both dancers. No the matches don't happen every week like some of the feuds we get, but they happen often enough that we don't need to see them for a long time.

It's a big problem in WWE that needs to be addressed. With as deep of a roster as WWE has, there's no excuse to not have a fresh match every few weeks. It's ok to mix things up a bit instead of just doing the same stuff over and over again, even though it's all WWE seems they're capable of doing anymore.

That brings us to the big segment in the middle of the show with Orton, Batista and Brock Lesnar. The key thing here is the amount of doors this segment opened. It's possible that we could be seeing Batista vs. Brock at the Elimination Chamber for the Mania title shot, or that Brock could enter into the Chamber, or that we could wind up with a three way out of all this (erg). The best thing though is that it could be one of several ideas and I'm not sure which one. That's always a great feeling and it's what I got last night.

However, the one option I don't care to see is Batista vs. Del Rio at the Chamber. No matter how many midcarders Del Rio beats up, he's a jobber at the main event level and has been for years now. Batista may not be the hottest thing in the world, but he's more interesting than Del Rio. No one is going to buy that Del Rio is going to make Batista tap or pin him after the superkick. It would be a filler match with what sounds like very uninteresting chemistry.

The Tag Title match was nothing special but the Outlaws showed they've still got it. They were playing the same characters they did before, but somehow they haven't aged in the fifteen years they've been gone. I don't see them being long term champions and would love to see the Usos take the belts off of them, but there's just not much to them in the ring. To be fair though, there wasn't when they were in their prime either.

Brock interfering keeps things open but I was surprised that there was nothing to follow it up later in the show. I was expecting the Authority to come out and address Brock but the less interaction I see between HHH and Brock Lesnar, the better my experience watching Raw goes. Lesnar continues to be terrifying, which is in part due to him throwing chairs everywhere. He needs to watch it with that.

The main event was absolutely awesome with both teams looking great. Sheamus is certainly back and in the same shape he was in before his injury. That's a good sign as so many people leave and then come back with a totally different look and physique that takes six months to get back to normal. As for the match, Bryan vs. Rollins stole the show as Seth continues to be the workhorse of the team. Reigns is starting to get his signature moveset together as you can see the big push coming.

The ending was perfect as neither team deserved to job, Reigns got to break the STF, and we set up a future match. Yeah lost in all this was the future Wyatts vs. Shield match which people have been drooling over for months now. The Shield isn't going to be around much longer and this is the one big match that people have been wanting to see for a long time. It'll be a nice addition to the Chamber, unless Bray and/or Reigns are added to the Chamber itself and the six man is at Wrestlemania.

A few other notes about the show:

Jake Roberts is a great choice for the Hall of Fame. He worked very hard to get his life back in order and deserves the honor for the DDT alone. This might be the better idea than putting him in the Rumble where he might have injured himself falling out of the ring.

A lot of people were missing from last night's show, including Punk, Langston and Rusev. I kept thinking Punk wasn't looking right during the Rumble so maybe he's banged up after all the wear and tear he's built up over the last few months. Langston might have needed a week off after the Rumble as well, given that it wasn't his night. I hope Rusev appears more than just once in the Rumble as the guy has potential.

Oh and Christian is back on Friday. Uh...yay.

Overall it wasn't a great show but it did what it was supposed to do. The wrestling wasn't great but it was able to get us through the night until we hit the awesome main event. More than anything else though it set things up on the Road to Wrestlemania and calmed the fans down after they were on the verge of rioting at the Rumble. The crowd wasn't a very big deal last night but that's a good thing at the moment. Good but not great show.

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