

Monday Night Raw – September 26, 2016: I Didn't Want It To Be This Way

Monday Night Raw

Date: September 26, 2016

Location: US Bank Arena, Cincinnati, Ohio

Commentators: Michael Cole, Corey Graves, Byron Saxton

We're past Clash of Champions and this is going to be an interesting show. The key here is Raw's competition as they're up against Monday Night Football and a Presidential debate that is likely going to break a lot of viewership records. Kevin Owens is still Raw World Champion and Roman Reigns picked up the US Title from Rusev last night it's time to start looking towards the Cell. Let's get to it.

One more note: I was in the arena for the show last night so this is my second time seeing this.

There's no intro as we're heading straight for the opening match.

Translation: PLEASE DON'T CHANGE THE CHANNEL YET! I can completely accept this.

US Title: Roman Reigns vs. Rusev

Rematch from last night with Reigns defending. The fans want Lana as Rusev takes him down with a front facelock. That's going to keep the people from watching the debate. Reigns is cheered quite strongly as he kips out of a headscissors but gets double legged back to the mat.

Rusev gets one off a suplex and starts in on Reigns' back. The nine corner clotheslines get Reigns out of trouble but he can't lift Rusev up for the powerbomb because of the back injury. We take a break and come back with Rusev putting on a bearhug to keep up the simple psychology. A dropkick hits Reigns in the mouth and some gutwrench suplexes get two. Back to the waistlock as the match slows down again.

Reigns fights up with more clotheslines and a big boot but the Superman Punch is countered, sending them both falling out to the floor. We come back from another break with Reigns headbutting him off the top and hitting a middle rope clothesline. Geez man enough with the Lex Luger style offense.

Reigns still can't powerbomb him so Rusev gets in a spinwheel kick. More headbutts and another kick to the head give Rusev another two. Reigns' latest comeback is stopped with a superkick and the fans are really getting into this in a way you almost never hear for a Reigns match. The Accolade is broken up but Lana offers a distraction to break up the Superman Punch. The apron kick staggers Rusev (and gets a great reaction from the crowd) and they fight into the crowd for a double countout at 25:38.

Rating: B. The match was another good outing for the two of them and the ending sets up a rematch in the Cell, which is going to receive a divided reception depending on your taste in Cell matches. Maybe it was just the Cincinnati crowd or maybe it's because he's in the midcard instead of the main event but Reigns was getting a great reaction here. This is the kind of role he's made for: an athletic freak who can take a beating and give out one of his own. Good match here.

Post match Rusev gets a chair and hits Reigns over the back. They get inside and Reigns gets in a spear to put Rusev down. Reigns sits in the chair and poses with the belt before hitting Rusev with the chair to even things up.

WWE2K17 ad with Ambrose's appearance getting a huge pop.

Here's Mick Foley for a chat about last night's Cesaro vs. Sheamus match. The thought of the series ending in a draw seemed to be a mathematical impossibility (not really) but that's what's happened. Foley brings out Sheamus and Cesaro with Sheamus almost immediately cutting him off to say this was about physical dominance.

Cesaro talks about doctors holding Sheamus back last night and an argument breaks out over who was more dominant. Foley cuts them off to say they're both right and they're both getting a championship

opportunity....which they're getting together as they're fighting for the Tag Team Titles. Cesaro: "SAY WHAT???" Foley tells them to get over it and just team together because that's his decision.

I had a very bad feeling that this was where they were going and while it's not the worst idea in the world (Raw is dying for tag teams at the moment), it feels like the TNA way of getting here: a bunch of matches that did nothing but fill time until we get to the end result. Sheamus and Cesaro had some good matches (even one very good one) but they drove the feud into the ground to the point where I didn't care how good the matches were since I had absolutely no desire to watch them.

And now, none of that matters because they're basically saying the whole thing was a tie and we're just going to do something different. It comes off as lazy booking and a way to fill in time, which is one of the worst things you can do in wrestling. I'm sure they'll be a decent team but they better not cut New Day's title reign off this close to the record.

Tag Team Titles: New Day vs. Anderson and Gallows

New Day is defending in a rematch from last night after Xavier Woods used Francesca II. The match starts fast with Kofi having to dodge a diving Anderson. It's off to Big E. for the Unicorn Stampede with Woods blowing the trombone in time with the stomps. Gallows, apparently not a music fan, pulls Big E. out to the floor and superkicks him in the face.

Anderson adds a running kick to the face for two and the champs are in quick trouble. Gallows gets in a chokeslam and we take a break. Anderson's powerbomb gets two and we hear about Demolition's title reign being in reach. A kick to the head finally allows the hot tag to Big E. for the suplexes. Big E. misses a charge into the post though and a running boot to the face gets two.

That's enough of being on defense for Big E. so he spears Anderson through the ropes, setting up the Midnight Hour for two with Gallows making the save. Kofi is sent shoulder first into the steps and the Magic Killer gets a very close two on Big E. They had me on that near fall. A VERY bloody Kofi comes back in and hits Trouble in Paradise to pin Anderson and retain the titles at 11:03.

Rating: C+. They're doing really well at making me buy into the title changes here and that's hard to do when it comes to a regular TV title defense. Anderson and Gallows are done as challengers now and I'm really not sure where they go from here. Sheamus and Cesaro are fine for placeholder challengers but New Day really should break the record when they're this close. It would be a waste of time not to.

We look at Kevin Owens injuring Seth Rollins' ribs in their match at Clash of Champions. Stephanie McMahon sent a second referee down for the count, seconds after Rollins would have had the title won. After the show ended, HHH arrived and asked Stephanie how it went ("Great.").

Sheamus and Cesaro (back in his suit) are bickering when Foley comes in. Mick starts yelling about how much potential these two have together because they could shake up the tag division. He'll even give them a chance tonight in a tag match. Foley showed a lot of fire here, as is his custom. Remember that.

Bayley vs. Anna Fields

Fields chokes her on the ropes to start and we hit an early chinlock. Bayley comes back with her elbows and clotheslines, setting up a quick Bayley to Belly for the pin at 2:04.

Post match Bayley says she's not done with Sasha and Charlotte after that triple threat because she wants to hug that Women's Title.

And now, the bad part of the show. Foley goes in to see Stephanie and asks about the referee issue in last night's main event and telling HHH it was great. Stephanie ERUPTS on Foley, talking about how it should have been his responsibility to get a new referee out there. Instead, he was probably with Sheamus and Cesaro because he thinks with his heart instead of his head. She hired him because of his mind as a businessman (Huh?) and wants him to be more like her. Instead of showing the fire he had earlier, Foley just stands there and takes this because she's Stephanie.

This is every problem with Stephanie rolled into one promo. Not only is it part of a story that is taking WAY too long to go anywhere (I'd be shocked if we get any real resolution before the Royal Rumble) but this

is Mick Foley, a three time WWE World Champion and a WWE Hall of Famer. He's one of the best talkers with some of the best fire of all time but he's standing here cowering in front of Stephanie because that's what happens to people around her.

Brock Lesnar, Charlotte, Sting, Roman Reigns and now Mick Foley all have nothing to say back to her because she's Stephanie and the most intimidating presence of all time. Oh except for when she's fun Stephanie who dances with kids and is just a regular soccer mom. This has been going on for years now (keep in mind that Stephanie debuted SEVENTEEN YEARS AGO and first became an authority figure in 2000) and if we're lucky she gets one bit of comeuppance a year. Other than that it's all Stephanie browbeating everyone else and if you don't like it, deal with it because she's Stephanie.

Rich Swann/Cedric Alexander vs. Drew Gulak/Lince Dorado

Swann and Alexander get an inset promo talking about how they're here to have fun but they're not underestimating their opponents. This didn't air in the arena and it would have helped quite a bit. Gulak and Dorado get their Cruiserweight Classic videos and again they're better than nothing. We get the big handshake to start for a compliment to the purple ropes, which take forever to set up and take down.

Dorado and Swann trade headscissors to start and nip into a stalemate. Everything breaks down and Dorado moonsaults onto all three as we take an early break. Back with Drew holding Swann in a chinlock before it's back to Dorado for some chops. The hot tag bring in Alexander for some forearms and a running kick to Gulak's head. A Lumbar Check sends Dorado to the floor and Swann sunset flips Gulak for the pin at 8:25.

Rating: C. This was the big popcorn break match of the night and it's still not hard to see why. Again, the wrestling is fine but the whole division is being wedged into a show that is already bloated. Swann and Alexander have some personality but Dorado and Gulak are just warm bodies in the eyes of the fans. It's better than last week but they still need some adjustments to make people care.

Cesaro/Sheamus vs. Nick Cutler/Willis Williams

Cesaro takes Cutler over with a one armed delayed vertical suplex but Sheamus drops to the floor instead of tagging in. For some reason he gets on the apron with his back to the ring so Cesaro can tag him in with a slap. The ten forearms make it even worse for Cutler and it's off to Williams, who is taken down with a hard clothesline. The jobbers actually start working on Cesaro's arm for a few seconds before Sheamus Brogue Kicks both guys. Cesaro pins the unconscious Williams at 3:33.

Rating: D+. This was exactly what it needed to be, though it's still forced and something that should have come months ago without the long feud in the first place. We haven't had a wacky partnership that went somewhere important since Kane and Daniel Bryan so this is as good as anything else they have.

Video on TJ Perkins.

TJ talks about wanting to be here for eighteen years but here's Brian Kendrick to interrupt. Kendrick says it's his title to win because Perkins owes him for his career. A brawl is teased and they'll fight at some point in the future.

Here are Charlotte and Dana Brooke for a chat. Charlotte says last night was another chance for everyone to be disappointed because that's what she does time after time. She's not the huggable Bayley or the internet darling Sasha Banks. Cue Sasha to say that's her title because Charlotte didn't beat her last night. Sasha is owed a one on one match and she wants it right now. Charlotte tells the YESing fans to be quiet so she can tell Sasha that she'll get her rematch...next week. Sasha cleans house and the villains leave.

Rollins is on his way to the ring to interrupt the upcoming Highlight Reel but Foley cuts him off because Seth isn't medically cleared. All Rollins can hear are Stephanie's words coming out of Mick's mouth.

TJ Perkins vs. Tony Nese

Non-title with both guys being TNA castoffs because they're dumb that way. The much stronger Nese throws Perkins around to start and he cartwheels out of TJ's ankle scissors to show off. An early kneebar

attempt doesn't work for TJ as Nese sends him outside for a superkick and a big dive to take us to a break. Back with Perkins grabbing a Black Widow but getting planted with a reverse gutwrench suplex.

The fans chant for Harambe (the gorilla who was shot at the Cincinnati Zoo, which was a recurring trend all night long) and CM Punk as TJ fights back with uppercuts and a jumping neckbreaker out of the corner. A gutbuster looks to set up a tornado DDT but Perkins is draped over the top rope instead. TJ is right back up with the fireman's carry into an enziguri (Fans: "RANDY SAVAGE!") and the kneebar makes Nese tap at 8:50.

Rating: C+. I know the fans don't care but this was entertaining stuff, partially because we have a reason to care about Perkins. Something as simple as being the champion tells us more about him than we know about anyone else and the announcers did a good job of building Nese up as the perfect athlete who could take down the champ. Good little match here, though the fans really didn't care.

Hispanic Heritage Month video on Pedro Morales.

Sasha vs. Charlotte and Perkins vs. Kendrick for the respective titles next week.

Ashton Kutcher and Danny Masterson are going to be in Los Angeles next week to take care of Chris Jericho and Kevin Owens.

It's time for the Highlight Reel. Jericho tells us to be quiet about a dozen times because this is the most anticipated Highlight Reel in WWE history. Before Owens comes out here though, Jericho has a bone to pick with Masterson and Kutchner, who have the nerve to claim that they're better friends. Jericho: "THAT'S IMPOSSIBLE!" That's so unthinkable that they're both about to make the List of Jericho.

It's almost time for Owens to come out but Jericho yells at the cameraman for shooting him from the wrong side, which means HE MADE THE LIST! Rollins is on there too because he got hurt again last night. Owens comes out and praises the Jeritron 5000 but says he's not about to wear a suit for a place like Cincinnati, Ohio. What kind of town can this be when it created Dean Ambrose? Jericho: "HE STILL OWES ME \$17,000!"

Owens moves on to Rollins and says the rib injury is karma after all the people Seth injured over the last year and a half. Cue Rollins but security and Foley pull him back. Instead here are Enzo Amore and Big Cass to interrupt and ask Jericho how they're doing. Jericho says they're just fine but Enzo and Cass ARE ON THE LIST.

After Owens corrects Jericho's spelling, Cass accuses Jericho of being Santa Claus. Jericho: "Maybe I am Santa Claus! Maybe I'll come down there and sit on your lap!" Cass points out that people sit on Santa's lap but Jericho said he was going to punch Cass in the face. A fan poll makes Jericho even angrier but as it turns out, Foley just made a match between these four.

Enzo Amore/Big Cass vs. Chris Jericho/Kevin Owens

Jericho and Enzo start us off but first we need to pause for the scarf removal. An armdrag has Jericho so frustrated that he crawls over for a hug from Owens. Kevin comes in and gets dropped by Cass so it's time to launch another human being over the top rope as a projectile. Sidewalk slams have the Canadians in trouble but Jericho sidesteps a charge to send Cass outside as we take a break.

Back with Enzo pounding on Jericho in the corner and getting two off a high crossbody. Owens offers a quick distraction though and it's time for the villains to take over. Thankfully that means Owens doing Enzo's dance across the apron because he knows how to mock a crowd. Jericho and Owens take turns beating on Enzo with Owens handling the trash talking ("THAT'S THE LEAD SINGER OF FOZZY!").

Enzo blocks a superplex but dives into a dropkick, setting up Owens' backplash for two. Owens to the referee: "I'm the Universal Champion!" Referee: "It was two!" Owens: "But he shouldn't even be out of NXT yet!" Enzo finally gets in a right hand to make the tag off to Cass for the house cleaning. For some reason Jericho decides to slap Cass, earning himself a boot to the face. The two of them head outside and it's Enzo hitting his middle rope DDT for two on Owens. The powerbomb puts Amore away at 16:37.

Rating: C. Owens' trash talking aside, this was just your standard main

event tag. Enzo and Cass are fine for this role and it's already more entertaining than seeing them talk about buying a timeshare in Puerto Rico. They're still making sure to protect Cass and it's way too early to even think about a split so this is about as good as it's going to get for them at the moment.

The show wraps up just after the match ends. Post show, Owens and Jericho kept beating on Enzo until Sami Zayn came out for the save. Posing ensued to close out the night.

Overall Rating: D+. This show suffered had the same problem as so many others: burnout. The first half hour was a good, hard hitting match, followed by an entertaining Tag Team Title match. Then it was Stephanie treating Foley like a dog who tracked mud into her house and a cruiserweight tag match that didn't need to be on the show.

The main event was a nice pick up but they really need something to fire the crowd up in the middle. Maybe a Sami Zayn match instead of putting him on Superstars? At the end of the day, three hours is too much on TV and it's even worse when you're watching it live. The show has good stuff on it but that good stuff is dragged down by so many other things, the biggest of which is just time itself. It wasn't a horrible show but you could tell when the debate came on because the show just gave up.

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