

Monday Night Raw – May 15, 2017: For Once, This Show Didn't Take A.....Dive

Monday Night Raw

Date: May 15, 2017

Location: Prudential Center, Newark, New Jersey

Commentators: Michael Cole, Booker T., Corey Graves

This could be an interesting show as the roster is freshly back from Europe, meaning there could be some severe jet lag issues. The other major issue at the moment is Braun Strowman, whose recent surgery will put him out until November instead of early July as originally thought. Tonight we might find out who is going to take his place. Let's get to it.

We open with a long recap of Roman Reigns beating down Braun Strowman and putting him on the shelf for a long time.

Opening sequence.

Here's Kurt Angle to open the show. He talks about Strowman's injury and says we need a new name at the top of the card to challenge Brock Lesnar for the Universal Title. Therefore, we're going to have an extreme five way at Extreme Rules for the #1 contendership with Seth Rollins, Finn Balor, Bray Wyatt, Samoa Joe and Roman Reigns facing off for the shot.

This brings out Reigns to say he's the Big Dog, Balor to say he never lost the Universal Title and that he beat Reigns, Joe to say he's shown his worth through his actions, Wyatt to say everyone will fall, cower and run and Rollins to say he wants to fight. Joe obliges him and it's a huge brawl with Balor hitting a big flip dive and leaving everyone laying. This was EXACTLY what they needed to do as they've set up the match with a clear goal and dealt with the next few months without missing a beat. That's as good as it could have been done.

Post break Rollins, Reigns and Balor are all fired up so Angle makes some matches for later tonight: Rollins vs. Wyatt and Reigns vs. Balor.

Jeff Hardy vs. Sheamus

Sheamus is in a shirt for some reason and gets stomped down in the corner. Jeff's dive over the top is easily caught though and Sheamus sends him into the barricade as we go to a break. Back with Sheamus hitting a hard knee to the jaw for two but Jeff dropkicks him out of the air and gets two off a Twisting Stunner. Sheamus kicks Matt off the apron but walks into the Twist of Fate, followed by the Swanton for the pin at 8:36.

Rating: D+. And I still don't care. Really, we've seen these guys have singles matches multiple times now and I have little reason to believe Sheamus and Cesaro are going to win the titles. Then again that means they likely will get them, which would make them the first team to pin the Hardys in the better part of three years.

Sasha Banks vs. Alicia Fox

Banks beat her last week but Fox had her shoulder up at two. Fox kicks her in the face for two to start and hits that great looking northern lights suplex for two. Sasha can't get the Bank Statement and seems to hurt her leg on the way down. Back in and Fox hits the ax kick for the completely clean pin at 3:02.

Rating: D. I'm sorry what now? I mean, I'm a bigger Fox fan than most people but I really don't get this one. Unless they're going with Banks losing a match she should win and turning heel in frustration, I really don't get this. Fox isn't on Banks' level and this really isn't the most logical thing in the world.

Intercontinental Title: Dean Ambrose vs. The Miz

Ambrose is defending and we get some Big Match Intros. Miz bails to the floor though and we take a break. Back with Miz hitting his running clothesline in the corner, followed by the YES Kicks. Dean comes back with a suicide dive, followed by a bulldog for two back inside. Miz

misses a running charge in the corner, followed by the top rope standing elbow to give Dean two more.

The rebound lariat is countered into the Skull Crushing Finale for the very close near fall, giving us a shocked look from Miz. Dean sends him outside again so Miz hides behind Maryse, only to have Dean dive anyway. Maryse offers a distraction but the low blow is blocked, allowing Dean to kick Miz low for the DQ at 12:02. Dean looks stunned at the DQ for some reason.

Rating: C+. That's as obvious of a setup for a No DQ rematch as I've ever seen and that's fine. Miz vs. Ambrose is a good feud and Miz winning his seventh title is a good idea. I liked the match more than I was expecting to and they actually had me for a second on that Skull Crushing Finale.

Balor says Roman's yard is in his universe.

Here's Alexa Bliss for a chat. Bliss rips on Newark a bit before talking about what it's like to be a winner. When you're smarter than everyone else and more dominant than everyone else, winning just comes easily. If you're a failure, say what. Crowd: "WHAT!" Bliss: "My point exactly." If she had entered Miss USA last night, she would have walked off with the crown. Bliss: "So Miss USA: you're welcome."

Cue Bayley to interrupt though she knows Bliss doesn't care what she says. Bayley is invoking her rematch clause at Extreme Rules but Bliss needs to make it clear that it won't be extreme pogo sticking. Bliss talks down as only she can and suggests Bayley leave the championships to the adults. A dropkick puts Bliss on the floor but she snaps Bayley's throat on the ropes and comes up with a kendo stick. One heck of a shot to the back sends Bayley outside and Bliss poses with the title. Heck of a segment from Bliss here, who is still on fire.

Angle is on the phone with Sami Zayn when Miz comes in to complain about what Ambrose did. Kurt gives him a rematch at Extreme Rules but Miz wants a match where the title can change hands on a countout or a DQ. Maryse yells at Angle in French so Angle uses some high school French to say he's a gold freaking medalist. Cue the Drifter to scare Miz and Maryse off. Angle: "Can I help you?" The Drifter leaves.

Neville/TJP vs. Jack Gallagher/Austin Aries

I would have expected this to headline 205 Live. TJP charges into a boot to the face to start and the heels are sent outside for a flip dive. Back with Neville in control on Aries and sending him outside. Aries fights out of a chinlock (fans: "CM PUNK!") and claps his hands around TJP's ears, allowing the tag off to Gallagher. Jack mixes it up a bit his week with some suplexes for two and everything breaks down. Aries' bad knee gets taken out but he's still able to hit a top rope ax handle. It sounds like the fans are chanting for Derek Jeter as TJP hits the Detonation Kick for the pin on Gallagher at 9:42.

Rating: C. If the fans were really chanting for Punk and Jeter, good grief get over yourselves. The northeast is supposed to be this hot bed for indy wrestling and you have WWE giving you a freaking cruiserweight division but LET'S CHANT FOR OTHER SPORTS! That's going to make WWE love the cruiserweights so much and the little guys are going to be SO over with the office. Well done you bunch of pompous twits.

Bayley is banged up when Angle comes in to say the rematch will be a regular match. That's not what Bayley wants though so Angle makes it a kendo stick on a pole match.

Golden Truth fires each other up.

Finn Balor vs. Roman Reigns

Before the match we see the full opening video of Reigns and Strowman again. Reigns starts fast by throwing Balor around the ring, only to get kicked in the face twice in a row. Roman misses a charge and goes shoulder first into the post, followed by a HARD running kick to the face. A double stomp to the back knocks Reigns even sillier as this has been almost one sided so far.

Back with Reigns hitting the apron dropkick to send Balor ribs first into the post. Reigns fires off the clotheslines in the corner and gets two off a sitout powerbomb. The bad shoulder gives out off another powerbomb attempt though and Balor hits a good looking double stomp. The Sling Blade drops Reigns but a Superman Punch is good for two. Balor kicks him

down again, only to have the Coup de Grace broken up. The spear gives Reigns the clean pin at 14:36.

Rating: B. This felt like a main event match and there's nothing wrong with Reigns getting the clean pin. Balor pinned him when it mattered a lot more and he's a made man for a long time as a result. Also none of this really matters when we're coming up on the pay per view anyway. Good match though.

The lights go out and the announcers are surprised when it's Bray Wyatt on screen. Wyatt wants to slay Lesnar. Oh and he'll beat Rollins too.

Seth Rollins says he slayed the King so he can slay the Beast.

Golden Truth comes out for a match but Goldust turns on Truth and beats him down. Goldust: "That's what's up."

Enzo Amore vs. Apollo Crews

Enzo talks about being from New Jersey but Titus O'Neil comes out and does his own version of the signature entrance, complete with a bit of the dance. Cass says hang on a second because the plans have changed.

Big Cass vs. Titus O'Neil

Titus is in a suit and beats Cass down but stops to take the belt off. Enzo offers a distraction though and a big boot ends Titus at 1:15.

Enzo takes a selfie with Crews, who enziguris him post match. That only kind of felt like a heel turn.

Bray Wyatt vs. Seth Rollins

Rollins starts fast and sends Bray outside for a....dive. Bray Rock Bottoms him onto the barricade though and we take a break. Back with Wyatt still in control and grabbing a superplex. Another Rock Bottom is broken up though and....let's have a graphic for the pay per view match IN THE MIDDLE OF THIS MATCH.

Anyway Seth tosses him to the floor for a....dive before Bray hits one of the hardest clotheslines I've ever seen. Another Rock Bottom gives Bray

two but Seth gets in his low superkick for the same. Bray gets tossed outside (third time) for a top rope...oh you get the idea by now but Samoa Joe comes in for the most obvious DQ in recent memory at 14:13.

Rating: C-. As repetitive as the match was, it really took a.....dive as they kept doing the same stuff over and over again. It also doesn't help that I had the DQ written up before the match started but to be fair, that's the logical ending and the right place to have Joe on the show. Good enough match but nothing great.

Bray and Joe beat on Rollins until Wyatt hits Joe with Sister Abigail to end the show.

Overall Rating: B-. This show's one job was to set up Extreme Rules and they did that in spades with three title matches and the five way being announced. After that, everything else was basically a bonus, including a title match, a team splitting up and a pair of heel turns. That's quite the show and we had some good wrestling involved as well. No it wasn't a great show but it did its job and was entertaining. What else can you really want from a show?

Results

Jeff Hardy b. Sheamus – Swanton Bomb

Alicia Fox b. Sasha Banks – Ax kick

Miz b. Dean Ambrose via DQ when Ambrose kicked him low

Neville/TJP b. Jack Gallagher/Austin Aries – Detonation Kick to Gallagher

Roman Reigns b. Finn Balor – Spear

Big Cass b. Titus O'Neil – Big boot

Seth Rollins b. Bray Wyatt via DQ when Samoa Joe interfered

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