

Monday Night Raw – January 9, 2017: The Night Stephanie Shouted a Lot

Monday Night Raw

Date: January 9, 2017

Location: Smoothie King Center, New Orleans, Louisiana

Commentators: Michael Cole, Byron Saxton, Corey Graves

It's a big night as WWE tries in vain to fight off the College Football National Championship game. Their best bet is appropriately enough a Hail Mary in the form of having Undertaker and Shawn Michaels appear, along with Roman Reigns defending the US Title against Chris Jericho and Kevin Owens in a handicap match. Let's get to it.

Stephanie McMahon is in the back with Mick Foley (who now has even less hair) for his annual performance review. First though, she wants to talk about the rumor that Undertaker will be here tonight. You mean the rumor that you SHOWED A VIDEO FOR LAST WEEK? Seth Rollins comes in and tells Stephanie he's in the Royal Rumble. Before that can go anywhere, Braun Strowman comes in to say he wants Goldberg or Reigns tonight. Rollins punches Strowman in the face and throws a plant at him until security breaks it up. Stephanie goes into screech mode to say she'll handle this.

US Title: Roman Reigns vs. Kevin Owens/Chris Jericho

Reigns is defending. Hang on a second though as Strowman comes out and gets in a fight with Reigns, leading to a 3-1 beatdown. Cue Rollins with a chair for the save, allowing Reigns to grab his own chair to attack as well, so no match for now.

Cue Stephanie to say there's going to be a handicap match later tonight while Rollins faces Strowman.

Seth Rollins vs. Braun Strowman

Braun doesn't waste time and cleans house immediately crushes Seth in the

corner. Rollins can't get anything in as Braun pulls him away from the ropes. A neck snap across the top rope staggers the monster but he knocks Rollins off the apron with ease to send us to a break. Back with Rollins hitting a suicide dive and running knee to the face.

A low superkick gets two and the springboard knee to the face only has a limited effect. Seth knocks him off the top (which freaks Byron out way too much considering it was the second time in the match) and a frog splash gets two. One more trip to the top goes a bit worse though as Rollins crashes into the barricade. Braun is fine with just watching him for the double countout at 11:36.

Rating: C-. It's interesting that they didn't have Braun get the win here as he still doesn't really have a major victory to his name (save for maybe last week over Sami but I'm not sure if that's major). That being said, beating Rollins might be a bit too much for him at this point. At least they had him look good though and that's what matters.

Seth holds Braun off with a chair.

Clip of Shawn's new movie The Resurrection of Gavin Stone.

Bayley is really excited about facing Charlotte at the Royal Rumble and Sasha Banks says she'll have her back. Charlotte comes in to laugh at them and Sasha yells at her, only to get jumped by Nia Jax. Nia cleans house and winds up choking Charlotte before walking away.

We look back at the Gentleman's Duel.

Jack Gallagher vs. Drew Gulak

Gulak takes over quickly with a middle rope clothesline and cranks on a double arm choke. Gallagher comes back with his headstand in the corner, followed by a headbutt and running corner dropkick for the pin at 3:21.

Rating: D+. This is a great example of how important a character is. Gulak is one of the least interesting wrestlers in the division and is going absolutely nowhere. Gallagher is a character unlike most in WWE and he stands out as a result. It also helps that he's one of the only people who could play the character. If you don't think that's important,

picture anyone else playing Undertaker.

Post match Gallagher says he has the rite to give Daivari a thrashing like never before in WWE. Instead though, he'd like to invite him to parlay, as in a sitdown meeting to discuss terms of agreement.

TJ Perkins teaches Shawn Michaels to dab.

Stephanie pesters Foley about where Undertaker is. Apparently Foley's ENTIRE performance review depends on getting Undertaker in the ring in the next hour. There's no real reason for this other than Stephanie decrees it and therefore we're not allowed to question it.

Here's Shawn to talk about about the Rumble. He's enjoying the idea of Royal Rumble season, especially since it's in his hometown, which is where he won the WWE World Title twenty years ago. "And yes, I am that old." Shawn is much more comfortable sitting on the outside when you think about all the people in that match.

Cue the ONE MORE MATCH chant so Shawn says he's going to teach us a lesson in standing up to peer pressure. He's here to talk about his new movie but here are Rusev, Jinder Mahal and Lana to interrupt. Rusev thinks Lana should have been in the movie and says Shawn can put her in via CGI. Shawn accuses Rusev of being a Wookie but Rusev says Lana should have won the Golden Globe. Shawn: "Could you not talk about golden globes? It makes me a bit uncomfortable."

Cue Enzo and Big Cass to say Shawn is the realest guy in the room. Shawn asks Enzo what we have over here. Shawn: "HATERS! HATERS I TELL YOU!" Cass thinks they could be in a movie called Beauty and the Beast or the Pianist. Shawn cringes and Cass explains the title in a joke that both hits and misses at the same time. They finally get to the challenge with Rusev wanting to fight Cass but it's going to be Mahal instead. Shawn thinks he'll stay out here for the match and if you're not down with that, guess what two words he has for you.

Jinder Mahal vs. Big Cass

Joined in progress with Mahal hitting a running knee and a low dropkick

for two. With legs as long as his, that offense makes sense. Cass comes back with his corner splashes but Rusev grabs his foot. That earns him Sweet Chin Music. The East River Crossing (pretty much botched) and the Empire Elbow wrap Mahal up at 3:09.

Rating: D. That botch didn't look good and it might be time for Cass to get another big power finisher. Above all else though, Shawn is a good example of how to use a legend. He came in, promoted his movie (by saying the date over and over in an old school move), was involved in a nothing match and gives a quick endorsement before leaving. In other words, it was effective instead of something like Ric Flair where it's a mess.

Emmalina video.

Neville vs. Lince Dorado

Dorado hits a very quick handspring into a Stunner followed by a running dive to the floor. Back in and Neville hits something like a fireman's carry slam into an armbar. A release F5 sets up a Rings of Saturn of all things to make Dorado tap at 2:59.

Rich Swann comes out for the save but Neville ducks the big kick to the head.

Video on Edge winning the Royal Rumble.

Sasha and Bayley come in to see Stephanie and demand a tag match next week. Stephanie tells Sasha to take the bass out of her voice because she's the only boss in this room. If Bayley keeps yelling, she'll lose her title shot. The tag match is on for tonight.

Luke Gallows vs. Sheamus

Cesaro and Anderson are on commentary to make it a five man booth. They slug it out to start until Sheamus gets in a spinning kick to the face. The slingshot shoulder gets two and they head outside for more slugging out. A big boot knocks Sheamus off the top though and we take a break. Back with Sheamus hitting the ten forearms to the chest followed by the top rope clothesline for two. The Brogue Kick is loaded up but Anderson hits Cesaro with a bottle. The distraction lets Luke get in a flapjack

for two. Sheamus pops up and hits the Brogue for the pin at 10:20.

Rating: D+. These teams just aren't interesting and their matches aren't any good either. The idea of taking four guys who wrestle a similar enough style isn't something that works too often and that's what's going on here. It doesn't help that none of them have shown any personality that's going to bring in any interest but hey, Sheamus and Cesaro had a series of matches and that makes them interesting right?

Reigns says he'll retain.

Here's Foley to request Undertaker come out, making it sound like he's summoning the Candyman (not Brad Armstrong for you old school fans). The lights go out...and here's Stephanie to rip on Foley for being unable to produce the Undertaker. Stephanie talks about all the issues Foley has created, including putting the Cruiserweight division on the line, creating the monster Braun Strowman and above all else: ALLOWING SMACKDOWN TO BEAT RAW IN THE RATINGS.

Before I can elaborate on how stupid that is, Undertaker cuts them off and makes his big appearance. After a very long entrance (duh), Undertaker says he goes where he wants, when he wants and no one (as he gets in Stephanie's face) tells him what to do. He'll be in the Royal Rumble and has dug 29 holes for 29 souls so he can be in the main event of Wrestlemania. If anyone stands in his way, they will REST IN PEACE.

Jericho and Owens are ready to become national heroes because it's time America was represented by two Canadians.

Nia Jax/Charlotte vs. Bayley/Sasha Banks

It's a big standoff to start and we take a break less than a minute in. Back with Banks in control of Charlotte until a shot to the knee puts her right back down. Bayley gets the tag and does her elbow to the back into the sliding clothesline spot but it's off to Nia for the domination. Charlotte comes in for some suplexes before the hot tag brings Sasha back in. That goes nowhere though and Bayley has to come back in, only to be run over by Nia. The big leg is enough to put Bayley away at 8:55.

Rating: D. I'm really not sure what they were going for here but it didn't do much good. Unless Nia is being added to the title match (gee, if only there was a power mad boss who could make it happen), I have no idea what the point of this was. The match wasn't even good and that's not promising going into the pay per view.

Noam Dar offers Alicia a free slap but she kisses him instead. Dar is shaken and Alicia says Cedric was right: he can't handle a real woman.

Here's New Day to address Titus O'Neil wanting to be part of the team. After a break, Titus comes out and suggests being on the team again but first, let's look at a clip of the original NXT with Titus stumbling while trying to carry a keg. They have an offer for Titus: if he can carry a keg around the ring in less than 12.7 seconds (the winning time of the original contest), he wins. Titus runs around but drops the keg before crossing the line. A match is made for after a second break.

Kofi Kingston vs. Titus O'Neil

Kofi runs around to start because Titus isn't smart enough to keep up with him. A chop off goes to Titus and he gets two off a big boot. Kofi's sunset flip gets the same and it's time for some tromboning. That's fine with Titus as he throws Kofi onto the rest of the team and Trouble in Paradise wraps O'Neil up at 3:39.

Rating: D-. WHY IS NEW DAY FEUDING WITH TITUS O'NEIL??? Is this really the best that WWE can find for them? These guys were borderline main eventers just a few months ago and now they're feuding with Titus O'Neil less than a month after losing the belts? It says a lot when you can drag Kofi down but Titus pulled it off. That's impressive.

Video on the UK Tournament.

US Title: Roman Reigns vs. Kevin Owens/Chris Jericho

Reigns is defending and is smart enough to lock Jericho in the shark cage, only to have Owens make a last second save. The champ is thrown against the cage, which falls down off the stage in a quieter than expected crash. Another shove sends Reigns into the steps as we're

waiting on the opening bell. The challengers have to tag here so Owens starts out for the team.

Jericho comes in and grabs the chinlock, only to have Roman, whose arm is banged up, come back with clotheslines. The Superman Punch misses Jericho and a Lionsault gets two. A Pop-Up Codebreaker is countered with back to back Superman Punches but Owens gets in a superkick from the floor. Reigns blocks the apron powerbomb though and scores with the apron dropkick. The Codebreaker slows Roman down though and now Owens hits the powerbomb on the apron. Back in and another Codebreaker gives Jericho the pin and the title at 8:19.

Rating: C-. What does it say that it took two World Champions to get the US Title off of Reigns? Like, couldn't they have done the EXACT SAME THING by having Owens interfere and cost Reigns the title in one of their many matches? Nah, that might imply that Reigns isn't invincible and therefore make things a bit more interesting. It's not like this was some big major screwjob or anything as they just beat Reigns and that was it. I'm glad Jericho won the title though as Reigns certainly didn't need it.

Overall Rating: D+. This show started off fairly strong and then fell off a cliff in the last hour. Above all else, Stephanie was up to her old tricks again and it really hurt the good things going on. Was the whole point of the performance evaluation just to set up the line about Undertaker doing whatever he wanted? That's what we had to sit through all those Stephanie segments for? Other than that, the wrestling wasn't great but I'm getting the Royal Rumble itch and that's a very good sign. Not a great show here, but the title change is a positive step forward. Tone down the Stephanie and the show is much better in a hurry.

Results

Braun Strowman vs. Seth Rollins went to a double countout

Jack Gallagher b. Drew Gulak – Running corner dropkick

Big Cass b. Jinder Mahal – Empire Elbow

Neville b. Lince Dorado – Rings of Saturn

Sheamus b. Luke Gallows – Brogue Kick

Nia Jax/Charlotte b. Bayley/Sasha Banks – Legdrop to Bayley

Kofi Kingston b. Titus O'Neil – Trouble in Paradise

Kevin Owens/Chris Jericho b. Roman Reigns – Codebreaker

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