

Monday Night Raw – August 8, 2016: Point Being?

Monday Night Raw

Date: August 8, 2016

Location: Honda Center, Anaheim, California

Commentators: Michael Cole, Corey Graves, Byron Saxton

Things are starting to pick back up as we have thirteen days before Summerslam. The big story coming out of last week saw Randy Orton and Brock Lesnar trade assaults though there's no word on Lesnar being back this week. Other than that we have a rematch between Sheamus and Cesaro for reasons that aren't entirely clear. Let's get to it.

We open with a Last Week on Raw which covers Balor vs. Rollins, Reigns vs. Rusev, Lesnar getting RKO'ed and showing up on Smackdown to take out Orton. I like this idea but they need to speed it up a little.

Opening sequence.

Here are Enzo and Cass to open things up with Enzo saying Sasha Banks was smitten with him last week. There was as much chemistry as a science fair and he was hitting it to the track but Chris Gold Glove Jon Bon Jericho came out and pulled it back over the wall. Enzo and Cass are some Anaheim Angels on a Stairway to Heaven so welcome to the jungle you Axl Rose wannabe. Jericho comes out and calls them a couple of goofballs before Kevin Owens comes out.

Apparently Jimmin Marvinluter had a chat with them and now Owens has his back. They're closer than brothers, which Owens takes a few seconds to confirm. Cass thinks it's like Bert and Ernie where they're in the same bathtub scrubbing each others' backs. Owens calls Enzo a dead weight that Cass brought over to Raw with him so he doesn't like Cass anymore. Owens and Cass are about to fight but Jericho wasn't talking to the big mutton head Cass, even though he was looking right at him. Jericho: "I was talking to the hip hop hobbit." A brawl is teased but nothing happens as we go to a break.

Enzo Amore vs. Chris Jericho

We actually wait to come back from commercial for the opening bell. Enzo starts fast with a dropkick and headscissors but gets run over by a shoulder. Owens, at ringside with Cass, runs his mouth as only he can. Jericho is sent to the floor with a baseball slide and a big staredown takes us to a break. Back with Jericho in control with chops in the corner, only to get caught with a middle rope DDT. Enzo tries another hurricanrana but gets caught in the Walls. The rope is grabbed but Jericho hits a quick Codebreaker. Cass and Owens get in a fight on the floor, ending with Cass coming in to boot Jericho for the DQ at 11:17.

Rating: C-. As far as a match whose only reason to exist was to set up a tag match at Summerslam goes, this was perfectly fine. The more Enzo gets in the ring on his own the better it's going to be for him. The good thing about Jericho at this point is you could imagine him jobbing to anyone so Enzo wasn't out of the running here. That's a rare treat you don't get often enough.

Post match Cass issues the challenge for a tag match at Summerslam. The Canadians quickly accept.

Mick Foley is on the phone with Stephanie when Sasha Banks comes in. She wants to face Charlotte and Dana Brooke in a handicap match tonight. Instead Mick makes it Dana vs. Sasha tonight and if Sasha wins, it's one on one with Charlotte at Summerslam. Mick: "Good luck." Sasha: "You don't need luck when you're the Boss."

Braun Strowman vs. Jorel Nelson

Nelson is speechless about why he agreed to do this. Strowman kicks him off the apron and turns him inside out with a clothesline. The reverse chokeslam ends this at 1:00.

Mick Foley meets with Puff Daddy and receives front row tickets to his concert in Columbus, Ohio. New Day comes in and Puff eats some Booty0's. Big E. is out due to his injury from last week and Kofi makes rap jokes.

Titus O'Neil vs. Darren Young

This would be the first match we saw last week. Darren hits him in the face to start so Titus hammers away. He loads up a quick powerslam but gets rolled up with Darren grabbing the trunks this time for the pin at 2:00. Keeping this short is the best thing that could happen tonight.

Here's Seth Rollins to open the second hour. The last few weeks have been a learning experience for everyone, including learning about his Summerslam opponent Finn Balor. He's followed Finn's career for years now and thought he was just a knockoff. "The Jared Leto to his Heath Ledger if you will."

We see a clip from last week with Balor talking to Seth, which makes Rollins talk about how Finn Balor isn't even his real name. Apparently it's a famous warrior and a demon king, which would be like Seth calling himself Rambo Apocalypse. Seth wants to know the real Finn Balor who came in here and insulted Seth in his ring. Balor has had two matches in WWE and now he thinks he's some big star.

The reason Seth is so arrogant is because he knows his place in WWE. He's not ignorant and doesn't need to surround himself with myths and legends because he knows who he is. One day parents will tell their kids stories about Rollins conquering people like Brock Lesnar, John Cena and Roman Reigns. His legend will be expanded at Summerslam when he adds Balor's name to that list. As has been the case lately, Rollins was on point here.

We look back at Orton hitting the RKO on Lesnar last week and Lesnar retaliating.

Sheamus vs. Cesaro

This is the other rematch from last week where Cesaro won. Apparently that wasn't enough to impress the bosses, which matters more than winning around here. Cesaro starts with a dropkick and scores with a suicide dive. Back in and Cesaro hits the running uppercut in the corner, only to get caught with the big ax handle as we take a break. We come back to Sheamus hitting a top rope shoulder for two and grabbing a chinlock.

White Noise is countered into a failed Swing attempt but the Brogue Kick

misses as well. The Irish Curse and White Noise get two each and Sheamus is stunned. Sheamus goes up top but gets dropkicked down, setting up the uppercut train on the floor. The referee gets in the way of a right hand and doesn't see Sheamus rolling Cesaro up. Back up and Cesaro grabs a rollup of his own for the pin at 11:00.

Rating: C. This wasn't as good as last week's match but at least there's no reason to do a third match. That being said there was no reason to do a second match and we got one anyway. Above all else though the line from the announcers about how the bosses want to see physical dominance instead of people winning matches made me cringe. If it's not about winning, what's the point of being here?

We look at Lesnar attacking Orton on Smackdown. That's the third time in ninety minutes.

Long video on Randy Orton vs. Brock Lesnar, including sitdown interviews with each talking about their time together in Ohio Valley Wrestling. The talent level down there was unheard of with Orton, Lesnar, Cena, Shelton Benjamin and Batista all in the same place. They debuted in 2002 and both took their own paths to greatness though Lesnar reached his peak far faster.

Then Lesnar left because he didn't like people to pursue his fortunes elsewhere. Lesnar: "I became a megastar and he became just a star." Heyman says Orton is the best surfer on the beach, riding all those big waves. But then Lesnar is the shark. We see Lesnar laying Orton out on Smackdown for the fourth time tonight but Orton says it only takes one RKO. Good stuff here, even though they really don't have history together.

Lesnar is here next week.

Dudley Boyz vs. Sin Cara/Neville

This is due to the Bubba and D-Von doing their usual "you're new and therefore you suck" speech to Neville earlier in the day. Sin Cara is dressed like Black Panther tonight. Bubba pounds Neville into the corner to start and the old guys take turns in the corner. D-Von is in a regular

t-shirt this week for a new look. Bubba goes after Neville and gets sent outside for a flip dive from Cara. Back in and D-Von takes over with a big elbow drop for two but misses a charge into the corner. It's off to Neville who ducks a D-Von clothesline to send it into Bubba, setting up the Red Arrow to pin D-Von at 5:18.

Rating: C-. Fine enough here and Neville/Cara are a passable selection for the new high flying team. I mean, it does make you wonder why they didn't just keep the Dragons together in the first place when Kalisto is just a warm body on Smackdown but I don't think they thought that through.

Bubba gives D-Von an angry glare post match. I blame the shirt change.

Here are Rusev and Lana in their wedding clothes with a wedding party set up. They're here to talk about their very special occasion and we get to experience their wedding day. We see a package of wedding photos and I flash back to last year when Lana was taken off TV for revealing the engagement. Yeah it's almost like that MADE NO DIFFERENCE WHATSOEVER. The fans call this boring which Rusev interprets as them wanting MORE MORE MORE. They're about to exchange their wedding vows again when Roman Reigns comes out to interrupt.

The fans boo because they have no idea how wrestling works or what they want out of their time here. Reigns was in the back watching and wondered why Rusev didn't have a best man. Maybe Roman can fill in that role and offers to give the newlyweds a toast. Rusev says no, so Reigns issues a challenge for Summerslam. Roman pours a drink and makes wedding night jokes, causing Rusev to go after him. A right hand knocks Rusev into Lana, sending her right into the wedding cake. Lana: "I HATE YOU!!!"

This is exactly the kind of thing that Reigns needs to do: simple stories that should get him cheered because he's doing something people want him to see. This was a really basic idea but it's going to set up the title match and gives people a reason to cheer Reigns and boo Rusev. Old school stories still work just fine and I have no idea why people hate them so much.

Sasha Banks vs. Dana Brooke

Non-title and if Sasha wins Dana is banned from ringside at Summerslam. Sasha takes her down to start but gets taken to the mat. Charlotte slaps Dana in the face by mistake and gets dropped by the champ. Back up and Dana misses a charge in the corner, setting up the double knees in the corner to give Sasha the pin at 2:17.

We get a sitdown talk from Finn Balor who talks about the origin of his name, including a famous warrior named Finn. Then there was the king of the demons: Balor. These aren't just stories but rather a source of power. When a warrior knows his power isn't enough, he can tap into these things and become greater than himself. Seth has never seen a demon like this but he'll meet the king at Summerslam.

Anderson and Gallows are dressed like doctors to discuss a condition called ringpostitis, which has been sweeping through the roster as of late. We see clips of Big E. getting crotched on the post last week and Anderson has a jar with ping pong balls inside. They recently performed surgery and the results were nuts. It makes you want to ball your eyes out and Gallows got a little testy. Tonight they collect another sample from Kofi Kingston. I love little vignettes like this, if nothing else just to spice things up a bit.

Kofi Kingston vs. Luke Gallows

Kofi starts fast and sends Gallows outside for a flip dive. Gallows takes over on the floor and muscles Kofi back in for a fireman's carry flapjack and the pin at 1:33. They're certainly not taking their time tonight.

Woods has to save Kofi from a post crotching.

Earlier today, Goldust met with Scooby-Doo and R-Truth thinks he's been replaced by man's best friend. A fight almost breaks out but Goldust suggests they go watch the new WWE Scooby-Doo movie together and eat some Scooby Snacks. The first movie was entertaining so I'm fine with this.

Here's Mick Foley for his big meeting with Daniel Bryan. They praise each other a bit before talking about Orton vs. Lesnar last week. Foley also isn't happy with Bryan degrading the Universal Title and wondering when the Milky Way Title was coming up. Mick says this isn't a joke and here's

Rusev, in ring gear, to interrupt.

Rusev sucks up to Mick, which Bryan thinks is a way out of his match with Roman Reigns. This brings out Cesaro to say he's earned a championship match in his last two performances. Bryan: "Cesaro, I think you've been completely underutilized on Raw." Foley: "Stay out of this Daniel." Mick makes the title match right here, right now.

US Title: Cesaro vs. Rusev

Cesaro is challenging and the bell rings at 11:01pm. Rusev goes after the arm to start and Cesaro is in early trouble. A whip into the corner puts Cesaro down again but he comes back with the running uppercuts. Rusev knocks him down again but the Accolade is countered into an electric chair drop. A slugout goes to Cesaro and the springboard uppercut drops the champ.

The Swing sets up the Sharpshooter and here's Sheamus to break it up. The distraction lets Rusev hit the superkick for two. I bought that as the finish. Sheamus gets up AGAIN and the distraction leads to a ref bump, meaning there's no count on the Neutralizer. Rusev pokes Cesaro in the eye to set up a Brogue Kick, followed by another kick to the head to retain the title at 9:50.

Rating: D. For the booking, not the wrestling. I actually groaned out loud at that ending because this is just dumb on so many levels. Let's take a quick look at why this was so dumb many levels.

1. It started after 11pm with zero announcement or build. Set this up instead of just doing it in such a hurry.
2. It only exists to set up Cesaro vs. Sheamus again, despite Cesaro beating Sheamus twice in a row, clean both times.
3. We now have Cesaro losing to set up a match against a two time loser.
4. Did I mention Cesaro loses again?
5. This felt like they ran out of ideas and threw in a taped house show match.

6. What was the point of Sheamus vs. Cesaro earlier tonight? Cesaro had already beaten him last week and all it did was set up a way to get us to this ending. Set up the match, perhaps by making last week's match a #1 contenders match instead of having it be a way to impress the bosses, and then have Sheamus interfere to set up the rematch. Don't have a rematch for no logical reason (the bosses wanting to see it again doesn't count) and then use it as a way to pay off another match later. That's stupid booking, but then again so is half the stuff WWE does at times.

Just a mess all around here and really stupid booking to get us to the next really stupid idea.

We're not done with the stupid as Rusev holds up the title and stares straight ahead for a good three seconds so Reigns can run down the aisle and spear him to end the show.

Overall Rating: C-. This show was much more boring than bad and that's not necessarily an improvement. The biggest problem here is that this wasn't an interesting show. Nothing really happened here, save for Reigns going after Lana and Rusev plus an ending that made my head hurt. They kept things quick all night and as a result none of the matches felt important. This felt like they were just burning off a show instead of building up to Summerslam, almost like they don't have enough stuff to fill in a three hour (plus) card. It just wasn't all that interesting though the Reigns, Rollins and Balor stuff was all good.

Results

Chris Jericho b. Enzo Amore via DQ when Big Cass interfered

Braun Strowman b. Jorel Nelson – Reverse chokeslam

Darren Young b. Titus O'Neil – Rollup with a handful of trunks

Sin Cara/Neville b. Dudley Boyz – Red Arrow to D-Von

Sasha Banks b. Dana Brooke – Double knees to the chest

Luke Gallows b. Kofi Kingston – Fireman's carry flapjack

Rusev b. Cesaro – Kick to the head

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