

Monday Night Raw – January 16, 2017: The Champ Is Acting Like The Champ

Monday Night Raw

Date: January 16, 2017

Location: Verizon Arena, Little Rock, Arkansas

Commentators: Michael Cole, Byron Saxton, Corey Graves

We're less than two weeks away from the Royal Rumble and that means we're getting closer and closer to finding out a lot of things for Wrestlemania season. The big story this week is the first announcement for the Hall of Fame and then probably finding out some more names for the Royal Rumble. Let's get to it.

Martin Luther King Day video.

Opening sequence.

Here's Roman Reigns to some of the loudest booing I've ever heard outside of a major city. Reigns can't complain about getting beaten down when he's outnumbered in a fight. He knows he lost the US Title but now he's off to get the Universal Title at the Royal Rumble. Just in case you needed more proof that the US Title meant nothing on Roman. This brings out Paul Heyman who is almost immediately cut off by the GOLDBERG chants. Heyman gives us a spoiler for the Rumble but here are Kevin Owens and Chris Jericho to interrupt.

Jericho loves the idea of the Royal Rumble because no matter who wins, they'll both wind up at Wrestlemania with both titles. Owens seems to agree but here's Seth Rollins to cut them off. That means more promises of winning before Braun Strowman comes and stares Reigns down.

Strowman doesn't say a word before Lesnar himself comes out. Sami Zayn runs in through the crowd and cleans house, including a Helluva Kick to put Braun outside. Brock throws everyone else down and is

left alone with Sami, meaning it's another German suplex for Zayn. Lesnar tells Braun to bring it on but Strowman drops to the floor, leaving Reigns to Superman Punch Brock. That earns him an F5 and Lesnar stands tall.

Enzo Amore/Big Cass vs. Rusev/Jinder Mahal

Enzo goes after Mahal to start but an elbow to the jaw takes him down. Mahal is sent outside and we take an early break. Back with Mahal dropping a knee on Enzo and Rusev grabbing a bearhug. Enzo slips out and the hot tag brings in Cass to clean house. Everything breaks down and the big boot to Mahal sets up the Bada Boom Shaka Laka for the pin at 8:35.

Rating: D+. Nothing to see here as is so often the case with Enzo and Cass matches. We need to get to the Rusev vs. Cass match, assuming we're still getting it. Enzo being back in the ring really doesn't do much for me and I'd be glad to have him stay outside full time while Cass does the work.

Ariya Daivari vs. Lince Dorado

Jack Gallagher is on commentary. Feeling out process to start with Lince getting in some strikes and the springboard Stunner for two. Dorado completely misses a high crossbody and a wind up lariat (Rainmaker) sets up a cobra clutch to make Lince tap at 2:18.

We look back at Undertaker announcing that he would be in the Royal Rumble.

Video on the UK Title Tournament.

Earlier today, Nia Jax attacked Sasha Banks during a knee injury evaluation.

Tag Team Titles: Cesaro/Sheamus vs. Anderson and Gallows

Cesaro and Sheamus are defending as this feud just keeps going. Anderson starts with Cesaro but Sheamus makes a quick blind tag as his partner hits a tilt-a-whirl backbreaker. The champs start speeding things up until Cesaro misses a charge into the corner so Gallows can drop an elbow for two. It's off to an armbar on Cesaro's shoulder which has been taped up since he returned back in April. A

slingshot shoulder brings Sheamus back in as things pick up all over again.

Everything breaks down with Gallows kicking Sheamus off the apron as we take a break. Back with Cesaro coming in off the hot tag as everything breaks down. The spinning elbow gets two on Anderson and Gallows' boot to the face gets the same. Sheamus comes in and punches the referee by mistake, leaving no count off the Magic Killer. The fans think it's awesome as another referee comes in to count the pin at 13:00.

Rating: B. I liked the match but the story is just doing nothing for me. There's no reason for me to care about either of these teams and that makes for a really hard sit whenever these guys come out to the ring. It's just not interesting as there's no reason for them to be fighting other than "well, we don't really have any other options." I'm sure this sets up a Rumble rematch because that's what we're stuck with for a title feud.

And never mind as it's a Dusty Finish as the champs are disqualified and retain the titles.

We look back at the opening segment. Tonight it's a six man main tag with Reigns/Rollins/Zayn vs. Owens/Jericho/Strowman.

Tribute video to Jimmy Snuka.

Emmalina video.

Sami, Rollins and Reigns talk strategy. Zayn sticks his fist out for the Shield pose and the other two leave. Rollins' eyes were hilarious.

Tony Nese vs. Rich Swann

Non-title and a 205 Live rematch. And no match as Neville comes in through the crowd and attacks Swann.

Post break Neville yells at an interviewer for not having enough respect and promises to beat Swann for the title at the Rumble.

Here's New Day to talk about the Rumble. The royal rumblings say that it's going to be foe vs. foe but Big E. thinks that if one of

them wins the Rumble, they all win and go on to be in the main event of Wrestlemania. Cue Titus O'Neil and even the announcers are saying enough already. Titus thinks he could replace one of them and take their spot in the Rumble. That's a no of course so Titus will just take it instead. Big E. agrees to put his spot on the line if Titus agrees to leave New Day alone for good.

Titus O'Neil vs. Big E.

Joined in progress with Big E. putting on an abdominal stretch. Titus comes back with a Dominator to set up a chinlock followed by his own abdominal stretch. The spanking is enough to tick Big E. off and he runs Titus down with ease. The Warrior Splash sets up the Big Ending for the pin at 4:56.

Rating: F. Now NEVER LET TITUS NEAR THEM AGAIN! Move on to ANYTHING else!

Jim Duggan talks about winning the first Royal Rumble.

Here's Charlotte to discuss the winning strategy that has kept her undefeated on pay per view. By that she means laughing at the idea of Bayley beating her at the Royal Rumble. We see some pictures of Bayley as a kid meeting people like John Cena, Ivory, Rob Van Dam and Bret Hart from years ago.

Charlotte even has some poetry from what looks like middle school while Charlotte was training and getting scholarship offers. We even get a video of Bayley reading her essay on wanting to be a professional wrestler. Charlotte cuts the video and reads it herself until Bayley runs out to chase her off. Bayley calls this unnecessary so Charlotte says she's just like the average fan.

If Charlotte wants to bring up all these stories, Bayley has a story for her. She didn't have a father who could just make a phone call and get her into WWE. What she did have is a father who would spend everything he had to get her a ticket to every show in San Jose because that was all she ever wanted to do. Bayley even has a new poem for Charlotte: Roses are red, violets are blue, at Royal Rumble, I will defeat you.

Another look back at the opening sequence.

Strowman isn't interested in talking strategy with his partners tonight.

Cedric Alexander vs. Brian Kendrick

They start fast with Cedric knocking him outside for a moonsault off the apron, only to get pulled down into a full nelson on the mat. Both guys take elbows to the face but it's Cedric taking over off a springboard clothesline. Kendrick counters what looked like a belly to back suplex into the Captain's hook as Alicia Fox runs out to play cheerleader. Cedric makes the ropes as we see Noam Dar watching from the back. The distraction lets Kendrick get in a baseball slide to the back before telling Fox to beat it toots. Back in and the Captain's Hook is countered into the Lumbar Check for the pin on Brian at 4:42.

Rating: C. Cedric is one of the smoothest in ring performers going today and Kendrick..well he's there too. I'm interested in this idea of the Alicia Fox being crazy story but that might just be because Fox is on my TV more often. Other than that though, this was your usual cruiserweight match, meaning it wasn't the worst match in the world but it didn't do much for me.

Cedric walks off with Fox in the ring.

We look at Nia attacking Banks again.

Nia laughs at the idea of Sasha being the Boss and loved seeing Sasha holding her knee in agony. The hype was over and the Boss was broken.

Fox doesn't want to talk about it.

Kurt Angle is announced for the Hall of Fame. That's LONG, LONG overdue.

Roman Reigns/Sami Zayn/Seth Rollins vs. Kevin Owens/Chris Jericho/Braun Strowman

It's a brawl before the bell and Strowman throws Reigns over the top as we take a break. Back with the match joined in progress with

Jericho coming in and taking a beating from Reigns and Zayn. Owens gets the tag and chinlocks Sami down, followed by an enziguri for two. The backplash hits knees though and the diving tag brings in Reigns to clean house. Rollins and Jericho go at it on the floor, leaving Strowman to choke Reigns down for two.

Back from another break with Owens cutting Seth off so the beating on Reigns can continue. Owens' chinlock is countered into a Samoan drop and the hot tag brings in Rollins. Everything breaks down again and it's Sami and Seth with back to back dives. Rollins' springboard knee to the face gets two on Jericho but Braun shrugs everything off. The trio gangs up on him though and Sami's high crossbody gets two. The Helluva Kick is easily blocked though the powerslam wraps Zayn up at 14:22.

Rating: C+. Nice six man here and a good upgrade over some of the stuff on this show. Strowman getting another big pin is a smart move and it made for a good way to wrap up the night. There was enough action to make the match work and the ending was much better than having a champion get pinned.

Strowman takes Sami up to the announcers' table but Seth comes up with a chair and Reigns adds a spear. The evil Canadians return from whatever hole they fell into and go for the table but Jericho takes a Pedigree on the stage. Owens cleans house with the chair and powerbombs Reigns through the table to end the show.

Overall Rating: C-. I really wasn't feeling this one as it seems that they're running out of ways to push the Royal Rumble over this many weeks. The show could have been much worse but stuff like New Day vs. Titus and the Tag Team Title feud (good match, boring feud) are dragging this show way down. The main event was better with someone exciting like Sami involved but it still wasn't all that great.

Results

Enzo Amore/Big Cass b. Jinder Mahal/Rusev – Bada Boom Shaka Laka to Mahal

Ariya Daivari b. Lince Dorado – Cobra clutch

Anderson and Gallows b. Cesaro/Sheamus via DQ when Sheamus punched the referee

Big E. b. Titus O'Neil – Big Ending

Cedric Alexander b. Brian Kendrick – Lumbar Check

Braun Strowman/Kevin Owens/Chris Jericho b. Sami Zayn/Seth Rollins/Roman Reigns – Powerslam to Zayn

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