

Monday Night Raw – April 18, 2016: What's The English Word For Good Show?

Monday Night Raw

Date: April 18, 2016

Location: O2 Arena, London, England

Commentators: Michael Cole, John Bradshaw Layfield, Byron Saxton

It's the annual post Wrestlemania European tour so we're in England for a big change of pace. The show is also taped tonight which can often lead to some less interesting TV. We're less than two weeks away from Payback where AJ Styles will be challenging Roman Reigns for the WWE World Title. Let's get to it.

Opening sequence.

Here's Dean Ambrose to open things up for the Ambrose Asylum. Dean actually treats it a bit more like a traditional talk show with a joke about a monster in the Thames River ("I didn't know Braun Strowman could swim."). He brings out Shane McMahon as his first guest and that means it's time to dance.

Dean talks about all the crazy stuff he's done over the years and then shows us a clip of Shane diving off the Cell at Wrestlemania. That made Dean ask what Shane could have been thinking, which Shane sees as a compliment. Shane's plans are about giving new talent a chance.

Names like AJ Styles, Sami Zayn and Sasha Banks (two of which had title shots at Wrestlemania before Shane was in power of course but that's just over thinking things) have gotten a chance and that's why we have arrived. Cue Kevin Owens to ask why Shane threw him out last week. Shane brings up Owens wanting to cost Sami the title shot last week but Owens says that just means he's an honest man. Sami has been riding his coattails for years now because he's just not good enough.

This brings out Sami to accuse Owens of trying to stab him in the back, which brings out Chris Jericho for some reason. Jericho and Shane are about to get into it when Dean yells at them to be careful around the plant. Shane makes Jericho vs. Ambrose and Zayn vs. Owens for Payback and it's nearly a brawl.

Chris Jericho vs. Sami Zayn

Sami cranks on an armdrag into an armbar to start before a back elbow sends him out to the floor. Back in and Sami can't pull off the corner walk wristdrag as Jericho crotches him to keep control. A dropkick sends Sami outside again and we take a break. We come back with Jericho suplexing Sami on the floor and hitting the chinlock. Some clotheslines and a high cross body put Jericho down so he grabs the bulldog to stop Sami's comeback.

A quick Blue Thunder Bomb gets two as you can tell these two aren't exactly going at full speed. Another high cross body is dropkicked out of the air and it's off to the Walls. Sami makes the rope and gets Jericho outside for the diving tornado DDT. Back in and Jericho pokes him in the eye (becoming the top choice for heels in recent weeks) to set up the Codebreaker for the pin at 12:47.

Rating: C+. Like I said you could tell that they were just doing signature stuff here which is a trademark of these overseas shows. These two could do something very entertaining with more time and less fatigue so we'll call this more of a "what could have been" than a disappointing match.

AJ Styles is in the back for a chat when Karl Anderson and Luke Gallows come in. Apparently AJ gave them their recommendations to get jobs in WWE and he's very glad to see them. Gallows wants to go find a spot to catch up because he can't quite remember their last night in Japan.

Tag Team Tournament Semi-Finals: Enzo Amore/Colin Cassady vs. Dudley Boyz

Enzo says there's a dud in the Dudley Boyz because they're a couple of haters instead of a couple of studs. Enzo: "We're like A-cups because we're real whether you like us or not." D-Von and Enzo get things going

and we take a very quick break. Back with Bubba slowly beating on Enzo before it's off to D-Von for a big slam. The middle rope backsplash misses though and the hot tag brings in Big Cass. Some splashes have Cass in control and he shrugs off the reverse 3D. A big boot sets up the Rocket Launcher for the pin on Bubba at 8:35.

Rating: D+. This was a bit disappointing but they were probably smart to just give Enzo and Cass a win. I'm really not sure if they should give Enzo and Cass the tournament as it's a big jump to have them be Tag Team Champions so soon and you don't want them to lose their first big match.

Here's Roman Reigns to a lot of booing for the "I'm the guy" line. Reigns says that anyone who thinks they're part of this new era of WWE can come out here and get punched in the mouth. The fans call him boring so here's AJ to interrupt. Styles praises Roman's talents and admits that he'll have to have the match of his life to win the title. The thing is that's what AJ has done to become a champion everywhere.

Reigns is ready to take him apart but AJ says he'll make a phenomenal champion. Styles leaves and here are Gallows and Anderson to beat Reigns down. AJ didn't see them at first but does see them lay Reigns out with a running boot/spinning flapjack combination. They leave the ring and join AJ, who doesn't seem pleased with what he just saw.

Post break Roman is walking through the back when AJ comes up to say that he had nothing to do with that attack. Roman doesn't buy it after Anderson and Gallows attacked the Usos last week. AJ admits they've been friends for a long time but he doesn't need them to win the title. That's fine with Reigns who wants it to be one vs. all.

Baron Corbin vs. Fandango

Ziggler is on commentary. Corbin shrugs off the chops and takes it outside where he throws Fandango over Ziggler. A kick to Dolph's ribs leaves him laying, followed by End of Days to Fandango for the pin at 1:29.

Baron kicks Ziggler in the face and gives him End of Days on the floor.

Greetings from Puerto Rico.

Here are Miz and Maryse for MizTV. Miz insults Prince George, saying he's plain and simple looking while the Intercontinental Title is perfect. Cue Cesaro to say the only kind of royal that Miz would ever be is a royal pain. The fans call Miz boring so he does a modified monologue from the movie Taken where he promises to beat Cesaro at Payback. Cesaro is ready to fight now and does Roddy Piper's bubblegum line from They Live, only to have Miz say Cesaro already has a match right now.

Rusev vs. Cesaro

Cesaro sees Del Rio and Sheamus out there but it's worried because he's already had a chat with Shane McMahon. Instead, we'll be having this match.

League of Nations/Miz vs. Cesaro/New Day

To make this even better, Cesaro has a New Day shirt under his suit. We start joined in progress with Woods taking over on Miz and bringing in Kofi for a kick to the chest. The Warrior splash gets two for Big E. and it's time for some gyrating. Del Rio comes in and gets beaten down as well, setting up a little tromboning. Sheamus gets the tag and stomps Woods down in the corner before knocking him outside as we take a break.

Back with Rusev splashing Woods in the corner and knocking the other good guys off the apron. Woods gets in a tornado DDT and the hot tag brings in Cesaro for the running uppercuts. The uppercuts go outside as well, followed by a high cross body for two on Sheamus. Miz gets in a cheap shot though, allowing Sheamus to hit a sitout powerbomb (that's a new one for him) for two on Cesaro. We hit the parade of finishers with Big E. hitting the Big Ending on Miz, followed by the Neutralizer for the pin on Sheamus at 13:30.

Rating: C+. This got better at the end but again it was a lot of standing around before we got to the entertaining stuff. New Day and Cesaro is a very fun combination though and beating up the League is an easy layup win. The League needs to go somewhere soon or just split up because you can only beat them so many times before it stops meaning anything.

Charlotte and Ric Flair laugh off Natalya making her tap out last week. Natalya comes in to say she's getting a rematch at WWE Payback (as opposed to Botswana Payback) where Bret Hart will be in her corner.

Natalya/Becky Lynch/Paige/Sasha Banks vs. Tamina/Charlotte/Summer Rae/Naomi

Charlotte is nice enough to let Summer start with Natalya, who calls Summer pathetic. It's off to Sasha, who eats an elbow to the jaw to actually let Summer take over. Everything breaks down and the good women stand tall over the villains as we take a break. Back with Becky throwing Naomi into the corner before eating a superkick from Tamina.

Summer comes back in and chokes in the corner for a bit before handing it off to Naomi for some kicks (thankfully minus the dancing). Becky finally sends Naomi through the ropes, setting up the diving tag off to Natalya. The basement dropkick puts Summer down but she gets in a quick spinning kick to the face. Charlotte comes in as everything breaks down with Natalya getting the Sharpshooter on Charlotte for the submission at 10:45.

Rating: C-. I wasn't feeling this one but there's only so much you can do with eight people in there at a time. The key thing here though is they're keeping this serious and the matches are working much better. This feels like a division with depth instead of the normal two people fighting for the title and a minor side story going on at the same time.

We recap Anderson and Gallows laying out Reigns earlier and AJ saying he had nothing to do with it.

Styles is with Gallows and Anderson again.

Greetings From Puerto Rico.

Tag Team Tournament Semi-Finals: Vaudevillains vs. Usos

Jimmy gets beaten into the corner to start and English slaps on a chinlock. A kick to the head allows for the tag to Jey for some house cleaning. The running Umaga attack hits English and a superkick knocks him out of the air for two. Everything breaks down with Jimmy being sent

into the barricade, only to have Jey dive on both of them. Jimmy's bad shoulder goes into the post though and it's the Whirling Dervish to send the Vaudevillains to the finals at 3:24.

Rating: D+. Again no time to go anywhere but Vaudevillains vs. Enzo/Cass is the best possible option so this makes sense. It's not like the Usos need the win so let one of the new teams get a title shot somewhere down the lines. The ending being mostly clean is a good sign too, especially since the Vaudevillains don't seem to have the longest shelf life.

Video on Apollo Crews.

Heath Slater vs. Apollo Crews

There's no Adam Rose in sight due to the suspension. Earlier tonight, Crews agreed to join the team if he loses here but they'll leave him alone if he beats Slater. Crews starts with the AJ Styles dropdown into a dropkick and a delayed vertical suplex for no cover. Slater sidesteps a charge into the corner though and Slater grabs a chinlock to keep control. Back up and Crews moonsaults onto the other Outcasts, followed by a jumping enziguri and the lifting powerbomb to pin Slater at 4:28.

Rating: D+. That chinlock stopped them cold so this could only be so good. Crews finishing the mini feud with the Outcasts is a good idea but now he needs to have a match that actually matters. If nothing else it might help him develop a much needed personality because right now he's just a smiling goon.

As Crews leaves, Kevin Owens comes out for his match and we get a quick staredown. That's quite the upgrade for Crews and quite the downgrade for Owens, though to be fair Owens feuds with half the roster most weeks.

Kevin Owens vs. Dean Ambrose

They start slugging it out until Owens elbows him in the face to take over. Ambrose forearm him in the head but the fight quickly goes outside for a real brawl. Owens is sent over the announcers' table and we take a break. Back with Ambrose getting caught in a chinlock and then being sent out over the top.

A frog splash off the apron crushes Ambrose again but he somehow gets up top back inside. Owens gets knocked to the floor and there's the standing top rope elbow to put both guys down. Back in and the rebound lariat gets two, only to have Dean run into a superkick for two. The spinning superplex gets the same for Owens but his second frog splash gets two. The Cannonball misses though and Dirty Deeds gives Dean the pin at 17:21.

Rating: B-. Pretty strong main event style match here with both guys trading big shots near the end. I could go without Owens losing another big match as he should definitely lose to Sami at Payback but at least he can bounce back from losses faster than almost anyone else on the roster.

Post match Jericho comes in and gives Dean a Codebreaker to end the show.

Overall Rating: B. The youth movement continues around here and that's exactly what needed to happen after the really weak Wrestlemania build. AJ vs. Reigns took a nice step up tonight and is starting to feel like something that could be a really strong pay per view main event. The rest of the show was fun as well, despite there being a lack of energy, possibly due to traveling. Raw continues to be on a roll though and that's a good sign leading into a big pay per view.

Results

Chris Jericho b. Sami Zayn – Codebreaker

Enzo Amore/Colin Cassady b. Dudley Boyz – Rocket Launcher to Bubba

Baron Corbin b. Fandango – End of Days

Cesaro/New Day b. League of Nations/Miz – Neutralizer to Sheamus

Natalya/Becky Lynch/Sasha Banks/Paige b. Charlotte/Tamina/Naomi/Summer Rae – Sharpshooter to Charlotte

Vaudevillains b. Usos – Whirling Dervish to Jimmy

Apollo Crews b. Heath Slater – Lifting powerbomb

Dean Ambrose b. Kevin Owens – Dirty Deeds

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