

Monday Night Raw – February 13, 2017: Oh No He Didn't

Monday Night Raw

Date: February 13, 2017

Location: T-Mobile Arena, Las Vegas, Nevada

Commentators: Michael Cole, Byron Saxton, Corey Graves

It's a pretty stacked show this week as Bayley gets a shot at Charlotte's Raw Women's Title, Emmalina (allegedly) debuts and Chris Jericho and Kevin Owens have a Festival of Friendship. We're getting closer to Fastlane and it's time to really start setting up the pay per view card. Let's get to it.

This show is dedicated to Chavo Guerrero Sr. It's always nice to see them do something like that, even if it's something minor.

Opening sequence.

Here's a dancing Stephanie (so she's good this week) to welcome us to the show. She's given Mick Foley the night off tonight and hopes he'll have his head on straight next week. Stephanie is in charge this week though but here's Roman Reigns to cut her off. Reigns wants to fight Braun Strowman right here tonight and the fans seem to agree. Stephanie doesn't though and threatens Reigns with the loss of his match against Strowman if he does anything tonight.

Anderson and Gallows of all people interrupt and say they're tired of hearing Stephanie disrespected like this. That means a handicap match tonight with Stephanie doing a bad Teddy Long impression to set it up. Anderson and Gallows get punched in the face to start it off.

Anderson and Gallows vs. Roman Reigns

This is joined in progress after a break with Reigns and Gallows slugging it out. The champs quickly take over and Anderson grabs a chinlock to fill in some time. Reigns fights up and starts throwing bombs, only to

get caught by a cheap shot from the apron. Anderson and Gallows start stomping away and that's a DQ at 3:09.

Rating: D+. As pointless of a match as this was, at least they didn't have the champs do a clean job. It's certainly better than sitting through them facing Sheamus and Cesaro again and a DQ doesn't do them any noteworthy damage. Reigns looked fine here and the Superman Punch for a comeback is always going to work.

Reigns clears the champs off without too much trouble.

Quick video on the history of the List of Jericho.

Kofi Kingston vs. Bo Dallas

Before the match, Kofi asks if Dallas is trying to be a Social Outcast. Big E. on the other hand has a folder labeled Ice Cream Blueprints because New Day is making an ice cream machine. That starts a WE WANT ICE CREAM chant as Kofi dropkicks Dallas to the floor. Dallas gets into the dancing and RIPS UP THE FOLDER. New Day is aghast so Kofi hits a huge flip dive to take him down. Bo gets two off an elevated swinging neckbreaker but gets caught in the SOS for the pin at 2:13.

Dallas is covered in cereal after the match.

Neville is ready for a match tomorrow night when Jack Gallagher comes in. Jack starts to quote some Shakespeare but Neville cuts him off for not being a man. We'll find that out at Fastlane but for now, Jack calls him a pillock.

Video on Jericho helping Owens retain the title over Seth Rollins.

Noam Dar vs. Jack Gallagher

Alicia Fox is in Dar's corner and Graves thinks she's staring at Gallagher. Dar can't keep Jack in a leglock as we get some snappy British spinning for an escape. A hard kick to the knee softens the knee up a bit better but Dar switches over to the arm. Gallagher doesn't care for the switch in psychology so it's the headbutt into the running dropkick for the pin on Noam at 3:15.

Rating: C-. I could watch Gallagher every week and Dar is getting better and better but this didn't have the time to go anywhere. Gallagher winning is the only option and he's looking pretty strong going into what should be a one off title match. Hopefully there's nothing to the Fox/Gallagher stuff as it doesn't sound all that interesting.

Neville comes out for the staredown.

HHH and Samoa Joe arrive.

Here's Emmalina in a rather shiny dress. She talks about the wait and says she's finally here. Now we'll see the makeover from Emmalina to Emma...and that's it. She was on screen for less than a minute.

Bayley is in the same place where Lita won her first Women's Title from Stephanie McMahon, who doesn't think anything of her. Tonight though, Bayley is hitting the jackpot.

Jericho and Owens are getting ready when HHH comes in to take Owens away.

Mark Henry vs. Braun Strowman

They do the big power lockup to start and neither goes anywhere. The referee backs Henry up so Strowman gets in a cheap shot to take over. Strowman drops a leg and grabs a chinlock to keep thing slow. The forearm to the chest is broken up but Henry can't hit the World's Strongest Slam. Braun actually hits a dropkick followed by the powerslam for the pin at 3:53.

Rating: C. You know, I didn't mind this. It's a good example of consider what they were going for here. The idea was to showcase Strowman as the new strongman and while that's been done over and over, they did everything exactly as they should have here and I got the idea exactly. Well done here, which I never would have expected to say.

Post match Reigns comes out for the fight and knocks Strowman down with two Superman Punches. The spear is countered into the powerslam though and Reigns is laid out.

We look at Jericho helping Owens against Reigns.

Cesaro and Sheamus are firing Bayley up when Enzo and Big Cass come in. Trash is talked and it seems that we'll be seeing Cass vs. Cesaro later.

Michael Cole has a sitdown interview with Samoa Joe, who says he's working for HHH, who gave him his first shot at the big time. HHH has given more people opportunities than anyone else and Joe has spent eighteen years mowing everyone down to get here. Joe doesn't want to hear about HHH any more because this interview is about him. He's not some guy like Sami Zayn who is just happy to be here. Cole brings up all the people HHH has given opportunities to and then turned on them (including Shawn Michaels) but Joe says that's not happening because he doesn't need HHH. The Destroyer has been unleashed.

WOW this was great. Joe looked like one of the most natural stars ever here and a lot of that is likely because that's the Samoa Joe character who has been around for a long time. I could go for Samoa Joe vs. Sami Zayn (assuming Zayn isn't facing Jericho again) and as soon as Joe can strike out on his own and not be another HHH project, he'll be in the main event in about five seconds. Finally: BAHAAHAHAHA TNA SCREWS UP AGAIN!!! They had this guy and decided that he needed to put over Sting instead of keeping the World Title. That's freaking hilarious.

Sami Zayn vs. Rusev

Sami backs away from a kick to the head to start but gets taken to the mat. The fans want Lana but have to settle for Sami fighting out of a headlock and chopping away. Sami knocks him outside for the big flip dive but Rusev just blasts him with a kick to the head to take us to a break. Back with Rusev grabbing a bearhug and throwing Sami off a fall away slam. Sami finally avoids a charge in the corner and they head outside, only to have Rusev blast him with a clothesline. As they get back in though, Sami scores with the Helluva Kick, his only major move of the match, for the pin at 11:00.

Rating: C+. I can go for the idea of Sami getting the heck beaten out of him and then coming back for the pin with his finisher. It worked for Randy Savage back in the day and it's going to work for someone like Sami, who is one of the best underdogs ever. If it gets us to Joe vs.

Sami, so be it.

Post match Sami says he never gives up or sells out like Samoa Joe, so here's Joe to jump him. The beating begins and Sami gets choked out.

Teddy Long Hall of Fame video.

Ariya Daivari vs. Akira Tozawa

Brian Kendrick is on commentary and takes credit for the indy movement in WWE. They slug it out to start with Daivari looking freaked out by Tozawa's shouting. A kick to the chest and a backsplash get two but Tozawa misses a charge into the corner. Daivari drops a knee and grabs a sleeper. That goes nowhere so some fast kicks (with fast camera cuts) drop Daivari setting up the snap German suplex to give Tozawa the pin at 3:11.

Rating: C. The shouting got a bit annoying but the idea of Kendrick claiming to be the mentor while Tozawa never acknowledges it is intriguing. I don't know if it's going to go anywhere of note but 205 Live is the land of simple stories being done well so maybe they can pull something off. Anything that involves Kendrick taking a beating is a good thing at least.

Jericho introduces the Festival of Friendship and that means a bunch of showgirls coming out to welcome him to the ring. Jericho is in a shiny hat and jacket but Owens looks downright confused. There's a bunch of covered stuff set up in the ring and Jericho promises a bunch of gifts.

First up: a sculpture of what looks like two people intertwined. Owens: "What is it?" Apparently it cost \$7,000 and while Owens wants to call it stupid, he calls it a steal. Next is a painting of Jericho and Owens' fingers touching ala the Michelangelo painting. Jericho thinks it belongs over Owens' mantle. Owens: "Chris I have two kids and you're not wearing pants!" Jericho: "It's art! You don't need pants!"

Finally, Jericho has a magician named Friendship who does some basic tricks (I'm a sucker for magic so this is the highlight so far). Owens says he has a nine year old son with a magic kit and he can do the same

trick. Jericho agrees on the bad performance so Friendship the Magician JUST MADE THE LIST! After admitting that he found the magician on Craigslist, Jericho says this is just the beginning.

The real present is calling out Goldberg, who is going to get.....we go to and come back from a commercial break.....IT! We get the music but it's Gillberg, who Owens promptly destroys. He's not happy though and wants to know what Jericho is thinking. Jericho says he did this for his best friend and promises that Owens will retain the title at Fastlane.

Owens smiles and says he has a gift for Jericho too. It's a NEW LIST...but Jericho's name is on it! Jericho pulls it out of the box and it's the LIST OF KO! Owens jumps Jericho and destroys him with the apron powerbomb. Jericho is sent into a big sign in the ring, leaving Owens to be showered in boos.

This was EXCELLENT and you could tell the crowd completely bought into the whole thing. The key here is simple: Jericho was doing something nice for his friend and Owens turned on him anyway. It makes Owens out to be a jerk while Jericho was a nice guy who was on the wrong side. That creates sympathy for Jericho and will make his face turn feel much more natural. Of course a lot of the heat goes away if Goldberg takes the title (though Jericho costing Owens would be nice) but Lesnar vs. Goldberg just couldn't get over on its own.

A bloody Jericho is stretchered out.

Cesaro vs. Enzo Amore

Before Cesaro comes out, Enzo accuses him of being a James Bond villain. Cesaro uppercuts the heck out of him to start and there's the gutwrench suplex. Back in and Enzo grabs the middle rope DDT, only to eat Swiss Death for the pin at 2:43.

Black History Month video on Rosa Parks.

Charlotte yells at Sasha Banks for being injured.

Women's Title: Bayley vs. Charlotte

Charlotte is defending and they start slowly here with the champ working on the arm. Bayley does the same with some armdrags but Charlotte slaps her in the face. That just earns her an even harder slap to put Charlotte outside as we take a break. Back with Bayley HULKING UP until Charlotte whipping the back of Bayley's head into the bottom rope.

A jawbreaker gets Bayley out of trouble but the neckbreaker into a choke has her right back in said trouble. The Ric Flair kneedrop sets up a dragon sleeper but Bayley climbs the corner to flip out. Another big boot stomps Bayley though and the pace slows right back down. A moonsault off the barricade makes Bayley's neck even worse as Charlotte is beating the heck out of her.

Back inside and it's time for another comeback with some hard chops and the middle rope elbow for two. Bayley goes one step higher with a top rope elbow for two more, followed by a top rope hurricanrana for the same. The fans are WAY into this and it's not hard to see why. Bayley grabs a modified Figure Four but here's Dana Brooke to rake the eyes for the save. Charlotte grabs the Figure Eight but here's Sasha to hit Dana with the crutch. Charlotte takes a shot of her own to break it up and the Bayley to Belly gives Bayley the title at 18:03.

Rating: B+. The good storytelling continues here as they set up the underdog story so well. You can even forgive the interference as Sasha was only evening things up. I wouldn't have changed the title here but after that Festival of Friendship, the fans needed something to bring them back to life and this is about as good as it's going to get. Of course none of this matters if Charlotte walks out of Wrestlemania (yes Wrestlemania) as champion again but it's a nice moment here. I'm sure I'll have more on this one later but the match was much stronger than I was expecting.

A big celebrating ends the show.

Overall Rating: B. I liked this WAY more than I expected to and the big reason might be the match length. Save for Sami vs. Rusev (which had a commercial), nothing broke ten minutes until the main event. One of Raw's biggest problems is the show feeling like it takes forever, which is

often due to some very long matches that aren't very good in the first place and are clearly there to fill in time. I never felt that way this week and it made for a MUCH more entertaining show.

As odd as it seems, Raw is looking a lot hotter than Smackdown at the moment with Owens looking like a monster heel, Jericho ready for the big (albeit short) face run and the women doing their usual thing. There are still problems but it's looking good at the moment, which I never would have said even a week ago.

Results

Roman Reigns b. Anderson and Gallows via DQ when both attacked Reigns at once

Kofi Kingston b. Bo Dallas – SOS

Jack Gallagher b. Noam Dar – Running corner dropkick

Braun Strowman b. Mark Henry – Powerslam

Sami Zayn b. Rusev – Helluva Kick

Akira Tozawa b. Ariya Daivari – German suplex

Cesaro b. Enzo Amore – Pop up uppercut

Bayley b. Charlotte – Bayley to Belly

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