

Main Event – December 29, 2016: The Best Thing That Could Happen to Him

Main Event

Date: December 29, 2016

Location: Allstate Arena, Chicago, Illinois

Commentators: Tom Phillips, Byron Saxton, Austin Aries

We're wrapping up the year with one more dark match show, meaning it's hard to say what to expect here. Now that Jinder Mahal seems to be a regular on Monday Night Raw, we need a new top villain. By top villain, I mean wrestler who hardly ever does anything beyond job to people only slightly higher on the totem pole than him. Let's get to it.

Opening sequence.

Curtis Axel vs. Titus O'Neil

The announcers talk about Axel's recent face turn as he dropkicks Titus to the floor for a long breather. Back in and Titus shoves him down and starts on the leg as Aries suggests a thumb to the eye. Titus kicks at the leg even more and stops a comeback attempt with a single right hand to the jaw. Axel fights up but the leg prevents a PerfectPlex. Instead it's the Clash of the Titus for the pin at 5:28.

Rating: C-. As uninteresting as this was and as much as it makes my head shake that Titus O'Neil of all people is now beating Curtis Axel, this wasn't a half bad match. Titus worked a body part and that played into the finish, which is good for more psychology than Titus has probably had in his whole career.

From Raw.

Tag Team Titles: New Day vs. Cesaro/Sheamus

New Day is challenging with Big E. on the floor. Cesaro gets beaten

down in a hurry with double middle rope elbows and a legdrop for two each. Woods is thrown out to the floor and comes up grabbing his knee as we take a break. Back with Woods diving through the ropes into a tornado DDT to plant Cesaro on the floor.

The hot tag brings Kofi in for the flip dive and a slightly botched counter into the SOS for two on Sheamus. Everything breaks down and Woods' top rope elbow gets two on Sheamus with Cesaro making the save. The Swing goes on but Big E. gets on the apron for a distraction. That earns Kofi a gorilla press down onto the big man and a blind tag sets up the Brogue Kick to retain the titles at 10:11.

Rating: C+. This was the required rematch so Cesaro and Sheamus can move on to someone else. New Day is in the Edge and Christian position of having long since outgrown the tag division so it's time to move on to a new endeavor. Unfortunately I'm not sure what that's going to be but a strong Kofi singles run could be interesting.

Video on Braun Strowman's recent violence.

Also from Raw.

Seth Rollins vs. Braun Strowman

Strowman throws him into the corner to start but Seth gets in a suicide dive on the floor. Back in and the enziguri and springboard knee to the head stagger the monster. A second knee has him even more wobbled but he pulls Seth out of the air on the third attempt. Seth actually drops him with a Blockbuster but the Pedigree is countered with a backdrop over the top. Braun runs him over again...and here's Sami through the crowd to jump Strowman for the DQ at 3:34.

Rating: C. I would have had Strowman go over clean here but I can live with what they did. Rollins shouldn't be squashed but he sold quite a bit for the monster, which is the best thing they could have done without having him get destroyed. Strowman didn't lose though and that helps so much.

Goldberg is back on Monday.

Tony Nese vs. Lince Dorado

Rematch from last week. They flip around to start until Dorado takes him down with an armbar. Back up and Nese stomps him in the corner as Aries talks about taking the title at will when he's allowed back in the ring. A springboard middle rope moonsault misses though and Dorado nails one of his own for two.

Back from a break with Dorado eating a hot shot, followed by a clothesline for two more. La majistral gives Dorado another two but Nese kicks him down and grabs a bodyscissors. Dorado fights up and hits a Tajiri handspring Stunner, followed by a shooting star headbutt (he left it short) for the pin at 11:12.

Rating: C. This was exactly what you would expect it to be and that's not necessarily the best thing in the world. Nese is getting better in the ring and it probably has something to do with being away from Gulak most of the time. They're building up a character for him and that's the best thing that can happen for Nese at the moment.

From Raw to wrap it up.

US Title: Kevin Owens vs. Roman Reigns

Reigns is defending. Owens hides in the corner to start and gets knocked to the floor with a right hand. Back in and Owens starts to slowly hammer away but Reigns clotheslines him down. Cue Jericho for a distraction so Owens can score with a DDT. The backplash gets two and we take an early break.

Back with Owens getting two off the Cannonball and we hit the chinlock. Owens: "ASK HIM!" Reigns fights up and gets in the apron kick, only to get caught with a Backstabber for two. It's too early for the Pop Up Powerbomb though so Reigns grabs the sitout powerbomb for two.

The Superman Punch misses but the second attempt connects for two on Owens. Jericho offers a distraction though and Owens gets in a Codebreaker for two. This brings out Rollins to Pedigree Jericho on the floor but Owens superkicks Seth down. Back in and the spear ends

Owens at 16:21.

Rating: C-. I'm actually starting to get a kick out of WWE trolling the fans so hard. They just had the World Champion get pinned as close to clean as a World Champion is going to get pinned by Reigns again and they did it in Chicago no less. As much as I can't stand the booking, there's something amazing about how much WWE is willing to screw the fans over for their own ambitions.

Post match Owens gets Pedigreed and Jericho gets speared to end the show.

Overall Rating: C. Completely average show this week and that's about all you can expect from Main Event most of the time. I'm really not interested in Dorado and I don't think that's exactly a rare perspective but at least the match was watchable. It's not fair to expect great things from a show like this but it was fine for about forty five minutes.

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