

Reviewing the Review – Monday Night Raw: September 8, 2014

This was a special episode billed as the season premiere. For those of you new to wrestling, that would be WWE code for “AHHH!!! MONDAY NIGHT FOOTBALL IS BACK AND OUR SHOW SUCKS!!!” WWE had a few weapons to fight the NFL, including Jericho vs. Wyatt in a cage, Orton vs. Reigns II and Jerry Springer, because Vince continues to be out of touch with reality. Let's get to it.

We opened with a very good cage match between Wyatt and Jericho with Jericho hitting a huge dive off the top of the cage (and possibly breaking his toe in the process) for the big spot. He also tweaked his knee in the process though, allowing Bray to pound on it enough to escape. This was a better match than I was expecting and seems to completely write off the feud. Bray got to look evil and won almost entirely clean, save for the Family blocking Jericho from climbing down at one point. Bray needs to move up a notch with his next feud and a midcard title might be just the ticket.

Orton asked for and received permission to do something evil tonight. This would wind up being attacking Jericho in the trainer's room, likely setting up a placeholder match for both guys at Night of Champions.

Time for the WWE's favorite comic idea: fake pictures of a wrestler. This is their jab at the massive celebrity photo leak ordeal from a few weeks ago, because nothing makes me want to cheer someone more than mocking crime. The idea was Ziggler had photos of Miz, including Miz in a facial mask and getting his chest shaved. After Miz and Sandow came out for a brawl, Ziggler showed us the last one: Sandow spray tanning a less than clothed Miz. The segment probably made Vince laugh but I just don't get it. They're not offensively bad or anything but the joke doesn't get more than the occasional chuckle from me.

Paige and AJ Lee beat Natalya/Rosa Mendes in the first Total Divas commercial of the week. The idea here is neither team could get along,

but at the end of the day Rosa just isn't very good and it caught up with her team. Apparently Natalya has taken Rosa under her wing, even though this story should have taken place about four months ago under the Total Divas timeline and we're just now hearing about it. AJ and Paige both kissed the title belt post match.

Next up was the big segment of the week with Cena talking about how awesome he was before Heyman interrupted and tried to turn John to the dark side, saying it was the only way Cena could beat Lesnar. Paul explained that if Cena finally told the fans to shut up when they were booing him and saying CENA SUCKS that he would be able to take Lesnar out and get his title back. Cena teased it for a bit before going off on Heyman, talking about how he would never give up on what he believed in. He capped it off by telling Heyman to have Lesnar come here next week for a fight, or Cena will beat on Heyman instead.

This was a fifteen or twenty minute back and forth segment between two guys that are born to talk on a mic. The whole thing worked perfectly and Cena finally going toe to toe with Lesnar again next week is going to rock. They've done a good job of making me want to see Cena try his luck against Lesnar again, but the interesting part is going to be Cena dealing with better than his best not being good enough to stop Lesnar. They were getting close to this with Bray at Wrestlemania but it didn't really go anywhere. This has potential though as Cena tries to define his legacy before he finally rides off.

Cesaro cost Sheamus a match against Rollins. There isn't much to see here and the match wasn't all that good. Cesaro beat Sheamus up post match to cap things off. It's nothing new but this is one of the better builds they've had to a midcard title match in a long time. Unfortunately they've run this match so many times before that I don't have much of an interest in this showdown. It's the danger of running the same matches over and over again on TV.

Lana and Rusev did their thing. Nothing to see here, save for Lana of course.

Now we got to one of my favorite parts of the show: an NXT showcase match

with Adrian Neville and Sami Zayn beating Tyler Breeze and Tyson Kidd. The interesting thing here was the commentary, as the announcers spent the entire five minute match hyping up the Takeover special and treating this like the only thing that mattered in the world. I know they can't do that all the time but it was very nice for a change. Neville blew the crowd up with the Red Arrow for the pin on Breeze.

The stupid segment of the night was the Jerry Springer summit with the Bellas. This was basically a way to show clips from Total Divas and have the Bellas' parents and brother talk about how horrible this fight was. The girls fought and Springer got taken down in the brawl. Here's the good part though: this was the ONLY Bellas segment of the night and it made all the difference in the world. If they have to do this stupid story then so be it, but don't make me sit through five segments a week. I can live with something like this where they're out there like ten minutes total.

The Dusts beat Los Matadores in a nothing match but the Usos took them out post match.

Adam Rose beat Titus O'Neil. The story here was the Bunny, who superkicked Slater and hit a Superfly Splash after the match. I could go for an unmasking story.

Orton and Reigns had a good twenty minute match until Kane and Rollins came in for the DQ. There isn't much to say about the match as a lot of it was the same as Summerslam, meaning it was good stuff. I like the booking though as there's no need to have Orton lose clean twice in a row and Reigns already has the big win over Randy so there's no need to do it again.

Post match Rollins and Kane had the cage lowered (with Rollins nearly getting stabbed by one of the poles in a genuinely scary moment) and Reigns, after fighting back for a bit, taking the Curb Stomp on a chair to end the show. This is the kind of adversity Reigns needs to face on his rise. It's ok to have him get beaten down as long as he comes back and wins the big match in the end.

Raw this week was WAY easier to sit through as they kept the Bellas stuff

contained to a single segment. That's been the biggest complaint in the last few weeks and the show was much better once that was solved. The show wasn't the best in the world, but after things have been this boring for so long, I'll gladly take an ok show.

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