

Smackdown – April 2, 2015: So Long, Farewell, Auf Wiedersehen Wrestlemania

Smackdown

Date: April 2, 2015

Location: Save Mart Center, Fresno, California

Commentators: Tom Phillips, Byron Saxton, Jerry Lawler

It was nice while it lasted but this is the final part of the big Wrestlemania week. Tonight is likely going to be the last major shows for now as Smackdown will go back to being the supplemental show it's been for years. There isn't much in the way of fallout tonight either as Raw ended without a huge bang. Let's get to it.

Opening sequence.

Here are Rollins and company for a chat. Rollins loves it when a plan works out, like when he cashed in Money in the Bank this past Sunday to become WWE World Heavyweight Champion. Now he's living a new life and doing things like flying across the country to be on the Today Show, then flying back across the country to face Brock Lesnar. That gave him some serious jet lag though and it wasn't time for Lesnar to get his rematch. If Lesnar hadn't lost his head, maybe he could have had that title shot here tonight.

Cue Randy Orton, who says he remembers everything over the last few months. He played the Authority like a fiddle (a very stupid fiddle) before he got to rip Rollins' head off with an RKO at Wrestlemania. More importantly though, he's owed a rematch for the WWE from last year's Wrestlemania and doesn't like how that belt looks around Rollins' waist. Seth wants to know why Randy is dwelling in the past, because he is the future.

Only Rollins gets to decide when the title is defended, which makes Orton insult the Stooges, Big Show and Kane for some reason. At least Big Show

won at Wrestlemania while Kane wasn't even there (he was in the battle royal). What does the Director of Operations do anyway? The way Orton sees it, Kane has gone from the big red monster to Big Red Riding Hood. Kane makes Orton vs. Big Show and offers Orton a potential title shot if he can win.

Big Show vs. Randy Orton

Orton quickly gets shouldered down but avoids an elbow drop. Show tries to get to the apron but winds up getting pulled into the elevated DDT. Cue the Stooges to break up an RKO attempt for the DQ at 1:19.

Everyone comes in but Randy fights back at Rollins, only to get chokeslammed by Kane. Ryback runs out for the save and it's RKO's all around.

We recap Bryan vs. Ziggler from Raw and Sheamus returning after the match. Who in the world thought that hair would be called anything but stupid? I mean, they had to know that reaction was coming right?

Sheamus vs. Bryan tonight, because they can't keep the matches they set up on Monday straight for twenty four hours.

Natalya vs. Naomi

The Bellas are on commentary. Naomi's inset interview says she can beat Nikki and win the title but she'll prove herself until she gets a shot. Feeling out process to start with both girls missing dropkicks but nipping up at the same time. That's rather impressive in Natalya's full body outfit. Natalya puts her down for the step on the back into the basement dropkick for two as the Bellas question Naomi's heart. We hit an abdominal stretch for a bit before Naomi is sent to the apron for a kick to Natalya's head. She puts Natalya in a headscissors but drives her head first into the mat instead of flipping her over for the pin at 2:20.

Rollins apologizes to Kane for the RKO but Kane likes the sound of Orton challenging for the title at Extreme Rules. Seth tries to talk him out of it but stops to comment on the smell of the office. He leaves and we hear a toilet flush and Ambrose walks in. Harper vs. Ambrose later tonight

because of the use of a bathroom. Seriously.

We get a sitdown interview with Roman Reigns, who talks about how hard it was to step in the ring with the Beast. He proved he was willing to take a beating and showed he could get up after a bunch of suplexes. Reigns talks about Suplex City but he survived the wave from Lesnar. He's thinking about buying a condo in Suplex City because Lesnar wasn't ready for him. Brock didn't have an answer for all the Superman Punches and they changed his appearance permanently.

The fight changed both of their lives and he'd love to do it again. Saxton asks about Rollins cashing in and Reigns says it crushed him. He was on top of the mountain and Rollins took it away when Reigns was so close. Thirty more seconds and a spear would have won him the World Title. He's beaten Rollins before so he can, he has and he will beat him again. I liked this more than any other interview I've heard from Reigns in a long time as it makes him much easier to relate to now that he's been humbled a bit. Good interview.

Miz vs. R-Truth

Truth raps to the ring. I don't remember him doing that for the last few weeks. The first ten seconds are spent with Miz taking off his sunglasses and the second ten seconds are spent on WE WANT MIZDOW chants. Truth shoves Miz off a headlock and hits the Lie Detector. The ax kick misses though and the Skull Crushing Finale is good for the pin at 1:22. Welcome back to Jobber Town Truth.

Mizdow runs out for a Skull Crushing Finale on Miz and puts on the sunglasses.

Here's John Cena to one of the loudest positive reactions I've seen for him in a long time (yeah I know it's Smackdown). Cena talks about how hard Rusev fought to stay undefeated for a year but seeing Rusev as the US Champion made him sick. It wasn't due to being Russian, but because of all the things Rusev said about America. The interesting thing is that Rusev was the American dream: he showed up and fought to become everything he wanted to be, but then he thought America sucked. "WELL AMERICA DOESN'T SUCK!"

From now on, this US Title represents opportunity. Cena says bring him your outcasts, your future stars or anyone that the Authority says is a B+ player. He'll fight anyone from Brock Lesnar to the Bushwhackers (hey now, they're Hall of Famers) because every Monday night, there's going to be an open challenge for the US Title. Now THAT is the best news that has happened for the title in a long time.

Cue Rusev and Lana, the latter of whom sounds like she's lost a bit of her accent. She says Cena is half the man Rusev is because this is Rusev's world. Rusev cuts her off by reaching out his hand for the microphone. With a glare at Lana, he says he didn't lose at Wrestlemania so he's still America's champion.

In Rusev's world, people like Cena have opportunities as well: surrender the title or be crushed at Extreme Rules. Cena thinks Rusev is drunk but if the Russian wants a fight, Cena isn't going anywhere. Rusev wants to wait for Extreme Rules and calls for the flag drop but nothing happens. Instead Cena points and the American flag drops. I'm kind of stunned it took that long to do that. Cena agrees to the match at Extreme Rules. The announcers keep pushing Rusev as the Russian Tank, which isn't a bad name for him.

We look at Sheamus attacking Bryan again. The tag match is off due to Zigler being too banged up to compete. And they didn't know that when they announced the tag match?

Luke Harper vs. Dean Ambrose

No entrance for Harper. Dean goes right after him in the corner and a middle rope elbow to the jaw. A basement clothesline gets two so Harper just hits him in the throat to take over. It turns into a slugout (shocking I know) until Luke catches a cross body and throws him over the top as we take a break. Back with Dean's suicide dive being caught so he nails a clothesline on the floor.

The top rope standing elbow gets two but Luke kicks his head off to take over again. Dean escapes the powerbomb and low bridges Harper to the floor. Luke quickly sends him into the timekeeper's area and loads up the table but Dean dives off the apron with a clothesline. He can't powerbomb

Luke through the table though so Luke shows him how it's done. The bell doesn't ring but I'm assuming it was a DQ win for Dean (or a double countout) at about 8:00.

Rating: C. Nice back and forth brawl here with both guys hitting each other really hard. Harper is great in the old Kane role from about 2004 as the midcard monster and Ambrose is fine as the guy who keeps getting beaten up and coming back for more. If nothing else it's nice to have a match be long enough to rate.

The Prime Time Players make fun of the New Day, with Titus spraying himself with water and shouting about FEELING THE POWER. Big E. sounds like he has a possum stuck in his throat, Kofi has a weird looking chest and Woods has bad hair. They do the New Day chant and crickets can be heard. If nothing else, I love the Prime Time Players shirts based on the old Prime Time Wrestling logo.

Sheamus vs. Daniel Bryan

Non-title. Sheamus has new music with a slower pace and no lyrics. After seeing the "I'm back" line for the third time tonight, the fans tell Sheamus that he looks stupid. Sheamus encourages them and says he doesn't see any real men around here. All the fan favorites are too vertically challenged and he's going to crush all the underdogs. So he's Batista from last year? Barrett is on commentary.

Sheamus shoves him into the corner to start and shrugs off Bryan's kick to the ribs. Bryan has some more success with the leg but Sheamus drops him with a clothesline. As Sheamus fires off uppercuts, Barrett says he never lost the title and is owed a rematch. That makes Rock, Orton, Bryan, Rusev and Barrett who are owed automatic rematches. It's almost like they're completely overusing a plot device.

Bryan scores with some kicks to send Sheamus outside but he comes back in for an Irish Curse to send Bryan to the floor as well. We come back from a break with Sheamus loading up a suplex but flipping Bryan over instead of going down with him. You might remember that as the Crash Landing from the final month of WCW. Sheamus: "ARE YOU NOT ENTERTAINED???"

Bryan tries some forearms to no avail and gets thrown hard into the corner. Some posing allows Bryan to get a breather though and he moonsaults over Sheamus before dropping him with the running clothesline. A backdrop sends Sheamus to the floor for the Flying Goat. The missile dropkick and it's time for the YES Kicks. As usual the big one misses but Sheamus can't hit White Noise.

Bryan sends him into the buckle and kicks the ropes to knock Sheamus back, only to get crotched on the top. The ten forearms are broken up as Bryan grabs Sheamus' arm. Why did no one ever think of that before? Sheamus knocks him to the floor and onto the announcers' table, busting Bryan open. Barrett hits a Bull Hammer behind the referee's back for a countout at 15:33.

Rating: C+. This wasn't as good as I was expecting as Sheamus is still working the kinks out of his new character. He isn't doing much besides big power moves, but at least he's getting on the crowd's nerves like he should be. Bryan was doing his usual stuff as well, but the match just never got going like you would expect it to.

Overall Rating: C-. Well it was nice while it lasted but everything is back to normal in WWE. There wasn't much to see here other than the announcement of a B level pay per view main event and another rematch from Wrestlemania. The show wasn't terrible, but it really falls off a cliff after the hot shows earlier in the week.

Results

Randy Orton b. Big Show via DQ when Joey Mercury and Jamie Noble interfered

Naomi b. Natalya – Headscissors driver

Miz b. R-Truth – Skull Crushing Finale

Dean Ambrose b. Luke Harper via DQ when Harper powerbombed him through a table

Sheamus b. Daniel Bryan via countout

Remember to follow me on Twitter @kbreviews and pick up my new book of 1998 Pay Per View reviews at Amazon for just \$3.99 at:

<http://www.amazon.com/dp/B00UYAMB8U>

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

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