

Reviewing the Review – Monday Night Raw: August 17, 2015

I know it's last minute but I needed to get this in before Takeover tonight or there's really no point in doing it. We're almost to Summerslam and it's time for one last gasp to try to make Undertaker a heel against Brock as we're in Brock's hometown. Other than that we're going to get the big go home promo from Cena which is destined to rock. Let's get to it.

HHH and Stephanie opened things up with a commercial for Summerslam, which continues to show that these two are almost incapable of having a normal discussion of anything. Stephanie is WAY worse about it though as HHH seems like he could turn it off if he wanted, but Stephanie really does seem like this is the way she thinks. Couple that with the law stating that no one is ever allowed to get one over on her in any way shape or form and she can get really annoying in a hurry. She's incredibly talented, but my goodness she can get annoying in a hurry.

Orton/Cesaro beat Owens/Sheamus in your standard Raw tag match. The ending seemed a bit botched as Owens was either too far away for the RKO or wasn't ready to take it. The more I think about it, the more the former seems likely as the RKO isn't exactly the hardest move in the world to take as you just have to fall on your face, which is about as standard of a move as there is. I'm sure Owens will get the blame for it anyway though as WWE is the kind of company where if you botch something, the best solution is to punish you for about a month instead of just forgetting about it and writing it off as a one off error.

The problem with the match was that it wasn't very exciting. They basically chinlocked each other for about eight minutes and then did a few other things. Unfortunately there isn't enough interest in either feud because we've seen them fight each other about a half dozen times in tag matches, because, as I spent a lot of time in the original review talking about, WWE currently has about four ways to build a feud with "tonight, it's a must see tag match" being at the top of the list.

Undertaker says he'll win on Sunday. Simple, to the point, and not eight minutes for the sake of talking for eight minutes because that's how they do promos. Why can't more people get this treatment? Like Orton for example. He can talk well enough, but he's really, really not suited for the long winded promos like Cena and HHH. WWE really needs to understand that wrestling isn't a one size fits all industry.

Rollins told the Authority he wants a statue if he wins on Sunday. Why do I have a feeling that's the latest version of a trophy which must be destroyed?

Reigns beat Harper for the third time in the last month. This is in addition to the two tag matches they've been in against each other. Yeah the matches are entertaining, but there are other people you can use for these matches. Since July 20, and again omitting the tags, those two have spent a combined 40 minutes fighting each other on TV. Now I'm supposed to want to see them fight again in a featured match on pay per view, which is likely getting nearly 20 more minutes?

Think of it like this. I love Star Wars. It's one of my favorite movies and I've seen it more times than I can count. That being said, if I watched it three times in a month, I'd probably start getting bored with it. Yeah Reigns vs. Harper is normally entertaining, but how many times can I watch Harper do his power stuff and then eat a spear for the pin? Mix that stuff up a little bit, especially when you have the roster you have on tap. Let them squash people and then cut promos instead. You get two matches and talking. I'm sure that could eat up the fifteen minutes instead of "dang these two AGAIN?"

Becky Lynch beat Tamina in a lame match. I'll get into this more later (as I have way too often lately), but there's no reason for the Divas to be fighting at the moment.

Speaking of overdone matches, Rusev made Mark Henry tap to the Accolade. Just stop with this. It wasn't really that interesting at its peak, and it hasn't been interesting whatsoever in the three times Henry has been squashed by Rusev in August alone. Like I said, when WWE gets an idea stuck in their head, that's all you're going to see for a long time.

Post match Ziggler returned to save Lana, giving us more of some of the worst chemistry in history. The pairing doesn't work, so we're stuck with it for the time being. Remember those WE WANT LANA chants from before? Notice that they're gone when she's with Ziggler? Well apparently WWE wants it that way, likely because Lana isn't on Total Divas.

So I know I harp a lot on WWE repeating things. It seems there's something to that as they reaired the same Undertaker vs. Lesnar video from last week. I get that you can't record some huge, epic package every week, but you couldn't grab a camera and get some fresh interviews with people talking about the match?

Ryback beat Miz in a preview for Sunday. I'm never a fan of having a challenger lose clean (or in any way really) to the champion before a title shot and I didn't like it here. Have Miz walk out or something, but don't have him get pinned in a short match.

Now we get to one of the biggest stories of the night with the contract signing (that would be the other big idea creative uses) between John Cena and Seth Rollins. I covered most of this in the column this week, but I didn't mention Cena and Rollins both acknowledging that Rollins is basically HHH's son in this whole story.

The sooner they get away from this, the much better Rollins will be for it. The idea that Rollins, who is the World Champion, is about half way to being a HHH tribute (note that I said halfway. This could be WAY worse, like with AJ Styles and Ric Flair in early 2010). Rollins is capable of being a huge star in the mold of a Jeff Hardy or Shawn Michaels but he has to stop and pay homage to HHH. Now I'd say it's pretty clear that he's going to go over HHH at some point, but they need to actually get to that point instead of having Rollins use the Pedigree, which is completely wrong for him. It's fine for a payoff, but the road there is tough.

There was an eight man tag with the four teams in Sunday's match. The good guys won.

Stardust and Barrett talked about their match on Sunday. I could go for these two as a regular team. It's not like they have anything else going

on.

Sasha Banks made Nikki Bella tap out in a non-title match. Not that this means anything of course and not that it's likely to be mentioned again after Sunday of course. Since Sasha made Nikki tap, there was no mention of a title shot anytime soon. I'm so fed up with this non-story and I really do think it would have been better to hold off on the Revolution until after Summerslam. If nothing else it means Banks isn't likely to be champion anymore (not that you would know she is because it might affect the Bella brand, which is TOTALLY a thing) and you can focus on chasing the Divas Title, which will finally be in season. Enough of this though, as I'm running out of things to complain about with the story.

Speaking of running out of things to say, Heyman is getting close to that point with the Undertaker vs. Lesnar rematch. This time he opted for singing hymns about Brock, which led to Undertaker coming out again and kicking Lesnar low. As usual, WWE only knows one or two ways to put together a story and if that means doing some of the most nonsensical things they can come up with to get to face Lesnar vs. heel Undertaker, so be it.

That's the big summary of WWE's issues: instead of booking to suit the talent, they plug the talent into formulas they may not fit into because that's how they run the shows. Undertaker isn't working as this heel they want him to be, so they're likely going to keep pushing it until we get the third match in a trilogy at Wrestlemania, because WWE loves itself some trilogies, for Undertaker's retirement match. The segment was good until the Undertaker completely went away from his character, but that's how things work in WWE. At least the writers got what they wanted out of it and if we don't like it, that's on us I guess.

Overall this wasn't a great show, but it set up Summerslam well and sold me on the main events. I'm not wild on how they're going about Undertaker vs. Lesnar, but the match has the potential to be an awesome brawl. That is of course unless they have to protect Undertaker, which is more than understandable as Cena could barely survive that kind of a beating. I'm sold on the upper card, but that midcard stuff is going to need one heck of a coupon to get me on board.

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