

Reviewing the Review – Monday Night Raw: April 14, 2014

Raw on Monday was a hybrid between the Ultimate Warrior tribute show which can make for some less interesting shows. We also got the first round of a tournament to find a new #1 contender to the Intercontinental Title. The problem is Daniel Bryan is on his honeymoon so there's not a lot that can happen. Let's get to it.

First up was the Ultimate Warrior tribute which worked better than I expected. The video worked very well, the roster on the stage in Warrior shirts and fans with Warrior masks looked great and the ten bell salute was its usual tear jerking moment. There really isn't much to complain about here because they did everything the way it was supposed to be done.

RVD advanced by beating Del Rio. There's not much to say here, much like with almost all Del Rio matches anymore. He did his arm stuff and the other guy did the rest. It's a pattern he's fallen into and it's not working for me much anymore. That's why I liked his face push so much last year. He's a talented guy and it allowed him to show off a lot of those skills that we don't often get to see now that his moveset is getting rather short. Note that there's a difference between limited moveset and being lazy. Del Rio's offense makes a lot of sense for what he does but he doesn't go that far beyond.

We got some classic Warrior moments throughout the night including Summerslam 1988 vs. Honky Tonk Man, Wrestlemania VI against Hogan and Summerslam 1990 against Rick Rude. I understand that you can't show full fifteen to twenty minute matches on Raw, but I was surprised they showed a clip of the FORTY FIVE SECOND Summerslam 1988 match. Seriously, from

bell to bell it's less than a minute and from Honky Tonk Man's music hitting to Warrior leaving is less than five minutes. You really need to clip something in there?

Ryback/Axel beat the Rhodes Brothers. This is a good example of the problem with the division: the match was ok at best but Ryback and Axel are "on a roll" after winning a grand total of two straight matches. Before then, their last win as a team was over two months ago. It's REALLY hard to buy them as a hot team when they're like 4-16 this year. It also doesn't help that we've seen every team against every team so many times now that there's almost nothing new to see. Have some longer feuds, but give them a story to help us carry them along. Why is this so hard?

Paige squashed Alicia Fox. That Scorpion Cross Lock looks AWESOME and is a great compliment to the Paige Turner. This was a much better performance from her this week.

We got a rematch from last week with the Usos vs. Randy Orton/Batista. The Usos got beaten up again but thankfully they didn't get pinned or give up. I can live with the champions getting beaten down and the Shield running in for the DQ because there was a chance the Usos could have made a comeback if they were given the chance. Not having champions job clean is all I ask. Having them lose like this doesn't really hurt anyone though so no real issue here.

Cesaro advanced by Neutralizing Henry. There's nothing here we haven't seen a bunch of times but it's still cool looking.

Rusev squashed Xavier Woods and set up a future match against R-Truth. I

didn't really see the match as it was less than a minute long and I was looking at Lana.

Sheamus advanced over Jack Swagger in a match that is showing the problem with most Sheamus matches. He was in trouble for most of the match but just popped up with a Brogue Kick for the win. I like the guy, but he's in need of some adjustments in his character. For one thing, it's ok to have him lose on occasion as it would make him seem more human. On top of that, GIVE HIM A STORY ALREADY!

Big Show knocked out Sandow in a segment that wasn't even a match. I'm not sure what the point here was but if it's to push Sandow, they're going about it in their typically stupid and highly backwards way.

Now we get to the stupid part of the show, as the Wyatts had another good promo about bringing the monster out of John Cena and John responded by showing pictures of the Wyatts dressed as women. This is an old standard "comedy" bit for WWE and it just isn't funny. It's not witty, it's not intelligent, it doesn't make a point about anything. It's something a 15 year old can do with an old version of Photoshop and think it's the funniest thing EVER but instead we're getting it from the top star in a multi-million dollar company in prime time television.

This is a good example of what scripted promos can do. The Raw script leaked and Cena's promo was mostly written out in advance. As you can see, there's a major problem with the WWE's writing staff: they're not very funny. Guys like Santino are funny and he's allowed to do some funny stuff at times. While I'm not a Santino fan at all, at least he mixes things up on occasion.

The writers have a few standard bits they go to when they want to be funny and they just don't work most of the time. This wasn't one of them and you would be much better off letting Cena do his own thing out there, as he's proven he can more than handle a microphone. Oh yeah and Cena vs. Bray in a cage at Extreme Rules. That could be fun.

Speaking of Santino, he and Emma lost a mixed tag to Fandango and Layla. I still have no idea why I'm supposed to care about this feud at all, nor why you would spend a few weeks building Emma up and then have her lose in 80 seconds here.

Stephanie got Kane to put the mask back on for revenge on Daniel Bryan. At first I thought this was stupid but the more I think about it the more I think it could work. It's very much like Foley becoming Cactus Jack for the violent feuds and that worked well enough to go its job.

Dolph Ziggler lost to Bad News Barrett in the final match. I'm digging the Barrett push, but they'll need to put him over Sheamus, which would likely set up Barrett vs. Cesaro in the finals and that's just not happening. In other words, they're shooting themselves in the foot with this booking again.

The main event was Shield vs. eleven heels which didn't last long as a brawl broke out and Evolution reunited for a big beatdown of Shield to end the show. See, now THIS is how you bring a stable back. There's a logical reason for this group to come together again and it's going to be used to give Shield a big rub. Far bigger than they got from the Outlaws at least.

Raw on Monday really didn't do it for me. It felt like a totally

skippable show which oddly enough didn't feel like much of a tribute. It was more like "Warrior died and we're all genuinely sad but we really don't have time to stop and wait for anything so on with the show!" I can understand that, but would airing a few more people talking about him have hurt? I mean, I know it would have meant no Santino vs. Fandango Part 73 but I think we can all live with a break from that feud.

The wrestling was pretty lame as well with no match being entertaining beyond just a basic level. Evolution is a nice idea but the tournament had the same problems every tournament has: I don't need to watch anything until the final, because the first matches were nothing we hadn't seen before. But hey, tournaments rock right?

Finally, it was a good example of why the booking just doesn't work a lot of the time. Yeah I know it's Extreme Rules so it's time for rematches, but Cena vs. Wyatt worked so well the first time because Cena didn't go for the "comedy". Now we've got pictures of the Wyatts as old women and it's neither funny nor advancing anything at all. It's hard to take the feud seriously when Cena has gone from nearly bashing Bray's head in with a chair to this in eight days. Again, that's mainly on the writers though, as they have no idea how to do a long form story.

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