

Smackdown – December 26, 2014: Oh Brother

Smackdown

Date: December 26, 2014

Location: Tyson Events Center, Sioux City, Iowa

Attendance: 4,000

Commentators: John Bradshaw Layfield, Tom Phillips, Michael Cole

It's the show after Christmas which means that Hulk Hogan is still in charge tonight. All that means is he'll make a match and say BROTHER a lot, but that's at least better than some of the previous bosses this company has had. Other than that we're still in the dull period before they start caring about the Rumble so let's get to it.

Opening sequence.

Here's Hogan walking through the same Christmas set from Raw to open things up. I really wish they would mix those things up a bit more often. Anymore it's just the same set from Raw but with blue as the main color. Switch things up a bit and make Smackdown feel more unique. Maybe they'll do that when the show moves back to Thursdays.

Anyway, Hogan has something to tell us brother (1), he's in charge tonight brother (2). We hear some of his fondest memories from being on Smackdown, including winning the Tag Team Titles with Edge, who will be hosting Raw with Christian on Monday. That's another thing I wouldn't mind seeing more of: plug those announcements. It's simple and quick yet gets the word out there.

Hogan is about to go on but Rollins and the Stooges cut him off. Seth calls him a champion, a Hall of Famer and the embodiment of Wrestlemania. He asks for and receives a handshake before saying if Hogan keeps it up, they might start calling him the Seth Rollins of the 80s. Hogan may have been great, but he doesn't belong in Rollins' ring anymore. That's a bit too far for our American hero, who says he's running Smackdown tonight. Hogan: "So if you don't mind brother (3)..." Rollins: "Well I do mind

brother. AND DON'T YOU BROTHER ME!"

Seth talks about how great the Authority was for business but now they've been replaced by a sideshow act like Hogan. As the future of WWE, this is Seth's business and he'd like Hulk to officially endorse him. After that, Hogan can get out of this ring because it's almost 2015. Hulk isn't sure Rollins is getting out of this ring alive if he keeps talking like that. He can think of several people who could lead this company into the future, like Dolph Ziggler for instance.

Cue Dolph, who calls Rollins the future. If you don't believe that, just ask Seth because that's all he talks about. Rollins says Ziggler just doesn't get it. The future isn't just a popularity contest and Rollins should just Curb Stomp him right in front of Hogan. How does that sound brother? Ziggler has been curbed stomped before and keeps getting up, so what does Seth want to do about it brother?

Here's Big Show to say that sometime you have to just use force, so now he's going to come out here and knock out Hogan and Ziggler. This brings out Reigns who tells Show not to come through those ropes unless he wants to get hit in the mouth again, right in front of his wife and kids. Hogan makes the tag match main event and actually doesn't drop a ninth brother (yes I counted) of the segment.

Kane vs. Ryback

Jobber entrance for Kane. We see Ryback sending Rusev running on Monday before things get going. Ryback fires off to start but runs into a boot to the...shoulder I think to put him down. So Kane can't even sell for ten seconds now? Cole crushes several dreams by confirming that Rose and the Bunny have split, partially due to the tombstones from Kane. Ryback grabs a spinebuster and loads up the Meat Hook but we've got Russians. He's still able to escape the chokeslam though and hits the Meat Hook and Shell Shock for the pin at 2:10. Now THAT is what Kane should be used for more often than not.

Rusev gets in the ring for a staredown but Kane comes back in to chokeslam Ryback, setting up the Accolade. I'm still not sure who wins this feud, even though it should be obvious. That's always a good sign.

After a break, Hogan runs into the Russians to tell Rusev that the US Title is on the line tonight. Giving champions almost no notice to defend their titles is the American way you see, BROTHER. And SISTER!

Alicia Fox vs. Naomi

They start fast with Naomi nipping up, only to eat a kick to the face for two. More speedy kicks get two for Naomi as Miz is watching from the back. A tilt-a-whirl backbreaker gets two for Alicia and we hit the chinlock. That goes nowhere so Naomi heads to the apron for a kind of Twist of Fate onto the top rope. Naomi gets tired of carrying Fox and kicks her in the head, setting up the split legged moonsault for the pin at 3:18. She even throws in counting the pin along with the referee because she's kind of awesome.

Rating: C. I'm so glad that Naomi is getting an actual story instead of the usual stuff we've been seeing with the Divas for years. She's an athletic freak and, in a description I wish I had thought of, the female Shelton Benjamin. No one in the division can keep up with her and unfortunately it means that WWE doesn't know what to do with her. It's good to see that they've given her some kind of a story though, because far too often the Divas' stories revolve around just wanting the title or some catty story that makes them all look ridiculous.

We recap the matches Hogan set up on Raw.

Jimmy and Naomi have a badly scripted conversation about Jimmy beating Miz later tonight.

R-Truth vs. Adam Rose

Rematch from Monday where the Bunny was beaten up by Rose after he lost to Truth. Therefore, Rose comes out sans Bunny and doesn't even do the fall, waving the Rosebuds off instead. Rose is much more aggressive here and takes Truth into the corner for some mule kick stomping. A nice snap suplex gets two on Truth and we hit the chinlock.

Phillips tries to bring up the incident on Halloween where Truth said the Bunny was the star of the team to set up this mini feud. Since that's

doing his job and keeping up continuity, JBL just buries him in response, saying how stupid the whole thing is. Back up and Truth makes his comeback, only to be sent into the post to set up the Party Foul for the pin at 2:07. Rose actually plays a decent heel, but his in ring work is still average at best.

Here are Rusev and Lana for a chat before the title defense. It's a short one this time, basically saying Rusev will crush anyone before he faces. Cue his opponent.

US Title: Dean Ambrose vs. Rusev

It's kind of amazing how Ambrose keeps getting these major matches despite barely ever winning anything. They take turns stomping each other down in the corner to start until Dean ties him in the ropes for chops and the running dropkick. A suicide dive drops Rusev again and Dean grabs a jackknife cover of all things for two.

The fans chant USA as Rusev runs Dean over and drops rapid fire elbows ala Hulk Hogan back in the day. You would think that the Russian imitating an AMERICAN would satiate the fans chanting USA but it doesn't quite work that way. A chinlock stays on even shorter than usual but Rusev ties him in the ropes and hits a running Vader clothesline to the back knocking him out to the floor as we take a break.

Back with the champ holding a nerve hold before the fall away slam gets two. Ambrose actually escapes the Accolade attempt and avoids a charge, sending Rusev head first into the post. The Rebound Clothesline sets up the standing elbow (love that move) for two and Ambrose's tongue is hanging out. They head outside with the champion going into the barricade, only to have Wyatt interfere for the DQ at 13:00.

Rating: C+. These matches are like a vacation: they're fun while they last but you know you're going to be disappointed by the ending. There was no doubt that it was going to end by countout or DQ because that's how these things end in WWE. It's a problem with how the company books its shows anymore but unfortunately it's something you have to live with. As usual Dean looks good, but when was the last time he had a fall on a show that actually mattered? And no, Tribute to the Troops doesn't

matter.

Rusev leaves and Bray throws Dean over the timekeeper's area, only to have Dean come up throwing chairs. About five are thrown into the ring and Bray bails as well. I have no idea where they're going with this, but it's modern WWE and a major gimmick match doesn't end anything anymore.

Miz vs. Jimmy Uso

Cole plugs a new app where you're a backstage assistant in WWE and solve problems which have nothing to do with anything happening in the ring. Levels include identifying a spot as fatty tissue, yelling at someone for not memorizing a script, trying to figure out what the heck the commentators are talking about and finding stronger ear plugs so HHH doesn't hear the BORING chants.

Miz kicks him down to start but we get a quick chase scene around the ring. JBL, of course, is talking about fast food mascots. Jimmy can't hit the running Umaga attack but eats a right hand from Jey. Naturally, that's not a DQ. Back in and Miz begs off to offer more mainstream connections. The fans aren't really happy with the match stopping for nearly a minute of Miz standing there with his hand out saying "come on let's be Usos", so Jimmy hits two superkicks and the Superfly Splash for the pin at 3:08.

Rating: D. I'm liking the idea of the Usos having some singles matches. Of course it shouldn't lead anywhere because splitting them up for singles runs would be a terrible idea, but I like that they're not just doing the same tag match every week. Imagine that: trying something else to keep things fresh for the bigger shows. There's so much in WWE that is going right but at the same time the big problems are just so wrong.

Ascension is coming next week.

Goldust looks at an electric orb and sees that the new year will be.....something we don't get to hear as the ball shocks him. Stardust comes in to say it's going to be his year.

Seth Rollins/Big Show vs. Roman Reigns/Dolph Ziggler

Ziggler and Rollins get things going as Cole recaps Survivor Series gets an achievement for recapping Survivor Series for the 200th time. A quick hiptoss has Rollins down so it's off to the power guys. Reigns can't get things moving too fast thanks to a shoulder from Big Show. Like the masterful heel that he is, Rollins comes in when Roman is down to stomp away. Reigns is able to get back up though due to the power of wetter hair, allowing for the hot tag off to Ziggler.

The Stooges get involved, and somehow don't get caught, by tripping up Ziggler as we take a break. Back with Dolph fighting out of a chinlock, only to be catapulted into the corner. The fans display their ventriloquism skills by chanting BIG SLOW without moving their mouths...or anything else for that matter. Reigns smiles at Show as the chant is getting annoying in a hurry. A few fans chant for Reigns but they're quickly drowned out by BIG SLOW.

Show misses a charge and eats a Fameasser, setting up the hot tag to Reigns. Mercury breaks up the Superman Punch and Seth nails the low superkick for two. The fans chant for Reigns (again with the ventriloquism) and he backdrops out of a buckle bomb attempt. The chokeslam doesn't work either and Dolph levels Big Show with a superkick, setting up the spear for the pin.

Nah I'm kidding. You know Big Show isn't going to get pinned when there's some hotshot with a future to take the fall for him. Rollins sends both opponents to the floor and suicide dives Reigns. Back in and Ziggler breaks up the springboard knee, setting up the spear to Rollins for the pin at 13:13.

Rating: C. The match was your standard main event tag (with another bad ending but I guess that huge fall over Show is supposed to make Reigns) but the chants were the most interesting part. Of course they were piped in, but I find it interesting that they seem more interested in playing down Big Show than playing up Reigns.

They were similar to the LET'S GO CENA/CENA SUCKS chants: yeah they're against Cena, but they're not for his opponent. The chants made this sound like it was all about Big Show with the few Reigns chants only

lasting a few seconds compared to the near minute of Show chants. I'm not sure what to make of that.

Overall Rating: C-. Yet another worthless episode of Smackdown with whichever main eventers we have on hand being thrown into a tag team main event. The Ryback vs. Rusev showdown still looks good, though I'm not sure they can stretch it out for another four weeks. Other than that, there really isn't much to talk about here. It's another basic episode of the same show they've done every Friday for weeks now and I get less and less enthusiastic about it every time. Oh wait Kane actually took a fall. He's been getting a bit better about that.

Results

Ryback b. Kane – Shell Shock

Naomi b. Alicia Fox – Split legged moonsault

Adam Rose b. R-Truth – Party Foul

Dean Ambrose b. Rusev via DQ when Bray Wyatt interfered

Jimmy Uso b. The Miz – Superfly Splash

Roman Reigns/Dolph Ziggler b. Big Show/Seth Rollins – Spear to Rollins

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