Night of Champions 2014: They're Making My Eyebrows Go Up

Night of Champions 2014
Date: September 21, 2014
Location: Bridgestone Arena, Nashville, Tennessee
Commentators: Michael Cole, John Bradshaw Layfield, Jerry Lawler

This is the textbook definition of a one match show and now the second or third biggest match isn't happening. Yesterday Roman Reigns was sent to the hospital with a hernia, putting him out of action for several weeks if not months. The main event is of course Cena vs. Lesnar II (III if you count the match from two and a half years ago) with Lesnar defending his title. Let's get to it.

Instead of a pre-show match, this month we have the return of the Peep Show. Christian is a good guy this time and says it's all about the titles. There's one match that has peaked his interest, even though it isn't for a title. It features his guest tonight though: Chris Jericho. There's no jacket yet but Chris sucks up to the fans a bit before they get in a friendly argument over who came up with the name Vitamin C and who was the captain of the team.

Christian gets on Jericho for not wearing pants on his show before showing us a clip from Raw where Orton attacked Jericho to set up their match tonight. Christian calls Orton HHH's lapdog, hamster, lackey and various other things. Randy pops up on screen and says it's the modern Terrance and Phillip. He says Orton beat Christian up so bad that he can't wrestle anymore and after tonight, Jericho will only be able to appear on Total Divas. Jericho says that's a perfect set up for Orton's show: Total Jackass. Chris lists off some snake killer names and that's about it.

The opening video has the theme of a belt being made and of course focuses on Cena vs. Lesnar. That's a cool concept and it worked well.

As they're introducing the matches tonight, we see pictures of people who have held the titles before.

Tag Team Titles: Goldust/Stardust vs. Usos

The Usos are defending and Jey is just getting over a knee injury in a match against the challengers which set up this match. Goldust and Jey get things going with the champ sending the veteran down. Off to Jimmy for a running forearm in the corner, sending Goldust off to tag his brother. Stardust gets slammed down as well and a hard whip sends him into the corner.

Back to Jey for the armbar but Stardust takes him into the corner for the heels to take over. Stardust starts in on the bad leg as Lawler emphasizes titles only changing hands on a pinfall or submission. Jey rolls over and tags in his brother for a big uppercut, sending Goldust rolling out to the floor. Jimmy dives onto Stardust but Goldust gets in a powerslam to take over. Back in and Goldust puts on a chinlock on Jimmy. It doesn't last long but a spinebuster puts Jimmy down for two.

Stardust gets the same off a neckbreaker and the Dusts stay in control. Jimmy busts up a chinlock with a jawbreaker to Stardust before sending him shoulder first into the post. A spinning kick to the head drops Goldust and the hot tag brings in Jey. Everything breaks down and Jey hits some nice dives onto the Dusts before the running Umaga attack crushes Stardust in the corner.

Young Dust pops back up and nails Dark Matter for two before tying Jey in the ropes. Stardust takes off his glove and slaps Jey for some reason, earning him a huge dive over the top to the floor. All four guys are down on the floor before Jimmy sends Stardust back inside for the Superfly Splash, only to hit knees to give Stardust the pin and the titles at 12:50.

Rating: C+. This wasn't bad and it's a solid choice for an opener but I'm not sure where the champions go from here. They're so completely away from what they were that got them over in the first place that they don't really have anywhere to go. Granted it's not that it matters given that the Ascension are on the horizon.

Dolph Ziggler and R-Ziggler say Dolph is ready for his title defense tonight and Miz will never work in this town again.

US Title: Cesaro vs. Sheamus

Sheamus is defending and Cesaro won a #1 contenders match here. Feeling out process to start with Sheamus taking him to the mat and then ramming him face first into the buckle. The rollnig fireman's carry gets two but Cesaro comes back with an ax handle to the head. Sheamus gets tired of this wrestling stuff and double legs Cesaro to hammer away. They head outside with Sheamus getting the better of it before getting two off the battering ram.

Sheamus goes up top but gets uppercutted out to the floor in a big crash. Back in and we hit the sleeper on Sheamus but the champion quickly fights out, only to get nailed with a hard clothesline for two. The champ comes back with a pair of Irish Curses for two of his own. Cesaro makes the mistake of rolling to the apron and gets caught with about five forearms to the chest. He quickly escapes and nails a forearm and big boot to the head, only to go up top and get slammed down for two.

The Brogue Kick misses and the big uppercut gets two for Cesaro. Sheamus comes back with a powerslam and the champion is all fired up. The Brogue Kick misses and a rollup gets two for Cesaro. The Neutralizer is countered but Cesaro lands on his feet. Sheamus loads up another Brogue but Cesaro gets underneath him for something resembling a backwards Angle Slam for a VERY close two.

Sheamus is down on his knees where Cesaro slaps him in the face. The champ is all BRING IT ON so Cesaro hits a running boot to the face and hammers away with rights and lefts in the corner. The referee pulls him away like he should, setting up the Brogue Kick for the pin to retain at 13:21.

Rating: B-. Take two big power brawlers and let them beat the tar out of each other for awhile. We've seen this match a few times before but at least it's something good every single time. Neither guy really has anything going for him right now so pushing Sheamus makes as much sense as taking the title off him. That's not a good thing.

Big Show gives Mark Henry a pep talk and says there are 308 million people in his corner. He gives Henry some American themed gear and tells him to tear Rusev's head off.

Country band Florida Georgia Line comes out for commentary and says they'll be at Tribute to the Troops.

Intercontinental Title: Miz vs. Dolph Ziggler

Miz is challenging and these two have traded the title for the last month or so. They fight over a top wristlock to start as the regular announcers suck up to the band. Ziggler tries a Thesz Press but Miz rolls away to avoid being hit in the face. The ten elbow drops have Miz in trouble but he pops up and nails a big boot for two. A boot to a seated Dolph gets two and we hit the chinlock.

Miz walks around and stomps Ziggler a few times as the announcers keep focusing on the band. This is WCW level stuff. Ziggler blocks the running corner clothesline with a clothesline of his own and both guys are down. A Stinger Splash sets up a neckbreaker for two on Miz and a sunset flip gets the same. They fall out to the floor where Mizdow sends Dolph into the apron before beating up R-Ziggler as well.

Mizdow laughs at Florida Georgia Line so they shove him down. The stunt doubles run to the back and Ziggler gets two off a superkick back inside. The Fameasser is countered into the Figure Four but Dolph finally crawls over to the rope. He pops back up with the Fameasser for two and both guys are down. Back up and Ziggler tries a rollup but Miz rolls through and grabs the trunks for the pin and the title at 9:25.

Rating: C. You know, if you ignored all the stupid band stuff on commentary and the stunt doubles and cameras staying on commentary, you might have seen part of a pretty good match. Miz winning the title makes me smile as I've really been digging this Hollywood character lately. The Florida Georgia Line stuff was just stupid and WWE shouting "PAY ATTENTION TO US TMZ!"

Video on Reigns' injury that aired on the Network yesterday. Reigns is shown in his bed and talking about his hernia. We also hear from the

doctor who talks about how severe it was.

Here's Seth Rollins for some gloating. One day you're on top of the world and the next you're Roman Reigns. Reigns is in a hospital but emergency surgery is no reason to not show up here tonight. However, in the interest of justice, Reigns has a ten count to make it to the ring. The referee rings the bell and counts as the fans chant for Ambrose.

We get to ten and Rollins is named winner by forfeit. Rollins insists that his hand be raised and says that he knows the people wanted to see him compete tonight. He's disappointed that Reigns isn't the man Rollins thought he was, but he's also willing to give someone a chance. Rollins issues an open challenge for a match right now. You should know what's coming from a mile away.

Dean Ambrose arrives in a cab (and the camera misses him getting out) and immediately takes Rollins into the crowd. There was no bell so this is just a brawl instead of a match for now. Dean hammers him through the crowd and backdrops his way out of a piledriver attempt. HHH sends out security to break it up but Ambrose dives off part of the set to take him down.

They head into another part of the crowd with Dean hammering away before clotheslining Seth back to ringside. Rollins tries to run but Dean picks up a chair. Security saves Rollins again and Dean has his hands tied. They carry him out with Dean swearing vengeance. The Authority leaves together. This was about all they could have done with Reigns being gone.

The expert panel (Renee, Booker T., Big Show and Alex Riley) recap the evening and make some basic predictions.

<u>Rusev vs. Mark Henry</u>

Lillian Garcia sings the National Anthem before the match and Henry starts crying. Henry wins the early slugout and Rusev bails to the floor. They do the same sequence again but Henry follows him out the third time. Rusev drives him into the steps to take over before hitting a running splash back inside. He puts on a side choke and things slow down a bit.

Back up and Henry hits a quick splash in the corner but can't lift him for the World's Strongest Slam. Rusev nails a spinwheel kick and starts in on the bad back. Henry fights out of an Accolade attempt and nails the World's Strongest Slam out of nowhere but his back gives out. Rusev wisely rolls outside but comes back in with the running superkick. Now the Accolade goes on and Henry quickly taps at 8:35.

Rating: D. That was pretty much exactly what was expected and it really wasn't anything interesting. No one gave Henry much of a chance here and can you really blame them? At the end of the day the Hall of Pain period was such an outlier in his career as the rest of his career has been such a mess.

We look at Lesnar's sitdown interview from earlier this week where he says he's here to fight.

Randy Orton vs. Chris Jericho

This is the result of Orton attacking Jericho a few weeks back. They start fast with Jericho nailing a dropkick and clotheslining Orton out to the floor. Back in and Orton charges into some boots in the corner but manages to crotch Jericho on top. A superplex drops Jericho and we hit the chinlock. They head outside again with Jericho being dropped back first onto the barricade.

Jericho gets thrown over the announcers' table for two and we're back to the chinlock. Back up and Jericho nails a shoulder for two but walks into a powerslam for the same. The RKO is countered into a bulldog and the Lionsault gets two. Orton escapes a Walls attempt and sends Jericho shoulder first into the post.

The Punt misses and Jericho gets two off a rollup before putting on the Walls. Orton gets pulled back to the middle of the ring but he slips through the legs and kicks Jericho back to the floor. The Elevated DDT plants Chris but he counters the RKO into a Codebreaker for two. Jericho takes forever to get up top and dives into the RKO for the pin at 16:19.

Rating: B+. This was a really solid match which surprised me by the end. I don't think the ending was really in doubt but at least they gave us an

awesome match to make up for it. Odds are Jericho leaves for awhile after this and I can't say I'm complaining. He's getting up there in years and you can only put over so many people before it loses some of its appeal.

Paige narrates the recap video about the triple threat. Nothing much to say here: AJ and Paige have been feuding since April and Nikki is here to promote Total Divas.

Brie says Nikki shouldn't become champion because she'll become even more obnoxious.

Divas Title: AJ Lee vs. Nikki Bella vs. Paige

Paige is defending. Nikki (with something resembling cornrows in part of her hair) bumps chests with the champion to start but AJ speeds things up to take over. Nikki sends AJ out to the floor and grabs a cross armbreaker on Paige. The champion fights up but AJ pulls her to the floor. AJ gets two on Paige off a spinwheel kick but Nikki comes back in to pull some hair. Paige kicks her to the floor and hugs AJ to her feet, only to nail her in the face.

Some headbutts get two on AJ until Nikki comes back in and beats up AJ a bit more. She catches AJ's cross body but gets countered into the Black Widow. Paige makes the save and loads up a superplex until Nikki makes it a Tower of Doom. Why Nikki is down as well isn't clear. AJ it sent to the floor but comes back in to break up a pin after Nikki's Rack. Nikki yells at her until AJ tosses her back outside. The less annoying ones go inside again where AJ grabs the Black Widow to make AJ submit at 8:45.

Rating: C-. We'll call this a pleasant surprise as Nikki isn't champion and that means this is a good day. Hopefully this winds up being like last year where they tease one of the Total Divas winning forever but never actually pull the trigger. Nikki is watchable in the ring but the story with her sister just kills anything they do.

We get a by the numbers look at Lesnar vs. Cena from Summerslam.

Expert panel on the main event.

We recap the World Title match. Lesnar destroyed Cena at Summerslam so

Cena has gotten all aggressive to have a chance at getting the title back tonight. Heyman has been trying to get him to embrace the hate and it went about as well as you would expect.

WWE World Heavyweight Title: Brock Lesnar vs. John Cena

They have over half an hour for this. Cena charges again and is immediately taken into the corner for shoulders to the ribs. Brock tries a German but Cena grabs the ropes and drops Lesnar with a clothesline. The AA gets one after forty seconds but Brock grabs the Kimura. Cena is in the ropes so Brock fires in some hard knees to the ribs. There's the first German suplex but Cena comes back with right hands, only to get caught in another Kimura. John is right next to the ropes though and the hold is quickly broken.

Another knee to the ribs puts Cena down and a third Kimura sends Cena running to the ropes. The second suplex gets two and Brock busts out Three Amigos but Cena's shoulders aren't down. Brock drives some shoulders into the ribs but Cena scores with some rights and lefts. Not that they matter as Lesnar takes his head off with a clothesline. Back to the Kimura with the same result as Cena grabs the arm.

An overhead belly to belly gets two for the champion and he shrugs off more punches. Cena comes back again with rights hands and a great looking elbow to the jaw to stun Brock for a bit. The AA is countered into yet another German though and Lesnar has a bloody nose. Cena has a big bruise on his left kidney. Brock takes the gloves off and drives Cena into the buckle for even more shoulders to the ribs. Another AA connects out of nowhere for two and Lesnar is actually in trouble.

The F5 is countered and Cena grabs the STF but Lesnar easily separates the arms and puts on another Kimura. Cena powers to his feet and rams Lesnar into the buckle a few times to escape. The third AA sets up another STF and Cena drags it back to the middle of the ring. He does it again and Heyman is starting to freak out. Cena picks him up for a fourth AA but Rollins runs in with the briefcase for the DQ at 14:02.

Rating: B+. This was a much better match but the ending really drags it down. However this gives us a reason for a third match in the Cell

because Cena knows he can beat him. It's good storytelling but I don't like this as a way to end a pay per view. They did a good job of making Lesnar seem closer to human though and that makes for great drama.

A briefcase to Cena's head sends him to the floor and Lesnar is out. Rollins takes forever to turn around but he plants Lesnar with a Curb Stomp. He cashes in but Cena picks Rollins off before we get a bell. So there's no cash in. Lesnar lays out Cena with an F5 and holds up the title to end the show.

Overall Rating: C+. I'd call this show a pleasant surprise. As usual there's hope for the future but I'm not sure how much they're actually going to follow up on this. Cena vs. Rollins for a month before we put these two inside the Cell is fine, but I'd like to see ANYONE else get in there instead of Cena for awhile. Not that Cena vs. Lesnar is a bad match, but spread the wealth a bit. It's a good show but the interest level is still really low.

Results

Goldust/Stardust b. Usos – Stardust pinned Jimmy after a missed Superfly Splash

Sheamus b. Cesaro – Brogue Kick

Miz b. Dolph Ziggler – Rollup with a handful of trunks

Rusev b. Mark Henry – Accolade

Randy Orton b. Chris Jericho – RKO

AJ Lee b. Paige and Nikki Bella – Black Widow to Paige

John Cena b. Brock Lesnar via DQ when Seth Rollins interfered

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