

Monday Night Raw – May 12, 2014: NO Daniel NO, YES Shield YES

Monday Night Raw

Date: May 11, 2014

Location: Bon Secours Wellness Arena, Greenville, South Carolina

Commentators: Michael Cole, Jerry Lawler, John Bradshaw Layfield

There really isn't much to say about this show. It looks like Payback is all set up and interest in it basically comes down to whether you liked Extreme Rules or not. There's not much new in terms of storylines save for the debut of Adam Rose last week in a segment rather than a match. Let's get to it.

We open with a recap of Sheamus winning the US Title in the battle royal last week and Evolution beating up Shield to end the show.

Shield is in the ring and not very happy to get things going. Ambrose admits that they took a beating last week and went down, but tonight they're standing tall in this ring. Rollins says they're running at Evolution, and if Evolution is made up of men, they'll accept a challenge for a rematch. Evolution used to be really good, but they're not what they once were because they can't evolve to beat the Shield.

Reigns shakes his head and Seth is surprised he has something to say. Roman takes the mic and says Evolution victimized his brothers a week ago. All of that made him realize that it's all Evolution has. If that's all they have, then they have a serious problem. Shield can serve justice cold and slowly and

they'll teach Evolution to believe in payback, the Shield, and in Roman Reigns. Not exactly great promo work there from Roman.

Evolution's limo is seen arriving with Shield still watching. HHH and company get out of the limo and Shield sprints to the back. HHH signs some papers and Shield is here for the fight. Security quickly breaks it up but Evolution is left laying on the concrete with HHH holding his head.

Rob Van Dam vs. Jack Swagger

We come back from a break with Zeb telling the fans to sit there and shut up. Last week he was reading the Bill of Rights when Adam Rose interrupted him. Rose and his band of hippies and Rocky Horror Picture Show rejects aren't American, so Adam needs to keep his distance. The bell rings and here come Adam Rose and his entourage. Rose comes to the ring and gets on the middle rope but falls onto the party when Swagger swings. JBL: "All we need is Kurrgan and the Oddities!" Rose and company leave, allowing Van Dam to hit a superkick and the Five Star for the pin at 2:10.

Video on Paige.

Bolieve!

Paige vs. Alicia Fox

Non-title. Alicia grabs a mic before the match and says Paige has managed to alienate the entire Divas division in just six weeks, so she needs to get out. Fox slaps Paige in the face and drives knees to the ribs before the bell. Paige says start the match but gets kneed again and hit with a nice tilt-a-whirl backbreaker. Fox rams her into the post for two back inside and gets two more off a northern lights suplex.

A neckbreaker and backbreaker put Paige down again for a very delayed two. We get a very modified surfboard with Fox's feet

in Paige's back before slamming her face first down onto the mat. Fox struts around the ring before ramming Paige face first into the mat a few times. She puts on a headlock for no apparent reason and gets caught in the Paige Turner for the pin at 3:55.

Rating: D+. The match was there to make Paige look good and it worked well enough. This is one of those WWE tropes: have someone dominate for a good while and then lose in the end to one big move. It doesn't really do much for the heel but at least the right person won, right?

Post match Alicia freaks out and destroys part of the announce table before throwing a beer everywhere. She says she should be Divas Champion before slapping a production guy and stealing JBL's hat.

We recap the Kane/Bryan/Brie segment from last week.

Here's Daniel Bryan with something to say. He says it's been a long road to get right here. From the moment he won the title at Summerslam, he knew this thing would be a huge uphill battle. The fans aren't sure if they should cheer or not. Bryan: "So that's what it feels like to be John Cena." After the attacks from Shield, Randy Orton and the Authority and with everyone behind him, he climbed the mountain and won the title at Wrestlemania.

Then he took the worst beating of his life at Kane's hands but he beat Kane at Extreme Rules. However, his style has taken a toll on his body. Unfortunately he has to pay the price this week with neck surgery and he's not happy about it. The Authority must be thrilled though because they think his career is done. There's a chance that his career is done but it won't be. He doesn't know when he'll come back, but there's only one answer to if he'll come back: YES! No word on what happens to the title.

We look back at the end of the cage match at Extreme Rules and

Bray's speech last week.

Usos/John Cena vs. Wyatt Family

Rematch from Smackdown where Harper pinned Jimmy. Harper and Jey get things going with Luke getting rolled up for two. An uppercut staggers Harper and a jumping clothesline puts him down for two. Off to Rowan for some choking on the ropes and a good old fashioned rake of the eyes. The LET'S GO CENA fans actually get louder than their opponents as Bray works over Jey in the corner for a bit.

Back to Harper who fires off a kick to the face. A flying headbutt from Jey is enough for the first hot tag to Jimmy who cleans house. Cole says the Wyatts can't get it together despite them controlling nearly the entire match so far. Rowan distracts Jimmy, allowing Harper to kick Jimmy's head off for two. Back to Bray for some knees to the head followed by the Gator Roll from Harper. Erick drops Jimmy across his knee and chokes even more. Back to the leader who muscles Jimmy into the corner and hits the running splash, only to get kicked in the face to put both guys down.

The hot tag brings in Cena to clean house on Rowan before nailing Harper in the face with a right hand. Rowan falls to the floor to escape the AA, allowing Harper to slam Cena face first onto the mat. Jey comes in with a high cross body to Harper but walks into a release Rock Bottom. An enziguiri (actually a knee) to the head drops Bray, followed by Cena putting Rowan in the STF, only to have Bray make the save. Bray gets all googly eyed until Jimmy superkicks him down to break up Sister Abigail. Harper gets kicked as well, setting up the double flying Uso to the floor. Back inside and the AA to Rowan gets the pin at 9:42.

Rating: C+. This was much better than the original and it gives Cena some momentum without making Bray look bad. That's the perk of having minions like Harper and Rowan as you can

beat them without sacrificing any of Bray's heat. It's not a great match or anything but it did exactly what it was supposed to do.

Post match Bray thanks Cena for making him realize exactly what Bray needs to do. Follow the buzzards.

Here's Evolution with something to say. Orton knows Evolution has had enough of the Shield and it's time to take them out. It's time to put the Hounds of Justice to sleep. Batista shouts that he's had enough and HHH says it's time to take the gloves off and finish this. At Extreme Rules the Shield proved how great they were but that's why HHH fed the roster to them. However, Shield got too big for themselves but HHH was wrong to think he could salvage something out of them.

If Shield wants a rematch at Payback, then so be it. Evolution will do what they do best and take Shield apart. They'll start by humbling Ambrose before taking the hummingbird's wings away from Rollins. That leaves Roman Reigns and Evolution will take their time to make an example out of him. Reigns will fail to adapt and....that's all HHH gets out as Shield jumps them from behind. Shield easily clears the ring and Evolution scatters. Batista gets on the mic and says he's had enough of all three of them. He challenges Reigns for tonight and Roman looks ready.

Nikki Bella vs. Natalya

This is due to Nikki not liking Natalya's painting on Total Divas. This would have taken place roughly five months ago and they're just now having the match. More of the Total Divas are at ringside and holding up cards with scores on them for the moves being used. Nattie takes Nikki down with ease to start but it's quickly reversed by some elbows from Nikki.

A middle rope knee to the chest gets two on Natalya but she slaps Nikki in the face and puts on an abdominal stretch. Nikki reverses into one of her own before Nattie fights out

and hammers away. The match turns into a brawl until Nikki tries a wheelbarrow slam but gets countered into a rollup. The counter is countered into an AWFUL looking rollup for the pin on Natalya at 3:30.

Rating: D. Nikki looks good in very tiny shorts and that's about all I've got.

Natalya freaks out on the other Divas post match. This seems like the start of a heel turn.

Sheamus vs. Curtis Axel

Axel gets the non-title match here by winning a coin flip. Sheamus hammers away to start and drops a knee to the head for two. Axel comes back with a kick to the face and a running knee lift for two of his own. A charge in the corner hits Sheamus' boot and he goes up top, only to get crotched down onto the ropes. Curtis gets two more off a neckbreaker from the top but a dropkick is countered into the Cloverleaf to make Axel tap at 3:20.

Rating: D+. This is fine for Sheamus as he gets to be in the ring with a quick story and get a win. There wasn't much to the match but it's a Curtis Axel match so what were you expecting? Having Sheamus just run over former midcard champions is a fine idea and something that could work well for him.

Ryback jumps Sheamus post match and I think Sheamus is in action again after a break.

Sheamus vs. Ryback

Joined in progress with Ryback holding Sheamus in a chinlock. I'd assume this is non-title as well. A powerslam gets two on Sheamus but he's able to get his knees up to block a splash. Sheamus hammers away in the corner and nails the running ax handles to the face. Ryback sends him to the apron but that

just allows Sheamus to hit the ten forearms.

They don't have a ton of effect though as Ryback grabs that over the shoulder Stunner for a close two. The Meathook is countered into White Noise for two more. Brogue Kick misses and Ryback grabs a spinebuster for two, only to walk into a running powerslam for two. Sheamus misses a swing at Axel, allowing the Meathook to put him down. Shell Shock doesn't work and the Brogue Kick is finally good for the pin at 5:33 shown.

Rating: C+. I liked this WAY better than I thought I would as they were allowed to have an entertaining power match. There's always something fun about two big strong guys just beating the tar out of each other for awhile with big move after big move. I still don't get the heel turn they're allegedly pushing for with Sheamus and this didn't help anything.

Here's Stephanie with something to say. She talks about Daniel telling us a story earlier tonight about climbing a mountain to reach his goal. Bryan won the title at Wrestlemania and then defeated the demon at Extreme Rules, but now it means he has to have neck surgery. All that proves is one thing: Bryan is simply not an A+ player. His body just couldn't take it and that's why Stephanie tried to protect him all these months. However, she has to do what's best for business and there's no way of knowing how this surgery is going to go.

Stephanie tells Daniel to come out and see her face to face but here's Kane instead. Kane comes out, dragging Bryan's unconscious body. Bryan's shirt is ripped and his head looks to be slightly cut. There's your injury angle to get him off television and make Kane look good in the process. Bryan is loaded onto a stretcher as Brie and Stephanie look on in concern.

Post break Brie shoves Stephanie away from the ambulance and tells her to stay out of this.

Dolph Ziggler vs. Fandango

Fandango takes Ziggler down with ease to start and gyrates a bit before throwing Dolph out to the floor. Back in and Dolph scores with some right hands, only to get caught with a knee to the side of the head. A snap suplex gets two on Ziggler and we hit the chinlock. Ziggler fights up and hammers away in the corner. Fandango comes back with a hard falcon's arrow for two more but he misses the guillotine legdrop, setting up the Fameasser for another near fall. A Layla distraction lets Fandango hit a quick spinwheel kick for two but Layla gets caught in the ring skirt. That distraction sets up the Zig Zag for the pin at 4:52.

Rating: D+. Layla is GORGEOUS but I'm getting bored with these midcard guys trading wins. Thankfully they've switched the people up a bit but it doesn't make for the most interesting matches in the world. There's potential for Fandango to be a ladies man character as the dancing thing begins to fade away.

Post match Fandango knows that he's a winner because he still has Layla. He says he loves her and Layla's smile lights up the arena. JBL: "This is revolting."

Here's Jim Duggan, likely to promote Legends House. He says he's sure we're all watching the show but here's Lana to interrupt. She says Duggan is just like England and America: a once great nation that has become a joke. China now has the biggest economy in the world and Rusev is proud to represent Vladimir Putin.

Duggan doesn't take kindly to this and starts a USA chant. Lana gives Duggan a chance to beg but Duggan swings the board. Rusev easily takes it away and breaks the board over his knee. Lana says crush but here's Big E. for the attempted save. Rusev easily dispatches Big E. and kicks him to the floor before standing tall.

We recap Shield vs. Evolution throughout the night.

Damien Sandow, who has shorter hair than the last time I saw him, comes out for a match and says people have been trying to silence what he has to say. Theme music cuts him off again.

Damien Sandow vs. Cody Rhodes

Cody takes him down with a fireman's carry takeover and gives some sarcastic applaud. Sandow drops to the mat to avoid a Disaster Kick and goes after Cody's knee. A snap suplex gets two on Rhodes and we hit the chinlock. Cody fights up but gets sent throat first into the middle rope. Sandown hits a running hip attack to the back of Rhodes' head followed by a missed Wind-Up Elbow.

Instead Damien takes him down to the apron for the elbow from the floor. Back to the chinlock for a few seconds before Cody makes his real comeback with a springboard missile dropkick. Sandow escapes Cross Rhodes and hammers away in the corner, only to have Cody rake the eyes and nail the Disaster Kick for the pin at 4:55.

Rating: C-. Well the heel turn had to start somewhere and a good old fashioned rake of the eyes would work as well as anything else. I do feel sorry for Sandow though as he can't even beat a guy on a losing streak. The match was nothing special as you would expect but at least there was a point to it.

Bolieve!

We look at the Bryan situation earlier tonight.

The Wyatts appear and Bray talks about how Cena's actions don't surprise him anymore because Cena is a human. All humans are flawed by their own greed and actions, preventing them from thriving in this paradise. Cena is just like them with his boundless narcissism, leading him right to Bray. Where does this end though?

Does Cena want to capture the head of the beast for his mantle? How can you do that when the beast is waiting for you? When mountains crumble and the oceans boil, Bray Wyatt will be left standing. Where will John Cena stand? How far is he willing to go to take the devil down? Time to sing but I think that was meant to set up a last man standing match at Payback.

Roman Reigns vs. Batista

Batista drives him into the corner to start and nails those shoulders, only to have Reigns counter with some of his own. A hard whip puts Batista into the corner and another sends him into the steps. Back in and Batista sends Reigns' shoulder into the post to almost no effect. Reigns is right back with a running clothesline but Orton and HHH get up on the apron. That goes nowhere so Reigns hits a running clothesline in the corner.

HHH and Orton block the apron dropkick though, so Ambrose and Rollins hit those sweet stereo dives. Reigns nails the kick to the head and the other four fight by the announce table. HHH breaks up the Superman Punch but Rollins breaks up a Pedigree attempt on the floor as the match is thrown out at 4:22.

Rating: C-. Another decent power match while it lasted but you don't want to have either of these guys job. I'm really curious to see where this goes though as Shield has been booked so strong for their entire run now, I can't imagine them losing in the end. I also can't picture any of them being ready for the big singles push either so I'm not sure where this goes.

Post match HHH is surrounded but Stephanie sends out most of the midcard to take out Shield. They surround Reigns and HHH gets a chair, only to have Reigns explode with a spear. Rollins and Ambrose both grab chairs to clean house and the Shield stands tall again. The place is going NUTS for this. Fandango takes the Dirty Deeds onto the chair and there's

Peace of Mind onto the chair for Axel. Slater gets a Superman Punch and it's a spear and Triple Bomb to Ryback. Shield tells Evolution to bring it to end the show.

Overall Rating: C+. This is a difficult show to grade. The wrestling certainly wasn't anything great for the most part, but the majority of the matches were good enough to pass. That being said, the big stuff tonight came in the form of stories, as Bryan likely having to drop the titles opens up a lot of doors. There's a chance Kane becomes champion but I can't picture it happening. What I also can't picture is who gets the belt next unless they put it on Cena again as a holding pattern. This has the potential to be very interesting, but I'd expect them to play it safe.

Results

Rob Van Dam b. Jack Swagger – Five Star Frog Splash

Paige b. Alicia Fox – Paige Turner

John Cena/Usos b. Wyatt Family – Attitude Adjustment to Rowan

Nikki Bella b. Natalya – Cradle

Sheamus b. Curtis Axel – Cloverleaf

Sheamus b. Ryback – Brogue Kick

Dolph Ziggler b. Fandango – Zig Zag

Roman Reigns vs. Batista went to a no contest

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