

Reviewing the Review – Monday Night Raw: March 30, 2015

I really don't think this show needs an in depth preview. It's the Raw after Wrestlemania and the expectations are all through the roof for tonight. We're going to see debuts, big storyline development and fallout from Wrestlemania. This is my favorite show of the year and it has a lot to live up to after last year's edition. Let's get to it.

We open with the only real option we had: Lesnar and Heyman, with one wanting blood and the other likely wanting to find catering. They bragged about the big title match last night and how Lesnar did exactly what he said he would but then Seth Rollins had to interfere and steal Brock's title. Heyman threatened litigation, but Brock would rather have his rematch tonight instead. This brings out Stephanie, who actually sells the arm injury from Rousey last night, and says Rollins is on his way here and will fight when he arrives. This was basically HHH wanting a match with Bryan last year but not as memorable.

Daniel Bryan beat Dolph Ziggler to retain the Intercontinental Title with the running knee in a match the live crowd thought was FAR more entertaining than it really was. Yeah it was entertaining, but they gave the guys a standing ovation near the end. That was way more than they deserved, especially in a match that didn't last twelve minutes. Post match Barrett came in but Sheamus returned for the save, only to turn heel and lay out Bryan and Barrett.

One of the things discussed most since last week has been Sheamus' new mohawk haircut and braided beard. I get the idea of wanting to change things up for someone who has become as dull as Sheamus (love the in ring work, bored by the character but I still really like him overall), but dear goodness man. You can't expect to have anyone hate this guy if they're too busy laughing at him for his stupid haircut. I can't imagine that lasts until even Extreme Rules, but it didn't exactly have the intended effect. At least I hope it didn't.

The first callup of the night was the Lucha Dragons, who stole the eight man tag also involving the New Day, Cesaro/Kidd and Ascension. Kalisto was all over the place and is definitely being tooled as the new Rey Mysterio. I dig the guy and there's nothing wrong with having a small guy that flies all over the place and does a bunch of cool flips. Ascension is dead in the water and New Day is getting ready to go for an ill fated swim.

Now we get to the big story of the night as Brock Lesnar came out for his match with Rollins, but Seth said he was too jetlagged to fight. Brock didn't quite care for that and beat up the Stooges and Cole, the latter of whom had a bad neck (of course he'll be back on Raw this week because we NEED Michael Cole). He also turned over the announcers' table, which for some reason wasn't turned back over all night, even once Byron Saxton and Jerry Lawler came out to replace the announcers.

The big thing here though was Brock screen refreshing a cameraman and being suspended by Stephanie, whose arm is totally fine now because of course it is. This was a way to get Brock off TV for the summer, which is fine, especially considering how big of a face pop he's going to get when he finally returns. Post break, Stephanie went into full screech mode to say Brock will be her censored, which is EXACTLY what this segment needed: Stephanie looking strong and Brock not being able to retaliate. I was getting scared there for a minute.

Damien Mizdow beat Stardust in a quick match which only existed so Miz could come out and attack Mizdow to continue their feud.

Not Adrian Neville had his big debut and beat Curtis Axel in less than eighty seconds. This was all it needed to be and Neville looks like a great high flier. Put the Adrian back though as just Neville is kind of an odd name.

Now we get to one of my favorite parts of the night: the first weekly John Cena Open Challenge for the US Title. This could open up a lot of doors with Cena possibly putting over one guy after another week after week. Now for those of you who don't get the meaning of wrestling terms, putting someone over doesn't mean losing to them. The best example for

Cena is Damien Sandow last year. Yeah Sandow lost the match, but he never looked like a bigger deal in his career. Being paired with Cena is like being paired with Undertaker at Wrestlemania: you're automatically a bigger deal because you get to rub elbows with him.

This week's challenger was Dean Ambrose, who had a really good match against Cena but came up short, eventually getting caught in the AA. This was one of the longer match of the night and while it took some time to get going, once they hit the third gear with the finishing moves, I was totally into the match and bought the Dirty Deeds as a near finisher for Ambrose. Dean teased a heel turn post match but it didn't come. I could easily see a rematch and wouldn't complain about watching it. Good stuff here and I'm really looking forward to seeing who challenges Cena in the future. Some NXT people would be very nice choices.

Rollins bragged, Orton stared, Big Show and Kane continued to exist for reasons I don't quite get. Well at least not this level. A six man is teased for later with Orton having to get some partners. We knew Reigns, but the question was who else.

AJ/Paige/Naomi beat the Bella Twins/Natalya in a match I already forgot about when I did the Reviewing the Review for Wrestlemania XXXI as I thought AJ's last match was at the big show. This match is noteworthy for two things: Naomi hitting the Rear View to pin Nikki and a bunch of fans chanting some very derogatory things at the Bellas and Naomi.

Here's the thing: yeah those chants are unnecessary and insulting, but I wouldn't worry about them yet. You can't base anything long term off the post Wrestlemania crowd as they exist to get themselves over. It doesn't help that the Bellas are treated as nothing but idiotic, money obsessed sex objects on Total Divas. WWE keeps telling us to watch the show and the fans see the Divas presented that way. No they shouldn't insult the Divas on national TV, but those ideas wouldn't be in the fans' heads if we didn't head the Bellas bragging about it all the time. If this keeps going it's a problem but I wouldn't worry at the moment.

Ryback offers to be Orton's partner, cementing the main event in stone.

Rusev squashed Goldust without Lana. This was just to get him back on

track.

In one of the worst choices for a main event they could have picked, Reigns/Orton/Ryback beat Big Show/Kane/Rollins when Reigns speared Kane. Having Reigns out there was fine, but who in the world thought putting Big Show and Kane in front of that crowd was a good idea? I mean.....WHY WOULD THEY DO THAT? With this crowd and just a year after the Shield turned face to end the show last time, they go with a six man that could have main evented any given Raw or even Smackdown? That's their big idea?

The show was a step down from last year but that's really not a fair comparison to make. You can't have a top level show every single year, especially when there's no Bryan title celebration to carry the show. Reigns is going to be fine long term but he needs to do something to get back on track. Beating up Kane and Big Show even more isn't that thing, but it seems like that's where we're going for the moment.

I like where things are going at the moment, but they're running the risk of getting repetitive with the main event matches. Orton vs. Rollins makes sense for Extreme Rules, but I'm really not sure where they can go for Rollins' next challenger. Reigns is going to be in there soon, but after those two I don't know where they're going.

There's more on here to like than not like, with stuff like Sheamus returning as a heel and Cena's upcoming open challenges are good things to see. They could build a lot off that and I'd love to see another NXT callup or two. Finally, Lesnar returning to eventually take down the Authority is going to blow the roof off the place. I can't wait to see where they go to challenge him, but it's going to be entertaining. Fun show this week but I'm hoping the crash back down to earth isn't a disaster.

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