

Monday Night Raw – December 22, 2014: Out The Same Way You Came In

Monday Night Raw

Date: December 22, 2014

Location: Target Center, Minneapolis, Minnesota

Commentators: Michael Cole, John Bradshaw Layfield, Jerry Lawler

It's the Christmas special tonight with special guest host Hulk Hogan. That's about as good of a name as you're going to get and maybe we can finally see that Santa With Muscles sequel. I can't imagine much of note happens tonight and odds are we wrap things up with a big fun tag match. Let's get to it.

There's a big Christmas set with trees and gifts.

Piper's Pit returns tonight with Lana and Rusev, plus Big Show vs. Roman Reigns and Dean Ambrose vs. Bray Wyatt in a Miracle on 34th Street Fight.

Here's Hulk Hogan as Santa Claus to get things going. The fans chant Hogan but he says it's Ho Ho Hogan. Tonight he's giving presents to all of the Superstars and the WWE Universe, including the two matches already mentioned. Before he can hit the catchphrase though, here's John Cena in red and yellow. Cena says that if there's one man as iconic as Santa Claus, it's Hulk Hogan.

For some reason, Cena starts singing Let It Go before throwing it to a clip of the end of last week's show. The fans want Lesnar, and that's exactly what Cena wants too. Cena says most people would say the decision should be reversed, but those are the people that get coal in their stockings. Last week he lost to Rollins fair and square, but now he wants a match with Rollins tonight. This brings out Seth Rollins to say the Curb Stomp from last week is why Cena can't see what's going on. No one wants to hear Cena's voice anymore.

Rollins isn't here to run down their careers because they're both legends, but it's Seth's time. Hogan shouldn't be in charge tonight because this should still be the Authority's show. He goes on and on about how this is his time and how Cena was lucky to escape. If Hogan doesn't grant Rollins his wish of bringing back the Authority, things will go bad for Santa. Cena tells him to shut up and turns down the Authority offer. Hogan instead just makes Cena vs. Rollins for next, thereby rendering the last few minutes basically worthless.

John Cena vs. Seth Rollins

Cena knocks him to the floor to start, drawing the Stooges up onto the apron to give Rollins his first opening. A Blockbuster gets two for Seth and Cena is in early trouble. Rollins knocks him into the corner and hits a running forearm before it's off to a front facelock. John shoves him off so Rollins grabs the briefcase as a ruse so Mercury can get in a right hand as we go to a break.

We take a break and come back with Cena fighting out of a chinlock and firing off the shoulders, only to have Rollins duck to send Cena outside. There's the suicide dive to drive Cena into the barricade but he avoids the springboard knee. A low superkick gets two instead but Cena tries a quick AA. Rollins lands on his feet but takes the ProtoBomb. Rollins blocks the STF and nails an enziguri to put both guys down.

Cena comes back by catching Rollins in a Batista Bomb of all things for two and it's another stalemate. They slug it out with Cena hitting another ProtoBomb and the Shuffle, only to have the Stooges offer a distraction. He backdrops Rollins onto both of them before throwing him back inside for the top rope Fameasser. Cena loads up the top rope AA but gets countered into the running Buckle Bomb for a VERY close two.

The Curb Stomp is countered into the STF but Rollins is quickly in the ropes, only to have Cena drag him back into the middle. Cue the Stooges for the save but Cena beats them up and hits a double AA. The briefcase shot misses and Cena plants Rollins with the AA for the pin at 15:48.

Rating: B. I was hoping for a few more minutes here to make this great but it has to settle for just really good. These two definitely have

chemistry and Rollins' day is going to come soon. He already has the win over Cena last week in the big gimmick match and that's the one people are going to remember. Very good match here.

Kane stands in front of a wreath and says bah humbug. Literally that's it.

Jack Swagger vs. Fandango

Neither guy gets an entrance. Jack easily takes Fandango down to start but can't get the Patriot Lock. A big boot puts Fandango down and a clothesline does the same with the fans not all that interested in what Swagger is doing. The Vader Bomb is almost blocked so the second attempt connects for two. Fandango goes to the apron for some kicks to the head to knock Swagger down and the guillotine legdrop gets the pin at 2:02.

Dolph Ziggler says the ladder match at TLC was one of the hardest matches he's ever had. Tonight he's defending against Harper again and knows that Luke is a nightmare come to life. He's going to give the fans what they want tonight.

Adam Rose vs. R-Truth

The Bunny is still in a neck brace. Feeling out process to start until Rose wants to dance, allowing Truth to roll him up for the pin at 58 seconds.

The Bunny checks on Rose post match and Adam beats him up for I think the third time. He shouts at the Rosebuds and knees the Bunny's head into the steps. Rose rips off the neck brace and storms past the Rosebuds as he leaves.

Edge and Christian host next week.

Hulk Hogan will be running Smackdown this Friday.

Big Show vs. Roman Reigns

Reigns easily takes him into the corner to start but Big Show easily picks him up and drops Reigns on the top rope. A shoulder gets two and

Show sends him into the corner to keep dominating. We hit the chinlock as the fans are already chanting boring. Roman fights back up with a Samoan drop but the Superman Punch is blocked. Instead a dropkick to the leg takes Show down and the Apron Kick staggers him to the floor. Now the Superman Punch knocks Show onto the announcers' table as Reigns is all fired up. He's so fired up that he rolls in for the countout win at 4:22.

Rating: D. The match was dull for the most part but at least Big Show didn't win. I'm assuming this keeps going because a win over Big Show is supposed to mean something, even though EVERYONE has beaten him over the years. I'd assume we get the blowoff at the first Raw of the year or the Rumble and it needs to end with total Reigns domination.

Dean Ambrose says he's been a good boy all year. He went to the Mall of America to see Santa Claus today but had to settle for a security guard with a white beard. All he wants is Bray Wyatt, because every time a bell rings, Bray Wyatt gets a beating.

Brie Bella vs. Natalya

Fallout from last week where Natalya made Brie tap in a tag match. Natalya quickly takes her down to start but stops to say something to Kidd, allowing Brie to take her down off the ropes. Two Brie Mode running knees to a seated Natalya are good for two and we hit a chinlock as this just keeps going. Back up and Natalya tries a Sharpshooter but gets small packaged only to roll through into one of her own for the pin at 3:19.

Rating: D. I don't freaking care. Seriously, I just do not care. I like Total Divas but dear goodness they've killed whatever interest I have in the Divas division with this Bellas vs. the World stuff. Again, basic wrestling logic says when you have someone vs. the World, THE SOMEONE SHOULD BE THE FREAKING GOOD GUY!

Natalya knocks Nikki off the apron and holds up the title.

Ascension is coming.

Goldust/Stardust vs. Los Matadores/El Torito

Before the match, we hear the Dusts talking about giving their opponents

red noses. Los Matadores come out to Christmas music and Torito is now a reindeer. Stardust wants Torito to start and I guess that's going to be legal. The bull sends him outside to start and dives into an armdrag. Back in and it's off to Goldust vs. Diego, with the masked man grabbing a sunset flip for two.

Goldust hammers him down and slaps on a chinlock before Stardust snaps the neck across the top rope. Stardust comes in off the top but dives into a dropkick, allowing for the hot tag to Diego. Everything breaks down and the bull tags himself in. Goldust spins Torito around and accidentally hits his brother, allowing Fernando to hit a Backstabber, followed by a Lionsault from Torito for the pin at 3:40.

Rating: D. So let me get this straight. We make the heels underdogs by putting them in a handicap match, only to have them lose to the kids' comedy character, likely signaling the split of the team who has had a career resurgence over the last year. I'm fine with the eventual split, but could you please THINK on your way there?

Luke Harper says he likes to take this time of year, so he's going to give Ziggler a beating and take the Intercontinental Title.

Intercontinental Title: Luke Harper vs. Dolph Ziggler

Harper kicks him in the face before the bell to knock the champion out to the floor. A BIG suicide dive takes Ziggler down and Harper loads up a powerbomb, only to settle for the spinning Boss Man Slam. Back in and Ziggler says ring the bell so Harper superkicks him down and hits the Batista Bomb for two. Ziggler tries to fight up but gets catapulted throat first into the bottom rope as we take a break.

Back with Harper knocking Dolph to the floor again. Harper blocks a superkick and slams the champ face first onto the announcers' table for two. Ziggler misses a Stinger Splash to give Luke two more and a pumphandle throw gets the same. A Michinoku Driver gets the third straight near fall but Ziggler grabs a sunset flip for two of his own.

Back up and the discus lariat is blocked by a superkick but Harper keeps going and lariats Ziggler for two. Harper's powerbomb is countered into a

facebuster and Dolph gets two more off the Fameasser. Another Fameasser is countered and Dolph hits two more superkicks, followed by the Zig Zag to retain at 11:26.

Rating: B. And they're DONE. Seriously, there is no need for these two to have that same match again for at least six months. I feel like I've seen them fight about 50 times in the last month and a half and that's not a good thing. Yeah the matches have been fun, but it's the same exact formula every single time. I mean, it's not exactly Sting vs. Vader out there so move Ziggler on to someone else.

Ziggler dedicates his win to the fans and says no one is taking the title from him.

It's time for Piper's Pit with special guests, Lana and Rusev. Lana starts fast, talking about how stupid America is for thinking Santa Claus brings them presents. Piper freaks out (of course) and says you can believe anything you want in America. Lana says then believe in this, and shows us a clip of Rusev taking out Ryback on Smackdown. Rusev says that's proof he can crush Ryback so the fans chant FEED ME MORE. Maybe Piper would like to be crushed too? Piper says she's Hot Rod and brings out Ryback with a bow around his chest. The fight is on in the aisle with Ryback dominating but Rusev bails before the Meat Hook.

The announcers list off some very specific areas in which USA is topping the ratings.

We recap the opening segment and Cena vs. Rollins.

Alicia Fox/Emma/Naomi vs. Paige/Cameron/Summer Rae

This is a Santa's Little Helpers match but Paige doesn't seem interested in the Christmas theme. To give you an idea of what I'm sitting through here, Emma starts by hitting Summer with her hair. Paige gets a LOUD chant to start before it's off to Cameron for a Codebreaker for two. Off to Page for a headbutt and a big reaction from the crowd. Lawler brings up Xanta Claus which JBL declares the worst thing ever. Oh come on now it wasn't THAT bad.

Paige stays on Emma with a chinlock until Emma fights up for a double clothesline. The hot tag brings in Naomi to FINALLY do something interesting as she flips over the top and Stuns Cameron onto the ropes. Everything breaks down with Paige cleaning house until Alicia hits a kind of reverse Fameasser to pin Cameron at 4:22.

Rating: D-. Please....make it stop.

Ascension comes next week.

Miz vs. Jey Uso

We get a pre tape before the match with Miz offering Mizdow a chance to sing, only to have time run out. Thankfully Cole is there to explain to us that the fans are booing Miz and cheering Mizdow. Miz does the pointing back and forth thing to start the BOO/YAY chant, basically making Cole's explanation even more worthless.

Miz grabs a headlock to start but gets thrown to the floor, setting up a dive from Jey to take Miz down. Back in and Miz drives a knee into Jey's ribs before slapping on a chinlock. Jey fights back up with a Samoan drop but has to roll out of the Finale. The Figure Four is countered but Miz rolls him up with a handful of tights for the pin at 3:31.

Rating: D+. Like most of the bad matches tonight, this didn't have time to go anywhere. The story is still there and it's still interesting, but they need more than three minutes to set something up. I do like that Miz actually got a win though as it at least keeps the story moving forward.

Preview clip of the Mick Foley episode of Monday Night War. Original air date: September 9.

Here's Bray to sing It's The Most Wonderful Time of the Year. He notices how people surround themselves with everyone they love during the holidays. Maybe they do that because it makes them feel safe. Do the people here tonight feel safe? Safety is an illusion that guards you from the other world outside your window. In that world, there is no Santa Claus or sugar plums dancing in your head. There is only evil, pain and sorry. That is Bray Wyatt's world and he is the king. You can help him

create this world by looking to the sky and following the buzzards.

Dean Ambrose vs. Bray Wyatt

Street fight. Dean hammers away in the corner to start and we have a pile of presents at ringside. JBL incorrectly says we haven't seen a Boot Camp match in thirty years, ignoring the one we saw at Tribute to the Troops between Shawn and HHH in 2005. Yeah that's a few years back, but JBL was on the show and apparently helped organize it. Anyway Dean takes him to the floor and throws him into a Christmas tree.

Ambrose slams the tree into him but stops to open a present, finding a TV monitor. Thankfully it isn't plugged in but Dean puts it back in the box anyway. Instead he finds a table with a bow on it but opts to hit a suicide dive (third one of the night) to drive Wyatt through some boxes. He loads up the table and wraps a wreath around his neck but Bray runs up the aisle. That's fine with Dean who puts the wreath around Bray and nails him, before just chucking a box at Bray's head.

Another package is opened to reveal a chair but Bray sends him off the stage and through a table as we take the last break of the night. We come back with a long tracking shot from the stage to the ring for a unique visual. Dean fights out of a chinlock but gets slammed down for two and put back in the hold. They head outside again with the fans asking for ONE MORE TREE. Bray listens to them and sends Ambrose into a tree for a good reaction.

It's candy cane kendo stick time with Bray nailing Ambrose in the chest over and over. Bray puts the stick in the corner like he did at TLC but Ambrose saves himself. Not that it matters as Wyatt NAILS him with a clothesline for two. Wyatt wedges a chair in the corner and of course goes head first into it. Dean erupts with chops and punches, followed by a bulldog to put Bray down.

The Rebounding Clothesline drops Wyatt again and a White Russian legsweep sets up the middle rope chair elbow for two. Now it's ladder time but Bray Spiders up and Rock Bottoms Ambrose onto the ladder for a close two. Dean counters Sister Abigail and sends Bray into the ladder to take over again. The standing elbow from the ladder gets two more but Bray fights

out of the pile of chairs. He sends Dean face first into the kendo stick in the corner for the pin at 21:24.

Rating: B-. Another good match between these two but just like Ziggler vs. Harper, I'm sick of seeing it. Mix the feuds up for a bit or even just swap the people out with Wyatt vs. Ziggler and Ambrose vs. Harper. I like Bray leaving with the win, but I'm over seeing these two fight anymore.

Naturally Dean sprays him with a fire extinguisher and elbows Bray through the table to end the show, meaning the feud will continue.

Overall Rating: C-. When this show phones it in, they can produce some of the least interesting stuff I've seen in a long time. The matches aren't all terrible for the most part, but there's just nothing to make me want to keep watching. Cena vs. Rollins, the Intercontinental Title match and the main event were entertaining enough, but the stuff between them dragged this through the floor. As I've said many times, the good was good but the bad was awful. Also, as almost always, cut 45 minutes of filler out of this and it's WAY better. Short version: they're closing out the year with the same issues they've had all year.

Results

John Cena b. Seth Rollins – Attitude Adjustment

Fandango b. Jack Swagger – Guillotine legdrop

R-Truth b. Adam Rose – Rollup

Roman Reigns b. Big Show via countout

Dolph Ziggler b. Luke Harper – Zig Zag

Alicia Fox/Naomi/Emma b. Cameron/Paige/Summer Rae – Reverse Fameasser to Cameron

Miz b. Jey Uso – Rollup with a handful of tights

Bray Wyatt b. Dean Ambrose – Wyatt threw Ambrose into a kendo stick

Remember to follow me on Twitter @kbreviews and pick up my new book on the History of the Royal Rumble at Amazon for just \$3.99 at:

<http://www.amazon.com/dp/B00PZ1GR7E>

And check out my Amazon author page with wrestling books for under \$4 at:

<http://www.amazon.com/Thomas-Hall/e/B00E6282W6>

Finally, I'm holding a Holiday Special for my e-books: any two of them for just \$5. Check out the details here.

<http://kbwrestlingreviews.com/2014/11/28/holiday-sale/>