

Roman Reigns Should Not Wrestle Tonight

Unless it's for the World Title.

Here's the thing: the ending to last night's show was supposed to feel different. It was supposed to be a change in Roman that makes it feel like he's given up on being a nice guy and is just going to start punching his way through everyone. Therefore, the worst thing he could have to do is face Rusev or Barrett or Del Rio, because it would be the same old match he's had for months now. You need Reigns to look like a killer, not the same guy who has failed for months now. The only way around this is if he faces someone and beats them in about two minutes tops, but I can't imagine that happening.

Oh and the show is in Philadelphia. This could be really, really interesting.

Reviewing the Review: Monday Night Raw – December 7, 2015

Let's get this over with. This past week's Raw was nothing short of a disaster as the show simply isn't getting better the people are leaving in droves at this point. There's no secret that this week's show was one of the weakest in a long time and did very little to make me want to see Sunday's pay per view. Let's get to it.

The show opened with the League of Nations talking about how they were going to take care of Reigns and pals on Sunday. This brought out the Wyatt Family and I was immediately interested. They said they were here for the chaos and a brawl was teased, which could have made things a lot

more interesting with the Wyatts moving up to the main event and possibly turning face, meaning we could drop this ECW reunion idea that has been done a doze times.

But no, because that might be too interesting. No instead we got the ECW guys coming out again (with Rhyno coming in to even things up), only to be joined by Reigns and company. This opened up some new dynamics for where the teams could go and the promos could have been interesting.

But no, instead of letting them talk or build up ANYTHING, the match was joined in progress when we got back with everyone in the match at once. Why bother with building something up when you can just give us everything right now and leave nothing to look forward to later tonight? Dreamed pinned Rowan, Sheamus Brogue Kicked Bubba and Reigns speared Sheamus to win, because SCREW YOU World Champion, you need to lose to Reigns like everyone else.

Much like the rest of this show, this was pretty good wrestling with a big middle finger to the fans at the same time. You're excited about the Wyatts moving up the card again after seeing them get knocked down for the last year and a half? HAHA too bad because you're getting the ECW reunion instead. You want to see Reigns actually deal with some issues? HAHA too bad because he beat the League on his own last week and then his team beats them here. Don't worry though because he'll lose another title shot on Sunday, which is supposed to erase all of Sheamus' losing over the last few weeks and months.

Instead of trying to give the fans something they're interested in, WWE is obsessed with just plowing ahead with their back and forth booking that doesn't get anyone anywhere and that the fans reject more and more every single week. Teasing the Wyatts in the main event scene as faces (an idea the fans LOVED) and then pulling the string on it again is even worse than just leaving it as is. It continues to show that WWE knows what we want to see but would rather go with whatever nonsense they have instead because THAT'S WHAT WE'RE GETTING NO MATTER WHAT.

We're long past the point where WWE needs to keep teasing something. At this point the show and the company are ice cold and desperate for

something to fire it up. Maybe that's the Wyatts in a face run or whatever, but putting them out there and then having them lose to the ECW guys while Sheamus loses AGAIN before retaining AGAIN on Sunday isn't the solution, which WWE still doesn't seem to get. I don't know when something is going to change, but it's going to be a long road to the Royal Rumble is that's when we can finally expect a change.

Stardust and Titus O'Neil did their weekly thing. Again, I've stopped caring about this until it actually goes somewhere.

In another good match that did little to advance anything, Kevin Owens pinned Dolph Ziggler, who then pinned Tyler Breeze on Smackdown. So we have Owens coming off looking good while Ziggler is still a loser but Breeze, the young guy who came in hot, looks like even more of a loser because he has to trade wins with DOLPH ZIGGLER. Dolph has been around forever and has lost to almost everyone but Breeze has to lose a series to him because he has to pay main roster dues or something because toiling in NXT for years doesn't count.

It doesn't help that this is right around the same time that HHH said on a conference call that they don't bring up people from NXT without a plan for them. WHAT WAS THE PLAN FOR BREEZE THEN??? The ONLY thing he's done is continue the Summer Rae story despite there not even being a story there anymore. Is that what they're going to claim the plan was? If so, we might have set a new benchmark for stupidest line/biggest lie the company has told.

Breeze came up from NXT and is already floundering because they didn't have anything for him to do and now he's stuck looking like a loser who loses to the jobber to the stars. Now am I supposed to buy him as a midcard threat? He has no story and a losing record, but I'm supposed to care about him? WWE has made it clear over the years that Ziggler isn't going anywhere long term (they had him beat the Authority and gave him the Sting rub and he was right back where he was two months later) and now they're putting him over Breeze? Why? Who does this help? Certainly not the fans as I'm sure you've figured out already.

Oh and then Dean Ambrose came out and threw a Coke in Owens' face because

Dean is WILD AND CRAZY. I'm sure Owens retains on Sunday though because he needs to get his win back after Ambrose beat him at Survivor Series and we need to make sure no one looks stronger than anyone else.

Donny Deutsch seemed to end the Miz/Neville story by offering Neville a spot on his new sitcom. Well that's better than turning Neville heel at least.

Team BAD beat Team Bella because THIS IS STILL A THING. We're stuck with Charlotte and Paige trying to figure out which one we're supposed to cheer (more on that later) while Sasha, the most over woman in the division because she tore the house down with Bayley time after time is stuck shouting UNITY with Tamina and Naomi. Yes Naomi, who they're STILL not doing anything with other than HAVING FUN MAGGLE because she uses the Rear View.

This was yet another five minute match that had nothing interesting, nothing going anywhere, the Bellas having no idea if they're good or bad, and Sasha being wasted. Charlotte vs. Paige is fine, but the fans want to see Sasha, who could be swapped in for either of the two Divas fighting over the title without missing a beat. Oh but she doesn't have Ric Flair so that's out of the question.

New Day came out and did their comedy thing before doing the champions losing thing. Yeah this time it was to the Lucha Dragons to set up the ladder match on Sunday because there was NO OTHER WAY to do this than have the champions lose. Having the Usos vs. the Dragons in a show stealer with the New Day interfering for a no contest so everyone looked equal was totally off the table of course.

MizTV had Charlotte, Ric Flair and Paige as guests. Charlotte is now doing her entitles better than you character from NXT which is what got her over in the first place. Unfortunately no one has any idea if Paige is going to be the heel in this feud or not, despite her doing the whole Reid Flair promo. As usual, the match will be ok if they're allowed to tear it up but for some reason we're likely going to have the focus on Ric, just as it always is. It's another idea that could go somewhere but since they can't just figure something out, we're still sitting through a

lot of wheel spinning.

Ryback and Rusev's rematch went to a double countout when Lana was run over again. Here's this whole feud in a nutshell: Rusev loves Lana, Lana keeps getting hurt and Ryback is fighting Rusev because the script says he's supposed to. That's the kind of idea that worked in the Muppet Movie, not on a wrestling show that we're supposed to buy as real (or as real as it can be in modern wrestling). This is yet another story that is ice cold and has no one behind it because they've pulled the rug from under Ryback so many times that it's almost impossible to get behind him again.

Jack Swagger beat Stardust in a quick match which was only there to allow the split between Zeb Colter and Alberto as well as to set up the chairs match stipulation on Sunday. I don't think anyone is going to miss Zeb and Alberto as a team but I'm also hoping this doesn't lead to Zeb and Swagger reuniting. Much like Zigler, Swagger is such damaged goods that it would be a waste of Colter's talents when he could build up someone fresh for a change.

Braun Strowman squashed Tommy Dreamer just like you would expect him to. You can forget about the Wyatts vs. the League. That really was just a tease at the start of the show.

Then we get to the part of the show that people remember the most. Roman Reigns came out to challenge Sheamus and the champion followed, only to take forever saying that he wouldn't get in until the weapons were out. By that I mean he talked about EVERY SINGLE ONE OF THEM. They finally started fighting and the whole thing took twenty minutes, capped off by a spear to put Sheamus through a table to end the show.

For once, and I emphasize FOR ONCE, this wasn't on Sheamus and Reigns. Austin and Rock at their best would have had trouble getting this segment over. Either that or they would have said screw it and started doing something entertaining instead. It was long and stupid with Sheamus still looking like a coward while Reigns still doesn't give me a reason to care about him.

The fans were walking out on the segment and I certainly can't blame

them. How was this supposed to make me want to see the match on Sunday? Yeah instead of actually fighting, let's stand around while they TALK! I can't remember the last time I saw an episode end this badly, but the worst part is WWE doesn't seem to understand why it was bad. You had a big match earlier in the show but instead of doing that, they ran with it in the first thirty minutes in a failed attempt to keep the fans away from Monday Night Football. I don't know who thought this main event was a good idea but they need to be fired, because this was horrible.

This was a show that felt a lot more fun live, but looking back on it there are so many major holes in what they were doing. WWE is in desperate need of a new direction and we're not going to get it anytime soon. Instead we're stuck sitting here watching another heel champion run away like a coward while Reigns is STILL waiting on his big moment (which he probably gets at Wrestlemania in a rematch with Lesnar that won't work).

They need to figure this stuff out and give us something to cheer for already. Maybe that's John Cena, but something needs to happen before the end of the year because I'm terrified of how low things could get before then. Raw was bad this week, but not bad in the traditional sense. This was bad in the "why am I wasting my time on this" sense, which is the worst thing they can do.

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Raw 2000 Being Added To The Network

Merry Christmas. It's only six shows so far but this is one of the times we've been waiting for.

Raw Ratings Still Suck

<http://www.wrestlezone.com/news/650007-wwes-ratings-decline-continues-this-weeks-raw-draws-near-record-low-viewership>

In this case, it's really not hard to figure out why. Last night was all about trying to keep the fans watching during the start of Monday Night Football, but why would I keep watching for a brawl, as in not a match, as the big showdown at the end of the show? The Wyatts interrupting the League was really interesting and then the Wyatts were out first at the hands of Tommy Dreamer, thereby ending the Wyatts' interaction with the League for the night.

In other words: potential at the start, then back to the same boring stuff they've done for weeks now.

Monday Night Raw – December 7, 2015: One on the Brake And Two on the Gas

Monday Night Raw

Date: December 7, 2015

Location: North Charleston Coliseum, Charleston, South, Carolina

Commentators: Michael Cole, John Bradshaw Layfield, Byron Saxton

It's the go home show for TLC and the big story continues to be Roman Reigns and company vs. the League of Nations. There's still a lot of the card to be set for Sunday but as usual, you can see most of it from here. The show isn't looking bad and if they put enough violent gimmicks on the card, everything should be fine. Let's get to it.

We open with a recap of Sheamus vs. Reigns and last week's main event. Thankfully Reigns beating them on his own on Smackdown is omitted.

Here's the League, now with their own music. Sheamus says he can't look stupid if he's the World Champion. As for this Sunday, how can he be afraid of defending the title against Reigns if he already beat him in 5:15? The WWE has entered the International Era and Sheamus lists off the four countries represented in the League. You'll notice there are no Americans, because in 2015, America just isn't good enough anymore. Sheamus says they're the best of the best.....and we've got the Wyatts?

The fans immediately chant YES for the Wyatts. Bray says they haven't been introduced because the League of Nations just lives in Bray's world. They're here for the chaos but here are the Dudley Boyz and Tommy Dreamer to interrupt. That was close. They almost had something interesting there before we get ANOTHER ECW reunion. Bray says they're not getting the message that they're outnumbered. Actually they're multiplying because here's Rhyno to even things up. Dang I was hoping for Dudley clones. Before they can get to the ring, here are Reigns, Ambrose and the Usos to make it sixteen people at once.

Dudley Boyz/Tommy Dreamer/Rhyno vs. Roman Reigns/Dean Ambrose/Usos vs. League of Nations vs. Wyatt Family

Elimination tag with one man from each team in the ring at once. Harper is quickly sent to the floor as Del Rio takes down Ambrose. It's off to Jimmy beating on Rusev as D-Von is down in the corner and Harper tags in Bray. There are basically two matches going on at once. D-Von tags in Rhyno for some clotheslines and a suplex to Jimmy.

Strowman comes in to clean house and it's off to Dreamer, wearing some Dusty Rhodes polka dot pants. Braun is knocked to the floor, allowing Rusev to take Dreamer down. The Usos load up a double superplex on Rusev but Strowman makes it a Tower of Doom with Dreamer being taken out in the process. Rowan tags himself in and takes a quick DDT from Dreamer for the elimination as we take a break. Thank goodness they got rid of the more interesting team so quickly.

Back with Del Rio beating up Jey and Dreamer until Tommy grabs a neckbreaker on the now legal Sheamus. Bubba comes in with a Rock Bottom for two on Sheamus but all twelve come in for a huge brawl. We get down to Rhyno vs. Reigns for a showdown but Rusev and Sheamus break it up. Rusev walks into a 3D and the Dudley Boyz set for What's Up, only to have Sheamus Brogue Kick Bubba for the second elimination.

Things settle down to Sheamus vs. Ambrose but Rusev tags himself in before anything can happen. Dean goes off on Rusev with strikes (Saxton: "Ambrose is a different piece of toast), followed by the standing elbow drop for two. Back from another break with Sheamus firing off the ten forearms to Jey's chest until Reigns makes the save.

It's off to Rusev for a bearhug before Barrett misses a charge in the corner, allowing for the hot tag to Reigns. The fans are WAY behind Roman here (it's an old NWA town so faces are popular and heels are hated) as he powerbombs Del Rio and Superman Punches Barrett and Alberto. Everything breaks down with a big series of dives and Del Rio gets Reigns in the armbreaker. Jimmy comes in with a Superfly splash for the save and it's a spear to Sheamus for the pin at 21:36.

Rating: B-. Fun brawl here but the League of Nations is now 0-2 as a four

man team and the already weak looking World Champion got pinned when you have three others who could take the fall. Rusev doesn't even have a match on Sunday and he can't take a pin here? Another good idea (like having the Wyatts out there) with questionable booking (like having them go out first) bringing it back down a bit when it didn't need to.

Post break, Sheamus says that's the closest he's coming to losing the title. He's going to smash Reigns up and he'll give us a preview tonight.

Stardust is raving about Hollywood when Titus O'Neil comes in to say Stardust needs to get some. Well Eden is probably here tonight.....but Titus means some Stardust time, such as reading a good book and having a bottle of wine. Stardust goes on another rant and Titus leaves.

Dolph Ziggler vs. Kevin Owens

Non-Title and Tyler Breeze/Summer are here. Kevin trips him down to start and grabs a front facelock as Ambrose is in the back watching (while eating popcorn and drinking a soda). We hit the chinlock on Dolph until Ziggler counters into a rolling three quarter nelson for two. Ziggler dropkicks him down but gets clobbered in the face with an old Vader style forearm to the face.

They head outside with Ziggler's headbutt not having much effect. The fall away slam into the barricade give Kevin three straight near falls and it's time for some big right hands to the head. A kick to Dolph's face gets two as Dolph keeps pulling himself up. Owens sends him shoulder first into the post for a nine count on the floor. The backsplash gets two more and Dolph falls back to the floor as we take a break.

Back with Owens slapping on a chinlock until Ziggler fights up and avoids a charge to send Owens shoulder first into the post for a change. Kevin is just fine and sends Ziggler out to the floor to try another countout. Dolph starts getting up again though so Owens goes outside, only to take the running DDT on the floor. Back in and Owens throws him with a release German suplex but misses the Cannonball. The Fameasser gets two and they trade superkicks with Ziggler falling on top for another near fall. Owens is right up though and it's a Pop Up Powerbomb for the pin on Ziggler 19:07.

Rating: B-. Another good match here but it felt more long than anything else. Ziggler continues to be entertaining enough but you're not going to get anything more than the same stuff every single time he's out there. I'm really not sure why Breeze needed to be out here as he was just watching instead of actually doing anything. At least we get the TRILOGY match on Sunday because that's all anyone wants to see right?

Post match Ambrose comes out and throws his popcorn and soda in Owens' face.

The Wyatts are ready to crush the ECW guys. Strowman wants to become Dreamer's nightmare later tonight.

Miz comes in to tell Neville that his offer of mentoring was serious on Smackdown. Donny Deutsch (star of a new show on USA) comes in to offer Neville a spot on his show. He gives Neville his card and tells Miz to get back to him in a few years. Miz gives Neville his card but Neville throws it away.

Alicia Fox/Brie Bella vs. Sasha Banks/Naomi

Fox and Banks start things off with Alicia grabbing a tilt-a-whirl backbreaker. It's off to Naomi who takes one as well to send Team Bad out to the floor. Tamina trips Alicia to take over and it's a dropkick from Naomi for two. We hit the chinlock from Naomi, followed by another one from Sasha. Back up and Alicia rolls over for the hot tag to Brie. It's time for the YES Kicks before everything breaks down. Another Tamina distraction sets up the Rear View for the pin on Brie at 5:28.

Rating: D. I'm so sick of these matches. We've seen them do the same stuff every single week for months now and nothing has changed except for the numbers. Naomi is still doing the same "HAVING FUN" offense, Banks is still as good as anyone in the division and Brie still has no idea if she's a face or a heel. You would think they would learn at some point but it hasn't happened in months now.

Post match New Day comes out to give Team Bad their own unicorn horns and everyone dances. Ok then.

The New Day is still in the ring after a break to talk about giving back. They've given a donation to the League of Nations and some baby names to Kim Kardashian and Kanye West for their new son. Then they have to give two different teams a Tag Team Title shot on Sunday in a ladder match. Why do they need ladders? They're not house painters and they're not saving cats from trees. We get a quick New Day Theater with Big E. playing a tree and Kofi playing a kitten. Woods says that New Day is a group of grown men and saves Kofi from the tree, end scene.

Lucha Dragons vs. New Day

Non-title, Woods is on the floor again and the Usos are on commentary. Cara and Kofi get things going with Kofi throwing him out to the floor for a suplex from Big E. Woods lays on the floor next to Cara and plays some trombone as we take a break. Back with Big E. missing a splash into the corner before it's off to Kalisto for some rapid fire kicks and the corkscrew cross body to Kofi.

The comeback is short lived though as Kofi takes him into the corner again, only to have Kalisto come back with a sloppy headscissors. The (not) hot tag brings in Cara to really take over off a standing moonsault to Big E. Kofi is legal though and kicks Cara down, only to have the Usos get in a fight with Woods (Jey: "BEAT HIM LIKE HE STOLE SOMETHING!"). The distraction lets Cara roll Kofi up for the pin at 6:36.

Rating: C. That would be the second time in an hour and a half that a champion has been pinned to set up a title match on Sunday. I beg of you WWE, please find something new. There are other ways to set up something like this and it's getting annoying to see this happen every single time.

The Usos leave with the horns and the trombone. So now they actually did steal something. SOMEONE BEAT THOSE TWO MEN LIKE THEY DESERVE!

After a recap of the opening match, Reigns says he's fine with having a lesson from Sheamus, even though he has no idea what Sheamus could teach him.

We look back at Charlotte faking an injury to beat Becky Lynch last week.

It's time for MizTV with guests Charlotte and Ric Flair. Charlotte takes over the introduction for her father and says Miz has ten minutes of Rolex time. Ric says he's so proud and promises to be in his daughter's corner at TLC this Sunday. That brings Miz to Charlotte's new attitude, which sends her off on a mini rant about Miz being sexist. Miz shakes it off and asks about the match on Sunday, bringing up Paige costing Charlotte her friendship with Becky Lynch. He stays at it by asking about Paige saying Charlotte is only here because of her father.

Ric gets up at that but Charlotte yells about Paige, promising to destroy her on Sunday. This brings out the third guest and Paige really doesn't look too upset. Ric says this is just a ploy so Charlotte goes outside. Paige slaps him in the face and does the strut. Ric: "Get her!" Charlotte charges but Paige runs to end the segment. So...am I supposed to cheer for either of these two or is this another SHADES OF GRAY story that is in no way a method to keep the writers from having to figure out who they want to turn face?

We look at Reigns pinning Sheamus again.

Ryback vs. Rusev

Rematch from last week. Rusev chills on the floor to start and gets back in at nine. Ryback shoves him right back to the floor as Rusev is holding his back from earlier. Tired of waiting, Ryback busts out a corkscrew plancha (seriously). Ryback: "WE'RE HAVING FUN!" A quick backdrop sends Ryback over the top again and Rusev snaps the arm over the top as we take a break.

Back with Rusev still on the arm by bending it around the ropes and sending it into the post. Ryback's comeback includes some shoulders followed by a flying shoulder to really mix it up. A middle rope dropkick (better than Brie Bella's) gets two for Ryback and it's time for a chase around the ring. Ryback runs Lana over by mistake (Lana may have intentionally gotten in his way) and hurts her ankle again, freaking Rusev out. He throws Ryback in the Accolade on the floor and it's a double countout at 10:37.

Rating: C. Ryback was trying with some fresh offense out there (always

appreciated) but he's fallen back through the floor in importance again. That's what happens when you build someone up on a short term basis, have him lose his two big matches and then do nothing with him for weeks. Oddly enough it's the inactivity that hurts worse than the loss to Kalisto in the tournament.

Stardust vs. Jack Swagger

Titus is on commentary and this is joined in progress after a break with Swagger putting on the Patriot Lock. Stardust makes the rope as Del Rio and Colter come out, allowing Stardust to throw the arm into the post. Some choking on the ropes has Swagger in trouble but he comes back with clotheslines and a powerslam. The Patriot Lock makes Stardust tap at 2:40.

Post match Del Rio nails Swagger. Titus yells at Del Rio to watch out for Stardust so Alberto hits Stardust with a chair. Swagger grabs his own chair and knocks Alberto's out of his hands before sending Del Rio running off. Jack asks Zeb what he's thinking but Colter drives off.

This week's Rosebush is about Miz wanting to mentor Neville. Apparently Miz wants Neville to be recast in Dumbo. Speaking of animals, we saw the return of Rhyno this week. This followed Tommy Dreamer's, now with a golden tan. He thought he had baby oil but it was really Becky Lynch's hair dye. This is still such a waste of anything Rose could do.

In the back, Del Rio yells at Colter for causing him to trip and drop the chair. Alberto says he doesn't need Colter and threatens to use the chair on him. Colter claims that Del Rio wouldn't be champion without him and drives off. So they're split now, thank goodness.

Tommy Dreamer vs. Braun Strowman

Braun throws him around to start and drives in some shoulders to the ribs. We hit the nerve hold for a bit before the standing choke puts Dreamer away at 2:46. Total squash at a slow pace.

Here's Reigns for the big showdown with Sheamus. Reigns asks where Sheamus is before talking about climbing the ladder with his Shield

teammates over the years. He's on top of the ladder and calls Sheamus out for a beating again. Cue Sheamus to say that Sunday is going to be a sequel when he beats Reigns down just like he did at Survivor Series. Reigns is ready right now but of course Sheamus doesn't want to do it tonight.

Roman wants to know where Sheamus' potatoes are because all he sees are tater tots. That brings Sheamus charging but he stops in front of the three tables laid against the apron. Sheamus promises to build a castle from all the broken toys on Sunday. Reigns challenges to fight him again tonight but Sheamus knows all Roman wants to do is use the weapons. That's fine with Reigns ("Hold on a second tater tot") who throws out all the goodies, one at a time to drag this out far longer than it needs to be.

Sheamus still won't get in so Reigns keeps talking and it's FINALLY on after nearly ten minutes of talking. Reigns gets the better of it at first and loads up the announcers' table, only to have Sheamus take over and send him into a ladder (which Sheamus has to grab before it falls into the crowd). They fight into the crowd and then up to the entrance where all the tables and ladders are set up.

Sheamus blocks a powerbomb and hits him with a chair to take it back to ringside. Roman is thrown over the announcers' table but comes back with a spear through one of the many tables to end the show. WAY too long here for what they did but points for not having everyone else come out and letting this be about the two of them for a change.

Overall Rating: C-. This was one of the fastest shows I can remember in a long time. The first two hours felt like they took half an hour and the last third wasn't bad. Unfortunately the majority of the show was ok at best with the action being the biggest problem by far. The wrestling was just ok and a lot of the booking made my head hurt. They did a good job of setting up the pay per view but it was far from an entertaining show outside of that. Not the worst or anything, but a totally forgettable show.

Results

Roman Reigns/Dean Ambrose/Usos b. Wyatt Family, Dudley Boyz/Rhyno/Tommy Dreamer and League of Nations last eliminating the League of Nations

Kevin Owens b. Dolph Ziggler – Pop Up Powerbomb

Naomi/Sasha Banks b. Brie Bella/Alicia Fox – Rear View to Bella

Lucha Dragons b. New Day – Rollup to Kingston

Ryback vs. Rusev went to a double countout

Jack Swagger b. Stardust – Patriot Lock

Braun Strowman b. Tommy Dreamer – Standing choke

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Monday Night Raw – December 25, 2000: We Need A Little Christmas

Monday Night Raw

Date: December 25, 2000

Location: McKenzie Arena, Chattanooga, Tennessee

Attendance: 7,223

Commentators: Jim Ross, Jerry Lawler

This is another request due to it being Christmas recently. One night late in WCW's dying days, Raw has a show on Christmas night. If I remember right, Nitro didn't air and I don't think many people noticed. This is a few weeks after Armageddon and the 6 man Cell match so we're rolling towards New Orleans and the Rumble which was very good. Let's get to it.

And no this isn't live of course. It was taped the Saturday before.

Here's Stephanie to open the show. You know, the implants with a McMahon attached. She looks great though. The McMahons are celebrating Christmas at the moment, with Vince volunteering at a soup kitchen in Greenwich and HHH sending Steph here. Even Stephanie is getting into it, making something that reminds her of her mother: a fruitcake. We get a clip from the end of Smackdown, which is Rock and Undertaker arguing over something. Therefore tonight it's Rock vs. Taker.

She brings out Edge and Christian with Angle as well. Angle is in his first reign as world champion while the Canadians are tag champions. Edge wishes Stephanie a Merry Christmas but they're sorry that Foley isn't here due to being fired last week. Christian insults Chattanooga for a bit and talks about Smackdown, which we see a clip from showing Edge pinning Rock to win the tag titles.

Angle does the same but with his own brand of humor. He's given himself a Christmas gift and has flown out his family. Here's an army of people that all look like Kurt. He introduces all of his family and all of their accomplishments. He talks about hitting Foley with a chair so the fans chant for Foley. Stephanie reminds us that he's fired and the fans boo Kurt's family. They sing Walkin In A Winter Wonderland until Jericho FINALLY cuts them off.

He tells Angle to shut up. Jericho liked the singing but instead it should have been the Twelve Days of Christmas. We have six Angles who will never be a laying, two valley girls and Stephanie, who gets all of her usual insults, in a a pear tree. For Christmas, Jericho wants the

world title, and he wants it tonight. Angle yells but Stephanie cuts him off. The title shot is denied but instead it's a six man: Angle/Canadians vs. Jericho/whatever team Chris wants. Jericho says that's nice but he didn't get anything for Stephanie. What do you get for someone who's had everyone? Jericho implies the Dudleys will be his partners.

Kurt gives his family a tour of the arena and runs into K-Kwik (R-Truth) and that's about it.

Hardy Boys vs. Dean Malenko/Chris Benoit

Benoit is IC Champion and Dean is Light Heavyweight Champion. In the back, Matt tells Lita to stay in the back because she'll get hurt. Lita goes anyway. Big brawl to start and Malenko pulls Benoit to the floor. Jeff is like cool man and hits a huge Poetry in Motion to the floor. That looked awesome. Benoit SNAPS off a dragon screw on Jeff's leg to take over. That looked sick. Malenko works on the knee a bit as well but Jeff gets a SWEET spinning leg sweep cradle for two. A double dropkick puts the Radicalz down and it's off to Matt. Everything breaks down and Lita hits Dean low. Top rope legdrop ends this.

Rating: C-. Nothing great here but the knee stuff was great. By that I mean one move but you get the idea. This would lead to Dean getting a date with Lita which wound up in a hotel room and Lita in some very nice lingerie. Anyway, not much to see here but it was nice to get the Hardys away from the Dudleys and Canadians.

Post match Matt gets put in the Texas Cloverleaf and Lita in the Crossface.

Post break Lita is being checked on when Benoit jumps Matt again.

Rock arrives and doesn't care to hear about his match with Taker.

Debra is still Lieutenant Commissioner but it's not fun without Foley anymore. She makes a triple threat Hardcore Title match with Raven, Blackman and Holly.

Vince calls Stephanie on voicemail and likes the match. He says he has to do something real quick at the soup kitchen but Trish's voice is heard

giggling.

We get a clip of Austin getting chokeslammed by Kane and then Austin demanding a match with him, which he gets tonight. Austin says he'll beat Kane up tonight.

Hardcore Title: Hardcore Holly vs. Raven vs. Steve Blackman

Blackman is champion. Raven and Holly get into it before Steve gets there. I'm not sure what you want me to say here as it's your usual one guy gets knocked down, the other two fight, the third makes the save. The challengers fight into the crowd but Blackman beats them both down out there. They go under the stage and into the back where Raven beats up what appears to be some stagehands. They go outside and Raven is thrown down some stairs. Holly finds a random 2x4 and swings at Blackman. He misses though and Blackman hits a German onto the hood of a car to retain.

Rating: D+. As I've said before, once you've seen one of these matches, you've seen them all. It's just basic brawling with weapons that goes nowhere and then they have the ending. They had beaten this so far into the ground but by keeping it down to like three minutes per match, I think it's ok.

Blackman is walking back to the locker room but Raven hits him with a board and steals the title.

The XFL is coming. OH YEAH!

Here's Regal who is European Champion. Little trivia for you: he's one of only two Europeans to hold that title. He blasts Americans for awhile until Kane comes out for his match. Ok then.

Kane vs. Steve Austin

Brawl to start with Austin hammering him into the corner. Regal is on commentary. A clothesline puts Kane down and another puts him on the floor. Austin gets pulled out there and Kane takes over. Regal gets up for some reason and Austin takes him down as well. Austin stomps on both of them as this is a total brawl. Back in the ring a big boot puts Austin

down and they slow down.

A second boot is blocked and Austin goes for the knee. Kane fights back and wraps Austin's leg around the post. Lawler says Kane is the official first entrant in the Rumble. Back in the top rope clothesline gets two. After a suplex gets two it's a bearhug. Austin comes back with the Thesz Press and the elbow. Chokeslam, Stunner and Tombstone are countered until a Stunner hits. Regal pops up on the apron and Kane gets up. Regal finally gets in for the DQ.

Rating: C. This was fine. It was just a brawl that ran about <http://kamagrawiki.org> seven and a half minutes and that's all it really needed to be. The interesting thing is you could easily compare this to a lot of Cena's matches on Raw today. There wasn't anything to it for the most part and there wasn't supposed to be. However Cena gets blasted for it and Austin is one of the most popular stars ever. Go figure.

Regal tries to bring in a chair but Austin clocks both guys with it instead.

Taker says he isn't surprised by having to fight Rock later. He says Rock has the bark but he has the bite. Taker is still face here.

Cue The Kat in a robe. She has a gift with her. She gets in front of the announce table and grabs a mic. The gift is for JR and it's the latest Divas video. As for King, Kat gets on the table and pulls the robe open to reveal some red lingerie. She shows the crowd too. Jerry gets a kiss also.

Stephanie barges in on T&A who says Trish isn't here. She leaves and they imply Trish is with Vince.

Angle calls his parents as his brothers/cousin watch. Well that was pointless.

Too Cool vs. T&A

Grandmaster vs. Test to start. Stephanie comes out to watch, probably because of the jokes T&A made after she left. Sexay hits a middle rope dropkick and it's off to Scotty so he can get beaten up for awhile.

Albert comes in and Scott can't do anything. Baldo (Albert) Bomb gets two as Grandmaster makes the save. Scotty gets in some kicks and a forearm to set up a double tag. Everything breaks down and Scotty sets for the Worm. Test kicks Scotty's head off after it hits. He sets for the ending but Stephanie distracts him, allowing Grandmaster to roll up Test for the win.

Rating: D. Didn't like this one at all. This whole show has felt like it's just a labor to get through and that's not good. To be fair though it's Christmas night so it's not like anyone is watching. Stephanie came in to mess with them, presumably to cost Trish's team, but this went nowhere.

Post break, Albert comes in to talk with Stephanie. He offers his services to Stephanie for whatever she needs.

Chris Jericho/Dudley Boys vs. Kurt Angle/Edge/Christian

Jericho and Christian start things off. The fans want tables and Jericho tries a quick Walls attempt but settles for a slingshot into a rollup for two instead. D-Von and Edge come in and things speed up. Bubba comes in and does his always funny yelling. What's Up to Edge. It's Table Time already and everything breaks down on the outside. Edge hammers on Bubba but it's quickly off to Christian.

The beating goes on for about 20 seconds before it's off to Jericho and Angle. Jericho gets in a fight with Angle's family who is all in the front row. The Dudleys put one of them through a table. The Dudleys and the Canadians fight up the ramp and Jericho hits a missile dropkick for no cover but the Lionsault eats knees. Angle Slam (and a good one too) beats Jericho.

Rating: C. This was going on so fast that it was hard to tell if it was good or bad. It certainly wasn't boring and the big stuff looked pretty good. I liked it for the most part but much like the rest of this show and the show overall, it came and went and that's all there really is to say about it.

The Angle family beats him down but the Dudleys make the save.

Edge and Christian say they'll get the Dudleys for what they did.

Right to Censor vs. APA

It's Buchanan/Godfather this time. Buchanan gives a very southern promo, talking about how evil the Dudleys are. Bradshaw starts with Godfather and the beating begins. Farroq and Buchanan come in and the bald one takes a spinebuster. Bradshaw comes in and runs people over, including a top rope shoulder. Ivory interferes and Jackie runs her over. They get in the ring because Jackie has to get on my nerves at least once a year. Val Venis uses the distraction to run in and DDT Bradshaw. A Buchanan legdrop ends this. The match was nothing.

We get a video of Chyna taking a spike piledriver and injuring her neck. She had an MRI so we get a sitdown interview with her. Short version: I'm hurt, I'm sad, I'm successful outside the ring, I don't like RTC, I'll be back but not against men. Somehow that took six minutes.

Rock is in the back and cuts Kevin Kelly off because they are chanting his name. He gives his version of Rudolph the Red Nosed Reindeer and sings to Undertaker a bit too.

Undertaker vs. The Rock

I've never really seen these two have a good match so maybe this is the exception. Taker pounds him down and knocks Rock to the floor with one punch. Rock gets dropped onto the barricade and the table as JR is running out of room to run. Back in the ring Rock fires off a few rights and the jumping clothesline to take over. Swinging neckbreaker gets no cover but a Russian legsweep gets two.

Taker gets in a big boot and pounds away on the back. They mess up something so Taker hits a side slam for two. DDT by Rock gets two. More back work by Taker and this match isn't breaking the streak these two have. Oh joy: it's a bearhug. Rock fights out and now Taker hits a DDT of his own for two. Chokeslam and Rock Bottom are countered but a chokeslam hits. No cover though because he wants a Last Ride. And here's Rikishi to interfere. Spinebuster to Taker but Rikishi pulls the top rope down and Rock wins by REALLY LAME DQ.

Rating: D-. What a boring match. They walked around, punched each other a lot, and that's about it. The really bad ending didn't help anything at all but hey, Rikishi is a top heel right? They don't really give a reason or a thought as to whether or not it would work, but he was the next guy to feud with Rock I believe. Give me a break.

Rikishi stands tall to end the show.

Overall Rating: F+. OH MAN thank goodness it's over. This was one of the least interesting shows I've seen in longer than I can remember. Nothing happened here, no one cared, no one wanted to be on the show it seemed, and nothing here would have seemed to have mattered. That being said, it's unlikely anyone watched it but if one person did, it beat Nitro that night. Horrible show though.

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Monday Night Raw – November 30, 2015: League Of Trombone

Playing Nations

Monday Night Raw

Date: November 30, 2015

Location: CONSOL Energy Arena, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

Commentators: Michael Cole, John Bradshaw Layfield, Byron Saxton

We're closing in on TLC and things aren't in the best place at the moment. Roman Reigns is challenging Sheamus but also has to deal with Rusev and King Barrett who attacked him last week. That's really all we have right now but a lot of the pay per view card will likely be set up tonight as the show is in less than two weeks. Let's get to it.

We open with confetti falling and here comes New Day to stand on a red carpet in the ring. Big E. knows we're wondering whose birthday it is and even though it's actually Naomi's birthday, this is about a NEW DAY. Instead of a birthday, tonight is a gala, a jubilee if you will. Big E. starts to sweat so Woods gives him a Terrible Towel (the symbol of the Pittsburgh Steelers) to clean up. Today marks a new champion: the shamrock shaking ginger giant Sheamus.

Here's the new champ, in a suit with his hair slicked back this week. Sheamus thanks the New Day for introducing him and then thanks the Authority for giving him this chance. Finally though, Sheamus wants to thank Roman Reigns. If Reigns had only accepted HHH's handshake, he might have this around his waist. Sheamus does a bit of dancing (Kofi: "The hips don't lie baby!") and New Day is amazed at the title changing hands after only 5:15. It's time for more posing with fireworks but here's Reigns to Superman Punch Sheamus and walk off with the title. They're already better than they were last week as this was fun.

Reigns is with Ambrose and the Usos in the back when the Authority comes in. They make him give the title back and Reigns says he's coming for the title at TLC. That's not soon enough for Sheamus though because he wants to defend the title tonight. The catch: there's a 5:15 time limit.

The announcers explain everything we just heard thirty seconds ago. WE'RE NOT THIS DUMB WWE!

Dolph Ziggler vs. Tyler Breeze

Probably time for Breeze to job again so Ziggler can get his win back. Breeze takes over to start and sends Ziggler into the corner for some shoulders to the ribs. We hit a front facelock as the announcers talk about the title match instead of anything in front of them. Ziggler fights up but goes shoulder first into the post as we take a break. Back with Ziggler fighting out of a front facelock and ducking an enziguri.

Breeze counters a hurricanrana into a powerbomb but Dolph slips out, only to nail another enziguri for two. Dolph's superkick is countered into a catapult, followed by a modified backstabber. For some reason this makes Ziggler hold his shoulder again but he's still able to counter the Unprettier into a pinfall reversal sequence for some near falls. Back up and Ziggler nails a quick superkick for the pin at 10:33.

Rating: C. Yep you knew it was coming. How did you know it was coming? You knew because this is what WWE does. Breeze got one over on Ziggler so that means it's time for Ziggler to get one over on Breeze because Breeze might get too popular (despite losing almost all of his other matches) and that must be stopped, meaning we have two guys who are hitting .500 and wonder why neither is over. Such is life around here because this company is stupid.

It's time for MizTV with guests Rusev and the returning Lana. Rusev is here first and says this isn't about the USA. The fans want Lana but Rusev says she's his wife and his alone. Rusev rants about loving her and brings out Lana, who looks exactly like she did about a year ago. Miz asks why this happened after everything they've been through but Lana says the past was forgiven when Rusev proposed. Seeing what else was out there just made their love stronger.

Lana NEVER went all the way with Dolph, drawing a YES YOU DID chant from the fans. Rusev didn't go all the way with Summer either. All he did was break her heart, just like he's going to break his opponents apart. Rusev and Lana kiss but here's Ryback for Rusev's next feud.

Ryback has no business here and no connection to anyone in the ring but Cole and company act like this is totally expected because their script

says it's supposed to happen. Apparently they had a scheduled match, but Cole only threw that in as an aside. Tell us this when Ryback's music hit so we're not trying to figure out what's going on. Anyway Ryback says we fight here so the match is on.

Ryback vs. Rusev

This is joined in progress with Rusev in control. Ryback fights back and hits a missile dropkick of all things. They fight to the floor with Lana getting knocked down, meaning Rusev stays outside for the countout at 1:45.

Rusev blames Ryback for Lana being hurt.

Ambrose has been called into HHH's office so HHH can tell him that if Reigns doesn't win in 5:15 tonight, Ambrose loses his Intercontinental Title shot as well. Reign has to learn that his actions affect his friends as well and what better way to show him?

Here are the Dudley Boyz with some tables leaned up against the ropes and covered in black sheets. The Wyatt Family has beaten them up for the last week, including chokeslamming Bubba through a table last week. So many teams have tried to put the Dudley Boyz down and the Wyatts have come very close but they're still standing and breathing. They pull the sheets off and each one has a Wyatt's name. D-Von reminds us of the three commandments: thou shall not steal, thou shall not kill and thou shall not mess with the Dudley Boyz.

They're ready to fight at anytime so here are the Wyatts so Bray can accept the challenge. He advises them to never invite the devil into your backyard because he might stay. Bubba says it looks like the Wyatts have the advantage but the Dudley Boyz have their own family. Cue Tommy Dreamer of all people and the Wyatts bail.

Wyatt Family vs. Tommy Dreamer/Dudley Boyz

Bray is the odd man out here and it's joined in progress again. D-Von is in early trouble but punches his way out and tags in Dreamer, who walks right into a swinging Boss Man Slam from Harper. Rowan puts on the head

vice but misses a splash, allowing for the cold tag to Bubba (D-Von was too busy clapping to put his hand out). Everything breaks down and the referee throws it out at 3:33.

Rating: D+. Of course it was Dreamer. It's always Tommy Dreamer. When all else fails, there is no one else on the planet that you can bring in for a hardcore match with ECW people involved than Tommy freaking Dreamer. If this is a one off thing or even a two off thing at the pay per view (which it likely is) then fine but this could have been a good introduction for someone new. Instead it's an old name for the Wyatts to beat up while giving the fans a very cheap pop.

It's time for a table but Bray gets knocked off the apron and through one instead, allowing the good guys to escape and preserve the ECW legacy for one more night.

We recap the opening segment.

Goldust vs. Alberto Del Rio

Non-title AGAIN. Before the match, Colter says the fans are too concerned with rats on Mars and Anne Hathaway being pregnant. Goldust punches Del Rio in the face before he can say anything and we start fast. A powerslam and spinebuster get two each on Del Rio but Goldust misses a charge in the corner, setting up the top rope double stomp for the pin at 2:00.

Post match Del Rio puts Goldust in the cross armbreaker until Jack Swagger makes the save.

Becky Lynch thinks she and Charlotte could have a great match, non-title of course. They WOO at each other and Ric is here too.

Usos vs. Lucha Dragons

Winners get the title shot, presumably at TLC. New Day is on commentary here as well. Kalisto takes Jimmy down for two to start before Jey comes in for a double elbow. Big E. starts with his reporter voice as the Dragons hit their monkey flip into a 450 for two. Cara speeds things up again as everything breaks down. Kalisto gets backdropped onto Jey but Jimmy takes him down with a big dive. Cue Cara for his own dive but the

New Day runs in for the no contest at 2:55.

New Day says that means no title match and it's time to dance.

Post break, Stephanie makes it a three way match at TLC, but if the Usos want in, Reigns has to win as well.

Brie Bella vs. Sasha Banks

Another Twitter induced match. Team Bad has a new thing where they put their fists together and shout UNITY in falsetto voices. Brie takes over to start but Sasha drops her in a hurry. Alicia gets sent into a superkick and Brie gets sent into the buckle for two as this is already a step off. A clothesline gets two on Brie and we hit a cross arm choke. Brie fights up for her middle rope dropkick and the YES Kicks. Not that it matters as the Bank Statement is enough to make Brie tap at 4:57.

Rating: D. I really wasn't feeling this one as Sasha seemed like she had to slow things down for the sake of letting Brie keep up with her. That's the problem with the division right now: half the matches get time but half the matches have to be slowed down and cut short because not everyone is on the same level. This didn't work for me though and they need to let Sasha get away from Tamina and Naomi already.

Ambrose and the Usos fire Reigns up. It's going to end in a brawl and we're going to get an eight man tag for the real main event aren't we?

WWE World Title: Sheamus vs. Roman Reigns

Sheamus (now in a Sheamus 5:15 shirt) is defending and this match has a 5:15 time limit with Ambrose and the Usos' title shots on the line. The champ tries to bail to start so Reigns rolls him up for some early near falls. Sheamus takes it to the floor and sends Reigns into the barricade as the clock is ticking. Back in with less than four minutes to go and we're under 4:00.

Reigns fight up and hits a boot to the face as we're under three minutes. Sheamus can't escape up the ramp and a Samoan drop gets two. They head outside again with two minutes left and Reigns is thrown over the announcers' table. Sheamus gets posted but the time is ticking away.

Roman finally gets him back in with a minute to go. The Superman Punch is loaded up but Rusev pulls him to the floor at 4:40.

Rating: D+. Yeah this was obvious. You knew they weren't going to change the title on Raw (because that might make people watch) so let's just do this and then set up the obvious eight man tag later on in the show. Sheamus vs. Reigns is fine and they're doing what they can with it but Sheamus losing again at the pay per view is going to make it even worse.

Barrett, Del Rio and Rusev huddle around Sheamus, who calls the four of them the League of Nations. Cue the Usos and Ambrose to even things up and Sheamus gets punched off the apron.

Charlotte vs. Becky Lynch

Non-title with Paige on commentary and Ric Flair in Charlotte's corner. Becky grabs the wrist to start and takes Charlotte down with a headlock takeover. Charlotte pops up and it's a standoff as Ric struts on the floor. They hit the mat for more headlocking until Charlotte chops her in the stomach. The neckbreaker sets up more chops but Becky kicks her in the chest. Paige gets annoyed at all the questions and threatens to put Byron in a submission on the table right now. Charlotte twists an ankle coming out of the corner but it's all goldbricking, allowing Charlotte to grab a rollup for the pin at 4:40.

Rating: C-. So they might be turning Charlotte heel? That's their big solution? Becky continues to lose, but they're at least offering some shades of gray here to make things a bit more interesting. Hopefully Ric is just a one off appearance here because he doesn't need to be around Charlotte, who is good enough on her own. Just don't have her talk live again.

Becky is stunned and more than a big annoyed.

The eight man tag is announced for the main event.

Post break Becky wants to know what that was but Charlotte calls it strategy. This isn't NXT anymore and everyone needs to step it up. They're still friends though. Charlotte leaves and Paige comes up to

gloat a bit, leaving Becky conflicted.

Adam Rose has a gossip segment called The Rosebush. Rose thinks Rusev wears the bra in his relationship with Lana and suggests that Zigler loves both Summer Rae and Breeze.

Titus O'Neil sings Christmas carols to Stardust and tells him to get in the Christmas spirit before shoving him down. We'll go with a holiday ok then here.

Usos/Dean Ambrose/Roman Reigns vs. League of Nations

The good guys don't get an entrance. We're not quite ready to go yet because here's the New Day to announce they're now part of the League of Nations to make this a 7-4 handicap match. Kofi and Dean get things going and it's Ambrose in early control with left hands in the corner. It's off to Jimmy vs. Woods and the Usos and Reigns start a quick Unicorn Stampede to turn the tables. The big staredown takes us to a break.

Back with Del Rio kicking Jey into the corner and tagging out to Woods. A clothesline gets two and it's off to Rusev for some stomping on the leg. The beating continues with Sheamus for the ten forearms to the chest. Reigns finally tries to make the save but Jey has to save himself with an uppercut to knock Kofi out of the air. The hot tag brings in Jimmy to clean house but Big E. clotheslines him from the apron. Jey is holding his knee on the floor as we take another break.

Back again with Jey having been taken to the back because of his knee. Jimmy is still taking a beating but he finally gets away to make the tag to Reigns as house is cleaned. Everything breaks down though and Reigns hits the apron kick to Kofi and Xavier, only to have Del Rio send him into the barricade. That means it's time for Reigns to get beaten down, including a knee drop from Sheamus for two.

Big E. puts Reigns in an abdominal stretch for some rhythmic slapping to the ribs. Reigns gets run over again and it's off to Del Rio for a chinlock to keep this slow. We see Jey on the floor, because when Cole meant he was taken out he meant he was down. Close enough I guess.

Reigns finally gets up and makes the hot tag to Ambrose to take everyone out. Dean dives off the top to take out New Day and Barrett before a suicide dive does the same to Sheamus. The Superman Punch drops Del Rio and Reigns adds a clothesline to Barrett but seemed to be holding his knee. Back in and a Brogue Kick puts Ambrose away at 25:10.

Rating: B-. This was a good brawl to end the show and make the League of Nations seem like a threat for a change. I'm not sure why New Day needed to be in there but anytime those three are on my TV I'm happier than I was otherwise. Sheamus getting the pin is a good idea, but you would think an Uso would have been a better option. Good, long match though and a much better option than just Rusev vs. Reigns from last week.

Post match Reigns comes in for the save (thankfully his leg seems fine) but gets beaten down to end the show.

Overall Rating: C. The major difference here is simple: there was a point to almost everything. Last week felt like they were just throwing out random stuff to fill in time and that's not how Raw is supposed to go. This week felt like they were building up to something instead of just wasting time until the next big show came. There are still a lot of problems with the show but it helps to have a point to stuff. Reigns vs. Sheamus is looking better, but you can see the screwjob from here.

The rest of the show was hit or miss at best, but there was enough good on here to make it work. The key thing here is it was better than last week, which really isn't a hard bar to get past. They've done a good job of setting up TLC as you can see most of the card from here and the League of Nations is a good idea but the show is still hitting its head on a low ceiling because these stories don't have a lot of room to go anywhere.

Results

Dolph Ziggler b. Tyler Breeze – Superkick

Ryback b. Rusev via countout

Dudley Boyz/Tommy Dreamer vs. Wyatt Family went to a double DQ when all

six brawled

Alberto Del Rio b. Goldust – Top rope double stomp

Usos vs. Lucha Dragons went to a no contest when New Day interfered

Sasha Banks b. Brie Bella – Bank Statement

Roman Reigns b. Sheamus via DQ when Rusev interfered

Charlotte b. Becky Lynch – Rollup

League of Nations/New Day b. Usos/Roman Reigns/Dean Ambrose – Brogue Kick to Ambrose

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Reviewing the Review – Monday Night Raw: November 23, 2015

It's been a bit since I've done one of these for Raw but the show has been so pitiful lately that I figured it was time to take another look at it. The show's ratings are pathetic and it should be interesting to look at how screwy the show has been to see why they're in such a horrible

place (even though they're making bank with the sponsors etc.). We're fresh off Survivor Series, meaning Sheamus just cashed in Money in the Bank because of reasons. Let's get to it.

The show starts and it immediately goes off a cliff. Here's the problem: Sheamus is Seth Rollins with pale skin and an annoying accent. The Authority came down to gloat, the new champion came out to say I TOLD YOU SO, the hero challenger came to the ring and issued a challenge, which was eventually accepted for the hardcore based gimmick pay per view.

In other words, it's the exact same thing that Rollins did when he set up his match with Randy Orton at Extreme Rules 2015. That's bad storytelling all around because you could call out every single thing that was going to happen in the opening twenty minutes of this show from the second that Sheamus kicked Reigns in the face the night before.

That's where Raw is having its biggest issues right now: it's so predictable. They have been using this same format for so many years and you can just swap in the characters you want. Why should I care that Sheamus is now going to be HHH and Stephanie's lapdog instead of Rollins? Now we get to see Sheamus go out and work really hard in a match so he can get the Authority's praises and go see them like a four year old that wants his dad's approval. You could see the Authority talking down to everyone again with Stephanie ripping Reigns' balls off because that's all she does these days.

Of course there will be no repercussions because the Authority is on a higher plane than everyone else so they can't be touched. HHH might do a match at Wrestlemania and put someone over (Unless they're Brock Lesnar because then the fans needed to see HHH get his precious win back. Or if they're Sting and the fans weren't absolutely certain who won the Monday Night Wars, which the match was about because Stephanie said so.) but it's happening once a year because HHH is too busy doing wacky fun stuff like dancing to make the crowd cheer or bequeathing the Pedigree to Rollins so Seth can get a rub.

The Authority taking one loss every few months doesn't change anything about them. It makes them look like they're treating a top star like a

charity case. If Rollins or Reigns beat them at Wrestlemania, it would change absolutely nothing because HHH would go into war mode for a big rematch that no one would care about because the Authority will be right back to normal with their charity of the month and doing nice things for the crowd because they're faces one week and serious businessmen the next week. As long as those two stay over though, Raw has accomplished its main goal. Until that changes, Raw isn't getting better.

As for the actual story of the night, Rusev came down and attacked Reigns to set up the main event. Yeah after all that, we get a match that has no real drama and will only end in a DQ or Reigns getting a pin. There's also nothing on the line and the new champion isn't in action. Therefore, there's no reason to watch. Reigns is part of the problem here but it's much more that it's a predictable story. The fans have learned that this kind of story isn't going anywhere until at least after TLC because we're going to have the Authority interfere and let Sheamus keep the title, setting up the Rumble. Why watch until then at the earliest?

The Dudley Boyz beat the Wyatts via DQ in a quick match. This seems to set up a feud, which makes me shake my head even more. If you were moving the Wyatts into a feud with the Dudleyz, do a Survivor Series match the night before with the Dudleyz, Bray and Strowman getting counted out or disqualified, leaving you to do the same finish that you did with Harper taking the final fall. It sets up the feud and protects Bray while still giving us the Undertaker moment. Everyone wins, but as usual we got the lamer idea because that's how WWE works.

Sasha Banks pinned Becky Lynch with a handful of trunks (which Cole was too busy schilling stuff to notice). After that WAY too long opener and all the Undertaker videos, this got four minutes. "Yeah we want you to revolutionize the division. Here's four minutes with no mic time or a character for either of you. Go rock it!"

Then the New Day came out and made fun of country music for about ten minutes. This was supposed to include an open challenge but New Day canceled it when the Lucha Dragons tried to accept. The Usos came out as well and it seemed to be setting up a three way match (possibly with a ladder and probably the Ascension) at TLC, but there was nothing tonight.

In other words, more time being wasted on something that doesn't really go anywhere.

However, there's one more major thing here: Kofi said that he hated country music and it wasn't even his character talking because he REALLY hated country music. How do you even respond to that? I understand the kayfabe is dead, but this is running out there and holding up a big sign that says "HEY! YOU DO KNOW THIS IS ALL FAKE RIGHT??? LIKE, KOFI KINGSTON IS TOTALLY A NICE GUY AND YOU DON'T NEED TO GET ANNOYED AT US OVER HIM!"

This screamed of trying to make it seem like Kofi was a jerk instead of just having him play one and letting us get immersed in it. The idea has worked for years but now we have to tinker with it for some reason because the fans are too smart. Yeah there are smarter fans, but there are also a lot of fans who either aren't smartened up (they're called kids) or a bunch of fans that like to be swept up in the whole idea (they're called the majority). Stop trying to reinvent the wheel.

Neville pinned Mark Henry in a quick match. Henry showed him respect after the match and that was that. This might be the start of a Henry retirement angle but as of now it seems like another match that didn't mean much. I like that actually as it's nice to just have a match for a change instead of having an angle and a story involved in every single thing that happens.

The Prime Time Players and Goldust beat the Ascension and Stardust. It was short and it was meaningless, but in this case it was boring. Not everything can work.

Del Rio and Colter did their weekly thing and no one cares. Like seriously, no one cares. It's the most boring thing on the show every week and I have no idea where it's supposed to go. Colter is awesome on the mic but he's got NOTHING to work with here. Oh and then Swagger came down and went after Del Rio again. This brings up another problem for WWE: they give someone a gimmick and that's what they're stuck with for good. This feud could have gone to anyone that they make into a patriot but instead we're getting Swagger, who will lose in the end because that's what Swagger does.

Charlotte and Paige had a much better rematch than the mess they had the previous night. They actually acted like they wanted to hurt each other instead of having a lame wrestling match, which made for a much better story. The ending helped as well with a double countout to likely set up a big brawl at TLC. It makes you wonder what they were thinking at the first pay per view match, but it was probably them letting them calm down after the whole Reid Flair fiasco.

Ryback beat up Heath Slater in another filler segment. Not a match of course, but a segment.

Ambrose/Ziggler beat Owens/Breeze in ANOTHER midcard tag match that barely went anywhere. This was to help set up Owens vs. Ambrose for the title, so of course Breeze had to take yet another pin. Breeze is another great example of a guy that has been crippled coming out of the gate because he's a fresh name for the bigger stars to beat and since they only know a few ways to build up a challenger (beat the champ or beat the same guy over and over), this is what we're stuck with.

Then Reigns beat Rusev via DQ in a long, dull main event with King Barrett interfering. Did this mean that Reigns was fighting more adversity? Of course not as he cleaned out Sheamus, Barrett and Rusev AFTER they beat him down. That's how the show ends: with Reigns looking like he's about to deal with even more midcard goons who aren't going to beat him before he gets to fight for the title, where I'm sure he'll get ripped off again before he wins the Rumble and likely fights Lesnar and wins the title at Wrestlemania XXXII.

In other words, we're going another few months before Reigns finally gets there. The problem is we've been doing that same story for over a year now and the fans are on the verge of giving up on him. There's a large group of fans that want to see Reigns, but so many of them are just fed up with having him lose and then deal with some midcard feud before going after the title again and then starting another midcard feud when he gets screwed over. They need to do something and do it soon because this stuff is really old.

Overall Raw was a total mess. In addition to the completely predictable

opening and main event developments, we have the huge gaping holes due to all the injuries. Since this is WWE, we certainly can't give the other Divas match more time or bring in some people from NXT for a showcase match or an angle that changes things up a bit. No instead we're getting Heath Slater and New Day making fun of country music because it makes Vince laugh.

The big idea here is that the show is stale. It's the same formula and the same ideas that we've seen forever but there's no indication that they're going to switch it up. We're at the point where Raw opening with a match is considered shaking things up. How am I supposed to get excited for a show when I have to wait twenty minutes to get to the first match because HHH needs to say "I told you so" and Stephanie needs to screech at whoever she's adding to her collection this year? How is that good television?

Apparently a lot of people don't think it is either and the ratings are showing it. Another bad show this week and something they need to fix in a hurry before it gets even worse. It's something they could fix easily too, which makes the shows that much more frustrating. Just stop doing the same stuff over and over and the show will feel better, which is half the battle already.

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Raw Ratings SUCK And I'm Not A Bit Surprised

<http://411mania.com/wrestling/wwe-raw-rating-tanks-to-new-low/>

This is a combination of more than one thing. First and foremost, the NFL is killing WWE. I don't think that's a bit secret at this point.

Second, the fans seem tired of the same matches over and over. Last night's main event was Rusev vs. Reigns. That was a cool showdown in the battle royal last year but now, who in the world thinks Rusev is going to beat him? It's a boring match that is just set up as part of a much longer story. In other words, don't bother watching now because it's going to be at least January before something interesting happens.

Third, the fans have gotten so used to having no one to cheer for that seeing ANOTHER heel champion is burning them out. Reigns held the title for five minutes. Unless you count Brock, who was still officially a heel, we haven't had a face champion since Summerslam 2014. That's getting into TNA territory. At some point, you have to give the people something to celebrate or they're going to give up.

Fourth, the injuries are taking a big toll. All those people being gone leaves a BIG chunk of the show needing to be filled in and it's really hurting things. Without Cena, Orton and Rollins (not to mention the part timers), there's a lot of time to be filled. Last night we had the New Day doing a (funny) segment that went nowhere and Ryback beating up Heath Slater in another "country music is stupid" segment. Couple that with a nothing Mark Henry vs. Neville match and some midcard tag matches and there was nothing interesting to watch.

Finally, Sheamus is the World Champion. Now Sheamus is a cool

guy and capable of doing some good stuff in the ring (see the Big Show matches which gave Big Show his best performances in years), but coming into the title win, he had won one singles match since September. I know WWE disagrees, but fans remember that. They see a guy who stole the title and is likely holding it for a long time. So we have a loser fighting a choker for the title while the Authority sits back and laughs. How is that supposed to be entertaining?

At the end of the day, WWE needs to freshen things up a bit. Aside from major changes like the show running long etc., they need something fresh. I don't mean giving the Authority new toys to play with. I mean a new idea. The Divas closing the show last week drew the best ratings in weeks. Now the show shouldn't be about the Divas, but the key thing is that it felt fresh. It wasn't another tag match or another two upper midcard guys fighting on Monday night Maggle.

Freshen things up, get rid of Sheamus, stop having champions lose and BUILD UP SOMETHING FOR NEXT WEEK! That still drives me nuts. Why in the world can they never have a match built up for the following week unless it's a tournament? "Next week, Dean Ambrose gets his shot at the Intercontinental Title! Ambrose beat Owens at Survivor Series and now he wants the gold! Tune in next Monday!" Maybe that can open the show instead of Stephanie strutting down to the ring and then yelling at someone for fifteen minutes. I don't know about you, but nothing gets me fired up more than TALKING!

But yeah, these numbers aren't surprising given how little effort they're putting in right now.

Monday Night Raw – November 23, 2015: The Real Injury Problem

Monday Night Raw

Date: November 23, 2015

Location: Bridgestone Arena, Nashville, Tennessee

Commentators: Michael Cole, John Bradshaw Layfield, Byron Saxton

The end of the year is almost upon us and we're in another Sheamus era. It seems that they're heading towards Roman Reigns playing Daniel Bryan this year because that's totally the same thing. There isn't much else coming out of Survivor Series but we could be in for a few very long months. Let's get to it.

We open with a recap of the World Title scene from last night.

Here's the Authority to open things up with Stephanie strutting down the ramp. Stephanie talks about opportunity striking very rarely and HHH brings up Reigns being stupid with his decision two weeks ago. Here's someone who seized opportunity when he had the chance: the new WWE World Champion Sheamus. The fans still say Sheamus looks stupid but there's nothing that is ruining his moment.

Last night he kicked Roman off his mountain because just as he promised, he was one Brogue Kick away. Sheamus holds up the title and asks who looks stupid now. Cue Reigns to say he wants his rematch and the fans chant YES. Stephanie is of course right there to make fun of the fans because she needs their balls for her collection.

There's no rematch tonight as Stephanie shouts at Roman to get out of her ring. Roman asks if HHH is hiding behind his wife so we get another staredown. HHH says no rematch tonight and leaves. Cue the returning Rusev to superkick Reigns down, followed by a Brogue Kick from Sheamus. Oh yeah he's the new Bryan. Well at least in WWE's minds. Everyone leaves and HHH makes Sheamus vs. Reigns in a TLC match at the pay per view.

Stephanie adds Rusev vs. Reigns tonight.

Recap of Undertaker and Kane squashing the Wyatts last night.

Dudley Boyz vs. Luke Harper/Bray Wyatt

Harper chops Bubba in the corner to start as the Wyatts are looking more aggressive tonight. Bubba kicks Harper in the face and it's off to D-Von for the reverse 3D. Bray saves his buddy from the regular version and we take an early break. Back with Bray chinlocking D-Von before switching things up with a nerve hold. D-Von fights up and makes the hot tag as everything breaks down. In the melee, Harper's discus lariat puts Bubba away at 7:53.

Rating: D+. Barely enough to rate here because of the big commercial break right in the middle. It's good to see the Wyatts win again, but does anyone believe that they're going to do anything after this? They're the biggest chokers in the company and it's getting harder and harder to buy them as contenders to anything. On the other hand, it's cool to see the Dudleys out there putting people over like they should be doing.

Post match Rowan and Strowman come in to continue the beatdown.

Video on Undertaker's career, the same from last night.

Sasha Banks vs. Becky Lynch

This starts after a commercial, the fourth in forty five minutes. Sasha takes over to start and chokes Becky on the ropes as we hear about the Irish dominance of WWE at the moment. Tamina gets in a cheap shot to give Sasha two and we hit the bow and arrow. Back up and Becky grabs a t-bone followed by the Disarm-Her but Tamina's distraction lets Naomi pull her under the ropes. A quick rollup with trunks gives Sasha the pin at 4:08.

Rating: D+. This is every problem the Divas have had in the last year: no characters, no personalities, no reason to care and no time for the match. The team thing is still annoying and it's one of the same ideas that the heels have used for the better part of ever in this company. These two can have matches but only Nikki Bella is allowed to have a personality around here.

Cole says Sasha might be in the running for #1 contender but Paige cuts him off and shows a clip of Charlotte's arm being under the rope in the Figure Eight last night. Charlotte is just a dirty cheater like her old man and Paige is going to prove it tonight.

Here's the New Day for a country music jamboree to celebrate their first anniversary as a team and to issue an open challenge. They come out on pink stick unicorns with Big E. wearing a cowboy hat. This is already funny by definition but JBL singing the Rawhide theme hurts it a bit. Big E.: "YIPPIE KAY AY MOTHER....." Kingston: "Shut your mouth!"

They can't bring themselves to say that they're in the capital of country music so they make fun of the genres tropes of losing your girlfriend, your truck breaking down and your dog running away. Big E. goes on a rant about tractor songs and says that's enough country music for a lifetime. Kofi, with a braided horn on his head, sums it up by saying this is the truth and it's not even coming from his character: country music SUCKS.

The open challenge is on and we've got some challengers in the form of the Lucha Dragons. Actually wait as the New Day goes to leave but get cut off by the Usos. Woods: "BAD JIMMY! BAD JEY!" Big E: "SIT! STAY!" The open challenge was just a figure of speech according to Kofi but Cara says let's make it a triple threat. New Day doesn't like this spotlight stealing and says no title match because the challenge is canceled. The Dragons and the Usos attack anyway and the champions are cleared out.

Charlotte is ready to defend her title against Paige in a rematch tonight.

Mark Henry vs. Neville

Henry throws him into the corner to start and Mark gets annoyed at Neville for fighting back. A BIG throw sends Neville outside and Henry looks conflicted. Back in and Neville escapes the World's Strongest Slam before kicking Henry in the head. For some reason we cut to Miz in the back before the Red Arrow pins Henry at 2:22, even though he looked like he kicked out at two.

Henry shakes his hand post match and tells Neville he's going to be good.

Stardust is raving about Cesaro and Goldust when Titus O'Neil comes in. They talk about science and Titus barks at him. That's your random segment of the week.

Stardust/Ascension vs. Goldust/Prime Time Players

Byron on Stardust and the Ascension: "They look like they had a big gulp of evil." The Dusts start things off but it's off to Konnor before any contact, just like last night. Viktor comes in before any contact as well so Goldust armdrags him down. Darren comes in to stay on the arm before Titus suplexes him onto Viktor as normal.

A belly to belly gets two for Darren and it's off to Stardust who eats a discus forearm. Viktor comes in off a blind tag to take over and I don't remember the last time a crowd was this silent. Stardust charges into a boot in the corner and the hot tag brings in Titus. Everything breaks down with Goldust clotheslining his brother to the floor, leaving Titus to hit the Clash on Konnor for the pin at 6:30.

Rating: D. The action wasn't that bad but there was nothing to care about here and the crowd made that clear. It picked up a bit at the end but there's only so much I can get out of watching Darren get beaten up for a few minutes. It doesn't help that neither regular team is going anywhere and Goldust vs. Stardust wasn't any good.

The winners dance after the match.

Here are Zeb Colter and Alberto Del Rio for the state of the MexAmerica union. MexAmerica was supposed to be a perfect nation but the early growing pains have been turned into fuel for all the haters on social media. Del Rio talks about everyone wanting to see something great but not being entertained enough. Therefore, the borders of MexAmerica are closed forever.

Cue Jack Swagger because he hasn't lost to anyone recently enough. How many people are there that could stand up for America or just call Colter and Del Rio out for being stupid to get a rub? No instead here's good old Jack Swagger to get built up and then lose the big match AGAIN because we haven't done that recently enough. Swagger says Colter used to stand for

something but now he's just complaining all the time. Jack comes to the ring but Del Rio holds up the title and backs off. Swagger does WE THE PEOPLE as they leave.

Divas Title: Charlotte vs. Paige

Charlotte is defending after beating Paige last night. After some big match intros they fight over a lockup, already showing more intensity than they had last night. They slap each other rather hard before Charlotte throws her face first onto the mat. A Fujiwara armbar sends Paige to the ropes and she yells at the fans to blow off some steam. Some knees to the chest get two for the champ and she puts on the figure four neck lock for those flipping slams.

Paige pulls her out of the corner for a crash and puts on a chinlock. That goes as far as a chinlock is going to go so Paige puts on her own figure four neck lock. A low superkick gets two and a suplex into the ropes gets the same. Paige gets tired of the submissions and hits Charlotte in the face a few times for two. After a leg lock from Paige, both of them score with kicks to the face as we take a break.

Back with the match turning more into a brawl until Paige kicks her down and nips back up. Charlotte puts on a rear naked choke of all things before spearing Paige out to the floor. I'm kind of digging this submission battle. At least it's better than last night. Paige throws her into the barricade but it's still a double countout at 15:02.

Rating: B-. WAY better than last night as there was some actual intensity and a much better story with Paige trying to do the submissions to match Charlotte because she wanted to prove she was better. It's amazing what you can do when you actually have personality and character instead of interchangeable people like most of the roster. This was WWE's way of saying "yeah we know last night sucked."

Paige sends her into the steps and puts on the PT0 on the table.

We recap how the main event was set up.

Here's Heath Slater with a guitar to show us how real country music goes.

He can't even get a note off before Ryback interrupts. The guitar to the back has no effect and there's the Shell Shock. I'm hoping Ryback at least mentions pinning the new World Champion last night.

Dean Ambrose/Dolph Ziggler vs. Kevin Owens/Tyler Breeze

Ziggler and Ambrose start things off with Tyler grabbing a wristlock. It's quickly off to Owens vs. Ambrose but Kevin tags right back out. A quick kick to the face puts Dolph down and the heels take over. The double teaming has Dolph in trouble until he comes back with a dropkick to set up the diving tag. Dean's suicide dive drops Breeze but he walks into a superkick from Owens. Not that it matters as Dirty Deeds puts Breeze away at 5:30. Owens stood by and watched the pin.

Rating: C. This was fine though I have no idea what it accomplished. In theory Owens vs. Ambrose is set up off last night so they could have found a way to do this without having Breeze lose. Like, Ziggler could have lost instead again, but I guess they need to make sure Tyler doesn't get too strong or whatever.

Earlier today, JBL and El Torito argues over whether to eat Tex or Mex food. Mark Henry was brought in to decide, leading to a dream sequence where Torito did JBL's entrance and it turns into a Hardee's commercial.

We look at the end of last night's show.

Rusev vs. Roman Reigns

Sheamus is in Rusev's corner. Cole says Rusev wrestles Reigns to the ground to start and probably gets yelled at as a result. Reigns pops him in the jaw and gets two off a running neckbreaker. Back up and Rusev starts kicking Reigns in the face, only to eat a big boot to send him outside. A whip sends Rusev into the barricade and we take our last break.

Back with Rusev holding a chinlock and throwing Reigns outside for a shot from Sheamus. The champ throws him back inside and Rusev starts setting up for the Accolade. That lasts all of ten seconds before it's off to a cravate instead. Sheamus trips Reigns again and finally gets ejected. The

Samoan drop puts Rusev down but Reigns can't follow up.

The clotheslines in the corner stagger Rusev but he comes back with a spinwheel kick. A top rope headbutt gets two on Roman and Rusev loads up the Accolade. Reigns doesn't even bother letting it go on and comes back with a Superman Punch for two. Rusev bails to the floor before the spear can launch and superkicks Reigns to stop a charge.

Roman gets rammed into the announcers' table a few times but comes back with the knees to the face inside, followed by a Superman Punch to knock Rusev off the apron. A countout doesn't sound good for Reigns so he goes out to get Rusev, only to have King Barrett jump him for the DQ at 16:16.

Rating: C+. Good brawl and I like the ending with Reigns now having to fight the entire trio instead of just one at a time. It's a good alliance and makes all three of them look better as a unit. Unfortunately it stills feels like it should be over the Intercontinental Title but they're making do with what they can due to all of the injuries.

Barrett gets a chair but Reigns fights off Rusev, Barrett and the invading Sheamus to end the show.

Overall Rating: D. You can really see where all the injuries are starting to mount up. The problem here isn't the lack of star power but the lack of an ability to cover three hours. Rollins may have been failing near the top, but he was taking up A LOT of TV time which has to be filled. Cena, Orton and Cesaro aren't there to do it either and it's really starting to show. The stuff like Neville vs. Henry and the Ryback segment were acceptable but nothing that's going to make me want to keep watching. They need to stir things up a bit and making fun of country music because Vince finds it funny isn't going to solve that.

Results

Luke Harper/Bray Wyatt b. Dudley Boyz – Discus lariat to Bubba

Sasha Banks b. Becky Lynch – Rollup with a handful of trunks

Neville b. Mark Henry – Red Arrow

Goldust/Prime Time Players b. Stardust/Ascension – Clash of the Titus to Konnor

Paige vs. Charlotte went to a double countout

Dolph Ziggler/Dean Ambrose b. Tyler Breeze/Kevin Owens – Dirty Deeds to Breeze

Roman Reigns b. Rusev via DQ when King Barrett interfered

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