

Reviewing the Review – Monday Night Raw: February 2, 2015

The big idea coming into this week was HHH promising to shake up the WWE and end the controversy that ended the Royal Rumble. That led to the big question: what was the controversy? Reigns won the Rumble by eliminating Rusev and is going to Wrestlemania, but as usual the fans wanted Daniel Bryan. That's the best theory we have coming into this show so let's get to it.

The big announcement opened the show and I'll give a very quick recap: Rock interfered in the Rumble before Rusev was gone so Seth Rollins and Daniel Bryan will fight in the main event for the right to face Reigns at Fast Lane for the Wrestlemania title shot. Rusev was never mentioned once in the promo. This led to Big Show vs. Roman Reigns with Big Show pinning Reigns for his first pinfall loss in a singles match in less than three minutes (with an assist from Rollins and the briefcase).

We're now going to jump to something a bit different. A few hours after the show ended, I was talking to my fiance, who has been watching wrestling for over twenty years. I looked at her and explained the first thirty minutes of this show. Her face went from its usual smile to confusion, awe and bordering on shock. She didn't know how to respond to anything I explained to her and eventually just said "what". Not a question, but a statement. What.

That's somewhere around where I am too. Read over what happened and explain to me how the decision makes sense. For those of you that have ever taken a logic class, the premises make sense but the conclusion doesn't fit. Yes, there was some controversy to end the Rumble. Yes, Rusev might have a claim to an unfair loss. Yes, Daniel Bryan deserves a rematch for the World Title as he never lost the belt. Solution: Bryan vs. Rollins with Rusev not being a factor. THAT DOESN'T ADD UP!

Just....it doesn't make sense. If they haven't set up Rusev vs. Cena already, you could set up Bryan vs. Rusev instead of Bryan vs. Rollins

tonight and have Cena cost Rusev the match (by countout of course), giving you Bryan vs. Reigns and Cena vs. Rusev with logical stories instead of this mess. But instead, they rushed into the matches without enough thinking, meaning the whole thing is a mess that doesn't make a ton of sense and leaves fans talking about the buildup instead of the end goal. Short version: slow down and think instead of just barreling into the matches without using some logic.

That brings us to Reigns vs. Big Show, which gives me a similar reaction. The more I think about it, the more I don't hate the idea. Giving Reigns a loss is a good way to build some adversity for him and keep him from being just another Superman. As I've said before, Roman Reigns needs to be Roman Reigns, not a Samoan John Cena. Having him lose early is actually going to be a relief to him later on and also takes away some of the certainty of him winning at Wrestlemania.

But.....WHY WAS THE LOSS TO THE BIG SHOW??? Of all the people on the roster, they felt that he needed to be the first man to defeat Roman Reigns? There was no one, like say Seth Rollins, that would have gotten more out of such a win? I can't believe WWE thinks this is a hot feud and it almost has to be just sticking it to the fans at this point. On top of that though, there is almost no logical reason for them to have fought again. Reigns pinned him clean on Smackdown, so why are they fighting again? Bad match, questionable at best booking, and a way to tick the fans off. As was said earlier, what.

Oh yeah other stuff happened on this show.

Curtis Axel has a new catchphrase: Don't change the channel. As much as I like Axel and think his potential has been wasted, that line made me chuckle, which says a lot after the mess I've seen so far tonight. Anyway, he thinks he got ripped off at Wrestlemania and ate Dirty Deeds from Ambrose for his opinion. Dean wants the Intercontinental Title, which is as good as anything else he could get around this time.

Stardust and Goldust are having issues and lost to Ascension. People have been asking for this feud for like ever so why not now. Oh and Stardust doesn't like being called Cody.

Cena came out to recap his feuds with Rusev and the Authority but Stephanie came out to make matches for the three guys that were fired for Survivor Series. I've said this far too many times now, but can we PLEASE move on past Survivor Series? That show was two and a half months ago and it's still a major driver of stories. Can't they come up with something fresh by this point? I'm over the idea of seeing these three guys being tortured because of one match that doesn't mean anything, but WWE seems to think it's the most interesting idea they've ever seen.

Ryback beat Luke Harper because Harper is a former Intercontinental Champion and therefore doesn't get to have much success.

Cesaro beat Jimmy Uso because of something about a double date and because Cesaro and Kidd winning one match makes them the next challengers for the titles. With all that talent they have, there's no room to bring people up? They can't throw Itami and Balor together on the main roster like they've thrown them together in NXT? Get them onto the main roster and then let them go their separate ways after giving us a decent title program? No, instead it's the same "well we won a match!" build that people have been complaining about for years now but WWE doesn't seem to be able to correct.

Miz fired Mizdow and made him a personal assistant. It's about time on this one as the stunt double thing stopped making sense about ten seconds after it started. Miz has basically been fighting a bunch of handicap matches while Mizdow hasn't been allowed to contribute anything. It's like hiring a chef but not letting them cook anything because you think you're better in the kitchen. The whole thing never made sense and Mizdow is over for all the wrong reasons, which to be fair is better than not being over at all.

Wyatt beat Ziggler in a decent match, which seems to be the start of a rumored Ziggler heel turn. I've heard of worse ideas as he's been abused by the Authority for months, so why not have him give up? I mean, we can't have him get revenge on the Authority and make them look bad, because WWE is little more than an Authority vanity project when they're involved.

While talking to the Authority, Rollins name dropped Randy Orton. That's going to be an interesting return as it could open up a lot of doors in the main event scene.

Paige beat Alicia Fox and was attacked by the Bellas to further set up her title shot. The Bellas have just drained whatever energy this division had going for it. Yeah they're better than they used to be and I'll take this a million times over "and I've never told anyone about this", but my goodness the Bellas just aren't interesting.

Mizdow cost Miz his match against Sin Cara, which I don't think surprised anyone.

Rusev beat up Rowan before their match and Accoladed him. The Russian flag messed up but the announcers actually covered it by saying Cena might have sabotaged it. It's nice to see them tie a mistake into a bit of a storyline advancement.

Bryan came in to talk to Reigns and was basically told to get out before he was thrown out. This was the kind of emotion and aggression we haven't seen from Reigns in a long time and it was a good sign for him.

Bryan beat Rollins with an unintentional assist from Reigns. It was probably the only way they could have gone and the match was the best thing that happened all night. There isn't much else to say here as it was Bryan vs. Rollins for seventeen minutes. What more do you need to hear?

Overall this Raw felt like getting punched in the jaw to knock out a sore tooth. Yeah your problem is solved, but now you're annoyed and sore instead of just in pain. I'm really not sure how this was the best option they could come to, but at least we're getting Reigns in a major singles match before Wrestlemania. A win over Bryan could take away some of the heat on him, especially if it's a clean win in a good match.

The first half hour of this show really drained me, but it's not quite as bad looking back at it a week later. Still though, this is a really weird way to get where they needed to go and could have been handled a lot better if they had just stopped and thought for a minute. Again, why not

just have Rusev vs. Bryan with Cena costing Rusev the match and set up the Rollins stuff later? It makes sense and keeps Rusev involved, which was the whole point of the controversy in the first place.

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