

Monday Night Raw – April 29, 2013: Best Raw In A LONG Time

Monday Night Raw

Date: April 29, 2013

Location: Nationwide Arena, Columbus, Ohio

Commentators: Michael Cole, John Bradshaw Layfield, Jerry Lawler

We're back stateside now and the big story is that Cena has an injured Achilles. Based on the fact that he kept wrestling while in Europe, odds are the injury isn't that bad. Other than that we're likely about to get more of the Extreme Rules card filled in now. It's interesting that other than the cage match, I don't think any of the matches have any gimmick attached unless you count a triple threat as EXTREME. Let's get to it.

Ricardo Rodriguez vs. Zeb Colter vs. Big E. Langston

The winner of this gets to pick the stipulation for the triple threat at Extreme Rules. Colter immediately heads to the apron to leave Langston vs. Ricardo. I don't think you have to tag here but it's not entirely clear. Langston of course runs over Ricardo like he's not even there and toys with him in the corner for a bit. Ricardo jumps over a charging Big E. in the corner and fires off some shots of his own. Colter comes in to pound away as well but Langston is mainly just annoyed.

Ricardo goes after Colter and the fans chant USA. Langston takes Ricardo's head off with a clothesline but Zeb shoves him away like an idiot. Colter gets stared down and claims a knee injury, allowing Ricardo to hit Big E. in the back with the bucket. This has no effect whatsoever, much like a shot to the head. Langston suplexes Ricardo down as Swagger, Del Rio and Zigler all run in. All three and Langston fall to the floor and Colter tries a quick cover on Ricardo. AJ makes the save and Ricardo rolls up Colter for the pin at 5:00. Alberto gets to pick the stipulations at Extreme Rules.

Rating: D+. How do you rate something like this? The whole point was to give us a mess and have Langston not win at the end. Either way, I don't

think any stipulation is going to make that much of a deal given how much they've devalued all three guys in the past few weeks. I can't say this was bad because it wasn't supposed to be anything more than this. At least Langston didn't get pinned.

We talk about Cena's injury for a bit. He's here tonight.

Today is World Wish Day and we see Cena granting another Make-A-Wish on the Today Show. Love him or hate him, this is always cool to see.

Cena comes out with the kids for World Wish Day. That's awesome.

Cody Rhodes vs. Randy Orton

Rhodes gets the jobber treatment by just being at ringside when Orton comes out. Orton shoves Cody around to start and throws him over the top, only to have Cody skin the cat. Randy is fine with that and dropkicks Cody down twice for two. Cody finally gets in a shot and stomps away in the corner as Cole continues to list off stats about everyone. All of the announcers have been doing it for the entire match. Orton comes back with a suplex for two and the fans want the RKO, only to have Cody dropkick Orton to the floor instead. Randy clotheslines Rhodes down on the floor and heads back inside as we take a break.

Back with Orton ramming Cody into the post on the floor before getting kicked off the apron by the Disaster Kick. That gets a few near falls back inside before Cody just goes nuts on Orton and stomps away. Off to a chinlock on Orton before Cody uppercuts him down for no cover. Back up and Cody drops an elbow on the back of the head for two, only to go up again and get crotched down. Orton superplexes him down for two and loads up the RKO, only to be countered into the Cross Rhodes for two. Cody loads up the Disaster Kick again but jumps into the RKO for the pin at 16:08.

Rating: C+. I wanted to hate this match but the near fall off Cross Rhodes helped it a lot. The problem at the end of the day is that Cody has been crushed so far over the last 18 months that it's impossible to take him as a serious threat to anyone anymore. This got better after some time but it was more long than good.

Post match Orton says he's more focused than ever and catches a sneaky Cody in another RKO for good measure.

The Bellas plug the E! show and brag about how good they look.

We get a look at the Divas show.

Naomi vs. Brie Bella

Naomi does all of her jumping and flipping to start before knocking Brie to the floor. The Bellas switch and Nikki rolls up Naomi for the pin at 1:15.

Oh wait Cameron complains to the referee and gets the decision switched to a DQ. The Funkadactyls get beaten up post match.

Here's the Shield without even getting to hear the beginning of their entrance. They talk about beating everyone from Ryback to Rock to Sheamus to Cena and now Undertaker. We get some clips of all the attacks and Ambrose starts talking about their match with Cena/Ryback tonight, only to be cut off by 3MB. They say they're going to rock Shield's party tonight and the fight is on. The Band is of course beaten up and here's HELL NO for the save. Shield runs from the two of them so the champs beat up 3MB.

Cena is getting his ankle taped when Ryback comes in. Ryback talks some trash but Cena says he's hurt and not injured. Ryback says he can't take any chances tonight.

Back and the announcers talk about a Dominos pizza tracker and say the King's pizza will be here in 40 minutes.

Dolph Ziggler vs. Kofi Kingston

Non-title of course. Kofi takes him down to start and hits a hard kick to the head followed by a spinning springboard splash for two. Ziggler comes back with a headlock to slow things down but Kofi hits a jumping back elbow to put the world champ down. Kofi heads to the apron for some kind of springboard, only to be dropkicked off the apron as we take a break. Back with Dolph holding a reverse chinlock followed by a clothesline in

the corner to put Kingston down again.

After a neckbreaker from Dolph, Kofi moves out of the way of a splash in the corner to put both guys down. Kofi fights out of the corner and hits his elbows to the face and the Boom Drop, only to have Dolph duck Trouble in Paradise and DDT Kofi down for two. The SOS gets two for Kingston and there's Trouble in Paradise, but AJ puts Dolph's foot on the ropes. Langston tries to revive Ziggler but Kofi takes them both out with a dive.

Back in and the top rope cross body gets two on Dolph, drawing AJ in for a distraction. Ziggler gets two off a rollup as does Kofi, but Dolph's dropkick is caught in a slingshot into the corner. A springboard spinning splash misses Ziggler and the Zig Zag is good for the pin on Kofi at 12:18.

Rating: B. Good match here from these two as is their custom. They've fought each other so many times that their chemistry has had a great chance to grow, making for some great matches. The interference didn't help Ziggler any, but at least he won with a clean pin off his finisher for a change.

Post match Langston hits two Big Endings on Kofi.

AJ and Kaitlyn have a staredown in the back. Kaitlyn gets a present and has a secret admirer.

Video on HHH vs. Lesnar.

Ryback comes in to see Vickie and Brad because Cena is out of the handicap match tonight. Vickie offers to make it a six man tag with HELL NO but Ryback declines.

King's pizza is delivered to fans by mistake.

Jack Swagger vs. Zack Ryder

Ryder shows us a clip from earlier tonight with Colter losing to Ricardo. Swagger runs over Ryder to start and puts on a fast armbar. A powerslam gets two for Jack and there's a DDT on the leg. Two Vader Bombs crush

Zack's ribs as Swagger can't pick a body part to work on. A third is countered by Zack raising his feet up and there's a backdrop to put Swagger on the floor. Ryder hits a baseball slide to take Jack down again but back inside it's the gutwrench powerbomb and the Patriot Lock for the submission at 3:06.

Rating: C+. It's nice to see a guy who works as hard as Ryder get to show off a bit. I'm still annoyed at WWE for what they did to him last year but at least he's still got a job. The match was a glorified squash at first but Ryder made it entertaining enough. Swagger's character is rapidly dying but at least his in ring work is picking WAY up.

Post match Colter hits a right hand on Ryder.

During the break Ryback left the building.

Here's Mark Henry who says he's going to prove how strong he is. He has a big rope with him and there's a red line in the ring. Apparently it's a tug of war against Tensai. Henry wins with ease so now he's going to do the same thing with Brodus Clay. Cole: "If you drop your elbow below your knee it's a foul." Jerry: "WHY DO YOU KNOW THAT?" Henry wins with ease but here's Sheamus with a challenge. They start the tug of war and Sheamus actually moves him a bit but Henry easily takes over. Sheamus lets go and Henry goes down, followed by a Brogue Kick to lay Henry out.

We look at the Make-A-Wish stuff from earlier.

HELL NO is in a handicap match with the Shield but Vickie tells Brad she needs him to do one more thing.

Post match Brad Maddox comes in to see Cena ("Hey Braden Walker") but John says he's in the main event as HELL NO's partner.

Antonio Cesaro vs. Alberto Del Rio

As the match starts we hear, I kid you not, yodeling trivia. Cesaro suplexes him down but gets caught with a running kick to the arm in the corner. Alberto goes after the arm and hooks an armbar. Cesaro comes back with some forearms to the back of the head, only to walk into a hurricanrana. Alberto sends him into the corner and hits the forearms to

the back and the Backstabber has Cesaro in trouble. The armbreaker is loaded up but Cesaro rolls to the floor and we take a break.

Back with Cesaro holding Del Rio in a chinlock before getting two off the gutwrench suplex. The running European uppercut gets the same in the corner and it's back to the chinlock. A suplex puts Alberto down again but Alberto fires off some clotheslines to come back. Del Rio goes up but dives into another uppercut. Cesaro charges into the post though, allowing Alberto to hit the low superkick for a close two. The armbreaker is countered into a rollup which is countered into the armbreaker for the tap out at 13:27.

Rating: B-. Another good match in a series of them for the three guys in the world title match tonight. Alberto continues to be solid in the ring although the crowd is only kind of into him. They were chanting OLE for him tonight though which is as good as anything else to get the fans into his match so maybe there's hope for him.

Post match Alberto announces that it's a ladder match for the title at the PPV.

It's time for a dance off between Fandango and Great Khali. Khali says he's a better ballroom dancer than Chris Jericho and gets to show off with Natalya. After what I think was a tango, Fandango says Jericho was clumsy on Dancing with the Stars. His chick is named Summer Rae and their dance is far better. Piped in noise give the win to Khali and Natalya. Fandango lays out Khali post contest.

Shield vs. HELL NO/John Cena

Shield comes in to fight before the bell but gets sent to the floor with ease. It's Kane vs. Ambrose to officially start things off with Dean getting beaten down. Off to Reigns who gets thrown around by the big fried freak, only to be taken into the Shield corner and double teamed into trouble. Kane kicks Rollins down and it's off to Cena but his bad ankle acts up in a hurry, meaning it's off to Bryan instead.

Daniel fires off some kicks before it's off to Ambrose vs. Kane again. Bryan comes back in and fires off a bunch of kicks to Ambrose before

hooking a surfboard. Kane comes in for a dropkick but the top rope clothesline misses. Off to Rollins for a double suplex and now it's Kane in trouble for a change as we take a break.

Back with Ambrose working over Bryan before it's off to Rollins for a kick to the chest and a kind of abdominal stretch on the mat. A hard kick to the back of Bryan's head gets two as Cena plays cheerleader. Reigns hits a Samoan Drop for two but Bryan sends him to the floor, allowing for a hot tag to Kane. Rollins is sent to the floor and there's the top rope clothesline to Ambrose.

Kane sends Dean to the floor before loading up the announce table. A Rollins distraction lets Ambrose hit a quick DDT to take Kane down but he makes it back in at nine. Ambrose goes nuts on him with knees to the head but gets caught in a quick chokeslam. The hot tag brings in Cena who initiates his finishing sequence on Reigns, only to catch Rollins in the AA. The ankle gives out though and Reigns spears down Cena for the pin at 15:24.

Rating: B. ANOTHER very good match tonight and ANOTHER major rub for Shield. That's John Cena that they just pinned clean in the middle of the ring. Not Ryback, not Sheamus, but Cena. If you didn't believe in the Shield before, I'm not sure what it's going to take for you to do so now. Good main event here and a HUGE moment for Shield.

Ryback is still here. I'm shocked too.

Overall Rating: A. I liked this show WAY better than I have most recently. The main thing here was that they were trying some new ideas. Between the triple threat, the mystery admirer and the tug of war, stories were advanced tonight without using the same old worn out ideas. Couple that with some good wrestling and build for a PPV and I'm rather pleased with the show.

On the other hand, there's the ridiculous commentary dragging things down. It was like a trivia night from Cole with factoids ranging from tug of war fouls to yodeling trivia. Is that supposed to interest me? Am I supposed to want to buy Extreme Rules more because I hear that stuff? It's more of a distraction than anything else and was REALLY annoying

tonight. Other than that though, very good show.

Results

Ricardo Rodriguez b. Zeb Colter and Big E. Langston – Rollup to Colter

Randy Orton b. Cody Rhodes – RKO

Naomi b. Brie Bella via DQ when Nikki Bella interfered

Dolph Ziggler b. Kofi Kingston – Zig Zag

Jack Swagger b. Zack Ryder – Gutwrench powerbomb

Alberto Del Rio b. Antonio Cesaro – Cross Armbreaker

Shield b. John Cena/HELL NO – Spear to Cena

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The Cena Make-A-Wish Stuff Tonight

Love him or hate him, that's just awesome. Period.

Go ahead and disagree. Please. Try to.

On This Day: April 26, 1993 – Monday Night Raw 1993: With A Marriage Proposal

Monday Night Raw

Date: April 26, 1993

Location: Manhattan Center, New York City, New York

Attendance: 1,000

Commentators: Vince McMahon, Bobby Heenan, Randy Savage

We're a few weeks after Wrestlemania IX now so Hulk Hogan is world champion. Not that he's here on the show or anything but he's world champion. Other than that though there isn't much going on around here. The main event tonight is heel Luger vs. face Crush which would be completely flipped in just a few months. Let's get to it.

We open with Bobby Heenan now on commentary instead of Rob Bartlett. Bartlett tried but he just wasn't the right fit on Raw.

Damien Demento vs. Mr. Perfect

Savage goes on a mini-rant about Bartlett before we get down to a lot of circling each other by the guys in the ring. Perfect starts off with a dropkick to send Damien out to the floor as things continue to go slowly. Back inside and Demento throws him out to the floor, knocking out the cameraman in a cool visual. Perfect gets back inside and is thrown to the floor for the second time in thirty seconds. Back in and they slug it out in the corner with Damien taking over again. Perfect comes back with some chops and the Hennig Neck Snap to set up the PerfectPlex for the pin.

Rating: C-. Not much here but Perfect was still solid in the ring. Demento was one of those guys who was around for awhile and then was never mentioned again after he left. At this point we were already

hearing about Mr. Perfect vs. Shawn Michaels, which wouldn't happen until Summerslam. I'm not sure why they were building up a match for that long but it turned out being a bit underwhelming after the buildup they had to meet.

We get a poem from a kid called There's No Hope With Dope. You can figure this one out for yourself. Undertaker pops up to say don't do drugs, which is strange to see when you watch it.

Heenan tells us about a guy who is going to propose to his girlfriend tonight. Bobby says he's going to make sure she says no.

Lex Luger vs. Crush

Luger is still the Narcissist and Crush is the Hawaiian in purple and orange. They lock up to start with Luger being shoved into the corner. Crush wins a test of strength but Luger kicks him in the ribs to take over. The Hawaiian comes back with kicks of his own and a gorilla press slam to send Luger to the floor. After a break we come back to see Crush suplexing Luger down for two.

Luger comes back with a knee to the back which sends Crush out to the floor. Crush has his back rammed into the post and we head back inside for some stomping on the ribs. Off to a bearhug which Crush is too busy to sell. A powerslam puts Crush down for two but Crush comes back with a pair of suplexes to take over. Crush puts on his head vice and gets Luger down to the mat, but Doink pops up in the rafters to distract the Hawaiian. There's another Doink on the other side of the rafters as Crush is apparently seeing "double vision". Luger blasts Crush with the forearm to send him to the floor for the countout.

Rating: D+. Slow match with a bad finish. The Doink feud did nothing for Crush as he was one of the most popular guys in the company but he was feuding with a clown. Luger would get the Superman push soon after this as the new Hogan once Hogan was crushed by Yokozuna at King of the Ring.

Nothing to see here for the most part.

King of the Ring qualifying matches begin soon.

Mr. Hughes vs. Jason Knight

Hughes is a big black man who was a bodyguard character for like 12 years straight. Knight is kind of almost sort of famous as Justin Credible's lackey from ECW. Heenan messes with a computer for the whole match as Hughes destroys Knight and wins with a Boss Man Slam. Nothing to see here at all.

We look at the couple in the proposal again.

Here's Shawn with something to say. We hear about his title defense next week against Hacksaw Jim Duggan and Shawn insults the crowd a lot. The fans think Shawn is gay. Heenan: "If they only knew." Shawn goes on a rant about the fans as Vince wants to know how Shawn can ignore the fans. We get a clip from Wrestlemania with Shawn attacking Perfect so Shawn says that Grover lives in a trashcan on Sesame Street. Perfect will not stand with the misrepresentation of his Grouch Oscar so he chases Shawn off.

We look at Tatanka beating up Bam Bam Bigelow to save Sensational Sherri. Later in the night Bigelow jumped Tatanka. He also cut Tatanka's hair. Ok then.

Von Krus vs. Typhoon

You might remember Von Krus as Big Vito in WCW. Krus pounds away to start and has some good energy to him. A backdrop puts him down almost immediately and we get a phone call from Jim Duggan to talk about the title match next week. Krus pulls on Typhoon's face but Typhoon comes back with a quick splash in the corner and the regular splash for the

pin. Krus dominated this until the end.

Heenan pesters the couple but the chick accepts the proposal anyway.

Overall Rating: D. Yeah not much here but that's how the early editions of Raw goes for you more often than not. The lack of Yokozuna, Bret and Hogan hurt the show a lot here as the main feature was Shawn and the Intercontinental Title, which doesn't really do much for the fans as Shawn wasn't a big deal yet.

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On This Day: April 23, 2007 – Monday Night Raw 2007: Cena's Birthday Present

Monday Night Raw

Date: April 23, 2007

Location: Earl's Court, London, England

Attendance: 12,000

Commentators: Jim Ross, Jerry Lawler

This is back in England and it's being reviewed for one reason: this is the Cena vs. Michaels hour long match which is more or less the match where Cena proved that he was in fact not human. Other than iron man matches, I think this would be

the longest match in modern company history unless I'm overlooking it and it's nearly 5am so I probably am. Let's get to it.

Here's Shane to open things up. He says that he's here for a fight but not with Lashley due to what happened last week. We get a video of the Milan Miracle, where a "fan" named Santino Marella came in for an IC Title match with Umaga and won the title with a little help from Lashley. This is fallout from Mania where Lashley beat Umaga and caused Vince to lose his hair.

Shane talks about how a fan is going to get a chance to face a dragon, just like St. George since it's St. George's Day. It'll be a No DQ match. The manager of Chelsea Football Club is here but it won't be him. Shane brings out Robbie Brookside who was a pretty big deal, teaming with Regal for years and competing in Japan as well. He had a cup of coffee on Nitro as well I think. Regal has said that without Brookside there wouldn't be a William Regal, a Finlay, a Wade Barrett or a Sheamus so take that for what it's worth.

Robbie Brookside vs. Shane McMahon

This is No DQ. Shane takes him down with a headlock and works on the back with elbows. Total squash so far as Shane knocks Brookside down in the corner. Shane sets up the Coast to Coast and drives the garbage can into Robbie's head. Robbie is out cold so Shane says this is a handicap match and brings out Umaga to be his partner. Umaga hits the running hip attack and a top rope splash but Shane brings out Vince to make it 3-1. Apparently this is the go home show for Backlash which is a show I haven't done yet. Vince is in a suit and hat but he gets the pin.

Rating: D. The idea makes sense but there's no entertainment value to it for the most part. Shane is always cool to see and further emphasizes how bad Garrett Bischoff is but there

wasn't any interest here. Brookside took a beating which was expected but the fans didn't really seem to care about him.

We get a clip from Wrestlemania where Cena beat Shawn. That means it's time for a rematch on Raw three weeks later right? Tonight's match is non-title.

Matt Hardy vs. Trevor Murdoch

The Hardys are Raw tag champions. Todd Grisham is doing ring announcing for no apparent reason. Murdoch takes him into the corner easily and throws on a headlock. Matt comes back with a fist drop for two. He goes up but gets pulled off the middle rope as Murdoch takes over again. Off to a sleeper but Matt breaks it up and hits a forearm. Side Effect gets two. A middle rope Fameasser gets two and Cade pops up on the apron for a distraction. Murdoch hits what was supposed to be a Canadian Destroyer for the pin.

Rating: D. This didn't click at all. Jeff was at ringside but didn't do a thing at all. There wasn't much to see here as it was a short match on top of being bad. Murdoch was pretty good at times but at other times he was your old Texas cowboy kind of guy which isn't interesting a lot of the time. Bad match.

Video on the Condemned.

Melina vs. Maria

Both girls are looking GOOD here. Melina is Women's Champion but it's not on the line. Grisham talks very slowly. Melina beats her up and after the quick comeback from Maria, a facejam ends this. It's amazing how much better looking these girls are than the current crop of Divas.

Carlito is getting ready in the back and Flair says let's go. This was a mentor/mentee thing.

Carlito vs. Great Khali

Carlito comes out alone, minute Flair or girlfriend Torrie. He tries to speed things up but gets run over by a Khali shoulder block. Carlito tries the legs and then the eyes. He goes up top but his missile dropkick misses. Chop, Plunge, pin.

Flair comes out post match and Carlito yells at him in Spanish. Naitch leaves in a huff.

Mick Foley talks about a Make-A-Wish kid that made the main event for Backlash which was a fatal fourway. One of the four is Edge who pops up and says he'll win on Sunday.

Another video on the Condemned.

Shawn runs into Cena and nothing of note is said.

Shawn Michaels vs. John Cena

There's almost an hour to go in the show so you know this is going to be something good. Shawn works on the shoulder to start but Cena counters with a headscissors into a stalemate. They do the exact same sequence and then try it again, but Cena goes for a drop toehold which Shawn escapes. Another STFU attempt sends Shawn running to the ropes. Cena is very pleased that he got that close.

Cena tries to grab the leg this time but Shawn makes the rope. They get in each others' faces and it's a slugout. Back from a break and the fans are getting way into this. Cena takes him down with a headlock instead which lasts for a good while. A big clothesline takes Shawn down and it's chinlock time. Shawn pops back up and is immediately clotheslined back down.

Sweet Chin Music is avoided and the FU is countered by Shawn heading to the floor. We take another break and come back to Shawn getting in a shot in the corner. He's mostly the heel in this but it's not full fledged. They speed things up and Cena hits a World's Strongest Slam for two. Release fisherman's suplex gets two. Throwback gets two. They slug it out and

Shawn counters a suplex into a neckbreaker for two.

Another slugout results in the flying forearm by Shawn. He nips up and hammers Cena down and goes to the corner for the elbow. It hits but instead of covering Shawn stomps the mat for the Chin Music. Cena ducks and Shawn grabs a quick backslide for two. The shoulder block misses and Cena may have hurt his shoulder on the crash to the floor. Shawn dives over the floor but Cena catches him in mid-air and slams him into the steps.

Back from break #3 and they're both in the ring again. It should be noted that we're probably half an hour into this and Cena looks FINE. He doesn't look tired, he doesn't look winded, he doesn't even look sweaty. That's almost scary. Cena charges into the post and Shawn has a target. He hooks a combination hammerlock/abdominal stretch on the mat before driving in some knees on the arm.

Cena shrugs off most of it and starts his finishing sequence, taking Shawn's head off with a clothesline. The Shuffle hits but the FU is countered into Chin Music attempt into the FU for a VERY close two. We take another break and come back with Cena throwing Shawn to the floor. Cena rams his back into the post and we head back inside. Delayed vertical suplex gets two.

Bearhug time which is proof we're in a big match as you almost never see a face use one of those. Shawn fights out of it but gets thrown over the corner and out to the floor. Back in Cena hits the top rope Fameasser which seems to be a new move for him. They go to the corner for a superplex but Cena instead tries an FU off the top, which Shawn counters into a powerbomb off the top to put both guys down.

Out to the apron and Shawn knocks him face first into the announce table. The look on his face says THAT REALLY HURT! Out to the floor and Shawn loads up a piledriver on the steps

but Cena backdrops him onto the floor as we take I think break number five. Back with them on the announce table and Cena is all fired up. Back inside Cena hooks the STFU but it's not cranked on perfectly.

Shawn makes the rope and we cut to some cheering girl in the crowd. Shawn looks a bit dead but Cena is waiting for the FU. Shawn pops up with the Chin Music but Cena tries the FU again. That gets reversed and Chin Music hits for a very delayed two. They slowly get up and Cena tries the FU again but Shawn slips down the back and hits the second Sweet Chin Music for the pin at 55:49. Unless there's some house show match that I don't know of, that's the longest regular one on one match in the WWE/F since 1981.

Rating: A-. It's certainly not a masterpiece or even anything close to one, but considering they just went an hour, you have to give them bonus points. Cena looked fresh as a daisy 40 minutes into this which is more proof that he isn't human. This is also a loss that doesn't hurt Cena because it wasn't like he got beat but rather that he got caught. Very good match and the time aspect of it is remarkable. This match is on the Heartbreak and Triumph DVD.

Shawn puts the title on Cena's chest post match and crotch chops him to end the show.

Overall Rating: B. To say that this is a one match show is an understatement but when it's a great match like this on free TV, you can't complain at all. Good stuff here and while it didn't really build up Backlash that well, it's still great with one match that is the first of its kind in over twenty five years.

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Monday Night Raw – April 22, 2013: That's One EVIL Skull Cap

Monday Night Raw

Date: April 22, 2013

Location: O2 Arena, London, England

Commentators: Jerry Lawler, Michael Cole, John Bradshaw Layfield

This is a taped episode from England, which usually makes for a less interesting show. The main event tonight is HELL NO/Undertaker vs. Shield in a very rare appearance by the Dead Man on the red show. Other than that we've got some issues with the roster as there's a house show in Wales at the same time this was taped, so a lot of people aren't here tonight. Let's get to it.

We open with recaps of the issues between Shield and HELL NO/Undertaker and Ryback and Cena.

Here's Heyman in the ring who says that he's acting as advocate for Brock Lesnar tonight. Everyone is wondering about what Brock did to 3MB last week but they're also wondering about Brock's challenge to HHH. Tonight we're going to get HHH's answer....via e-mail as he's not here tonight. Heyman talks about how HHH is a coward...and here's HHH in the arena. Heyman says he got the e-mail but HHH says he was lying about not being here tonight. He says he accepts and there's a Pedigree to Heyman.

Jericho vs. Ziggler tonight.

R-Truth vs. Antonio Cesaro

Cole shouts WHAT'S UP and kind of dances during the entrance. Cesaro yodels as his humiliating depush continues. Cesaro takes over to start

with a forearm to the back of the head and a hard clothesline. The fans start an OLE chant as Cesaro hits a double stomp for two. Truth blocks a kick to the ribs and gets two off a front suplex. Little Jimmy hits a second later for the pin on Antonio at 2:19.

Shield arrives via helicopter. That's rather awesome.

Damien Sandow vs. Brodus Clay

Sandow takes Brodus to the corner as the fans chant for Cody's mustache. Brodus comes back with a slam and an elbow drop for two but Sandow hits a kind of Edge-0-Matic and the Wind-Up Elbow for two of his own. Off to a chinlock for a bit but Brodus fights up and hits a corner splash and the t-bone suplex. A Cody distraction lets Sandow roll up Brodus for the pin with a handful of trunks at 3:23.

Rating: D. This was a nothing match as they just went back and forth for a few minutes until we got to the lame ending. That's likely because the feud and story between these groups is over but it's continuing because there's nothing at all to do with any of the guys and they're locked into these tag teams because the writers can't think of anything else.

We look at Dolph winning the title again before we see him hitting on the title in the back (I said that correctly). AJ comes up and they make fun of Kaitlyn before sending Langston away so they can make out. Vickie and Brad show up to interrupt and say that if Dolph loses tonight, Jericho is in the title match at the PPV, making it a fatal fourway.

We look at Punk walking out last week.

Shield is here and talks about how no one has made them rest in peace yet but now they're the judge, jury and executioner.

Chris Jericho vs. Dolph Ziggler

Non-title here. Jericho gets a quick rollup for two and puts on a headlock. Ziggler comes back with a headscissors on the mat but Jericho fights up and hits a quick dropkick. Dolph slides to the floor for a kiss from AJ but Jericho hits a suicide dive to take Ziggler out as we go to a break. Back with Jericho missing a charge into the corner and hitting his

head on the post before falling to the floor.

Back in and Ziggler dances around a bit before gyrating his hips. Jericho reverses a neckbreaker into a backslide but gets clotheslined down almost immediately. Off to a reverse chinlock by Ziggler which transitions into a sleeper, only to have Jericho escape and speed things up. A top rope ax handle "connects" but Ziggler avoids the bulldog.

The Walls can't go on but an enziguri gets two for Jericho. Chris loads up the Lionsault but Big E. pops him in the head, giving Ziggler a near fall. Back to the sleeper by Dolph followed by a jumping DDT for two on Jericho. The fans of course do the Wave because they're apparently bored by the match. Jericho gets up first and hits a back elbow before getting in on the Wave as well.

The Lionsault hits knees though and the Fameasser gets two on Jericho. Ziggler sends him into the corner and goes up top, only to get crotched and superplexed down for two. The Codebreaker connects for a VERY delayed two as Dolph gets a foot on the rope. Jericho dropkicks Langston down and puts the Liontamer on Ziggler...but here's Fandango. Well at least his entrance as the fans go NUTS. The distraction lets Dolph hit the Zig Zag for the pin at 16:46.

Rating: B-. Good long match here and it's nice to see Ziggler get a win over a big name, but not having Fandango show up was a mistake. I know he was on another show tonight, but so was Shield and they're here. Anyway, not bad for the most part but it's nothing memorable and they've done far better before.

We look at the end of Raw last week with Shield beating down Cena as Ryback watched. Ryback vs. Cena is official for the PPV.

Mick Foley is here and says that it's human nature for people to look in the mirror and blame someone else, much like Ryback is doing.

Tensai vs. Cody Rhodes

Tensai throws Cody around to start and drops him with a right hand to the face. A delayed double underhook suplex gets two for Tensai but Cody

comes back with a neckbreaker and a front facelock. The Disaster Kick gets two and it's back to the front facelock for a bit. Tensai fights back and pounds away before hitting the rolling cannonball attack in the corner. Sandow gets on the apron for a distraction but gets crushed by Brodus. A Baldo Bomb puts Cody down and the running backsplash gets the pin at 3:34.

Rating: D. This just kept going and going with nothing interesting at all. Again, the feud was over weeks ago but it's an England show tonight so we need to have the same guys fight even though no one is really interested in seeing it anymore. This is one of those matches that could be cut to get this show down to two hours again.

Bryan is freaking out because Undertaker isn't here yet and wants Kane to call him. Kane: "He's not the kind of guy to carry a cell phone." Bryan wants a hug and to show Undertaker diagrams. Kane: "Whatever you do, DO NOT TRY TO GIVE HIM A HUG!" As they're talking someone jumps them but we only see one pair of boots.

We look at the main event of Smackdown with Big Show/Henry beating Orton/Sheamus when Show chokeslammed Orton.

Ryback asks Cena how it felt to be jumped by the Shield. Maybe he and Foley should have a discussion in the ring tonight.

Big E. Langston vs. Zack Ryder

This is exactly what you would expect: Ryder gets in a few shots but gets run over with a clothesline. The Big Ending ends this at 1:43.

Undertaker/HELL NO vs. Shield

Surprisingly enough Undertaker comes out first. Shield surrounds him and the fight is on, only to have HELL NO come out for the save. The brawl is on and we take a break before the bell. Bryan and Ambrose start with Dean getting his arm cranked on over and over. Kane comes in and does the same before it's off to Undertaker to a big pop. Taker works on the arm as well with some driving shoulders before having Old School broken up. Ambrose charges into a boot in the corner and now Old School connects for

two more.

Back to Bryan who gets to fight Reigns. After a hard kick in the corner by Daniel it's off to Kane for an elbow drop for two. Shield finally uses the numbers game to get Kane down in the corner and pound away on him with everyone getting in a shot. Rollins comes in and goes up top, only to jump into an uppercut from Kane. Hot tag brings in Bryan who immediately speeds things up and moonsaults out of the corner.

A clothesline puts Rollins on his knees and there are the NO kicks to the chest and a big one to the head. Rollins is sent to the floor and there's the suicide dive to take him down. Back in and the missile dropkick puts Rollins into the corner but a running dropkick from Bryan misses. Back with Bryan being hit in the throat by Reigns for two. Off to Rollins as Bryan is in big trouble.

Rollins talks trash so Taker does the throat slit and has a bit of a fit on the apron. Bryan finally gets in a shot on Ambrose and it's hot tag to Taker. Ambrose gets the Snake Eyes into the big boot and legdrop (brother!) for two. Taker loads up the double chokeslam on Ambrose and Rollins but Reigns spears Taker down for two. Off to Kane for a chokeslam to Ambrose and there's another hot tag to Bryan. Daniel goes up but gets crotched by Reigns. Bryan still manages to launch the Swan Dive but only hits mat, allowing Ambrose to pin him at 18:58.

Rating: B. Again this was good but it didn't reach the level that they were shooting for. This was a great moment for Shield though as they get a win over Undertaker which is a big name to add to their list. Odds are they take the tag belts off HELL NO at Extreme Rules, which puts the company in a bind unless they do a triple threat to get the belts off Shield. Anyway, good match here.

Foley is with Cena and says he's going out there tonight to confront Ryback. Cena gives him a chair to take with him just in case.

Fandango vs. William Regal

BIG ovation for both guys here. Regal signals for the dancing girl to call him. We start with a dance off and Regal takes over with some hard

forearms to the face. They trade right hands but Fandango hits a quick Downward Spiral for the pin at 1:43. The dancing girl might be Summer Rae from NXT.

Post match Jericho jumps Fandango and dances with the girl.

Divas Battle Royal

AJ vs. Aksana vs. Naomi vs. Tamina Snuka vs. Layla

Kaitlyn is at ringside and the winner of this gets a title shot. The Bellas have been disqualified from this because of the Twin Magic last week. Tamina immediately superkicks AJ down and she's out cold. Naomi and Layla clean house as AJ lays on the mat. Aksana is eliminated and Naomi hits a Rear View on Tamina. Snuka eliminates Naomi from the apron but Layla dropkicks her to the floor. It's Layla and AJ left but AJ is still out cold. Layla tries to lift the dead weight that is AJ but she pops up and kicks Layla out to win at 3:19.

Rating: N. As in next, because I don't care about this at all and neither did the audience.

Trailer for No One Lives, which is the latest WE Film starring Brodus Clay. By starring they likely mean featuring for about 18 seconds.

Here's Foley to call out Ryback. After the cheap pop here's the monster, now with a skull cap which makes him edgy I guess. Foley talks about how it used to be him standing against every monster and getting back up, but now he can't do that anymore. Foley shows Ryback the Shield beatdown of Cena last week in case he didn't see it in any of the three other times it's aired tonight. Ryback says he loved it so Foley wants to know what happened to the Ryback that debuted last year.

Foley says that it's inevitable that Ryback is going to be WWE Champion someday and he doesn't want it to be on a technicality. Ryback goes off on Foley for coming out here year after year and sticking his nose in everyone else's business when no one wants to hear it. Ryback knows what he's doing and he doesn't care about anyone anymore and only wants the title.

Foley pulls the chair back and Ryback slaps him before throwing the chair out. Cena runs out for the save....and here's Shield. Cena immediately gets on the apron and Shield goes after Ryback, but Cena makes the save with a chair. They stare each other down and Cena hits the AA to end the show.

Overall Rating: B-. The two feature matches delivered so that's more than enough to give it a good grade, but, say it with me, the extra hour drags it down. The stuff like the Divas battle royal and the Tons of Funk/Rhodes Scholars stuff just dragged the show down because they were clearly there just to fill in five minutes each.

That's the problem with Raw and WWE in general anymore: there's good stuff in there, but by the time you get to it you're so exhausted by the other stuff that it loses its appeal. The lack of the extra guys helped a lot though as they didn't have to pack in so much stuff tonight, meaning stuff got more time. In other words, the Brand Split would have helped this show a lot.

Results

R-Truth b. Antonio Cesaro – Little Jimmy

Damien Sandow b. Brodus Clay – Rollup

Dolph Ziggler b. Chris Jericho – Zig Zag

Tensai b. Cody Rhodes – Backsplash

Big E. Langston b. Zack Ryder – Big Ending

Shield b. Undertaker/HELL NO – Ambrose pinned Bryan after a missed flying headbutt

Fandango b. William Regal – Downward Spiral

AJ won a battle royal by last eliminating Layla

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book on the History of the WWE Championship from Amazon for just \$5 at:

On This Day: April 21, 2008 – Monday Night Raw 2008: King Me

Monday Night Raw

Date: April 21, 2008

Location: BI-LO Center, Greenville, South Carolina

Commentators: Jim Ross, Jerry Lawler

This is another request and since it's taking forever to download some TNA shows, I figured I might as well knock some of these off in the meantime. This is the King of the Ring tournament so it's a three hour special. Almost everything you have here is a tournament match, plus an eight man tag and a REALLY stupid other match. Let's get to it.

Theme song gets us going. It's still Papa Roach.

We open with Lillian telling us that the tournament is back tonight.

King of the Ring First Round: Chris Jericho vs. MVP

Jericho is IC Champion and MVP is US Champion. There's no bracket yet and even JR and Lawler haven't seen them. I don't mind a champion losing so much here as one of them gets to look stronger. This is also the go home show for Backlash, which is a show I haven't done yet. MVP takes him to the mat

to start but Jericho comes back with some knees to the head and a kick to the same area.

MVP punches him in the corner as this is off to a hot start. Jericho drapes him over the top rope and mostly misses a baseball slide to the floor. MVP catches him coming back in with a knee lift and a kind of clothesline for two. He hooks kind of a modified abdominal stretch on the mat but Jericho gets up pretty quickly. Overhead belly to belly puts Jericho down for two. They do the Flair bridge up into a backslide spot which gets a good reaction in Horsemen country. Big boot gets two for MVP. Jericho comes back with a clothesline but the Lionsault misses. Play of the Day is countered into the Walls and Jericho advances.

Rating: C. Very basic match here but with a one night tournament you have to keep things that way. Again I don't mind MVP losing clean here because it was to another champion and on top of that he would drop the title on Sunday anyway. Not much to see here but it was fine all things considered.

Jericho sits on the throne post match.

King of the Ring First Round: CM Punk vs. Matt Hardy

Punk has the MITB case. Feeling out process to start but it turns into a strike off, won by Punk. He takes Matt down for two and hooks a quick chinlock. Matt comes back with some headbutts and drives an elbow into Punk's back off the middle rope. Matt's bulldog is countered into the clothesline and bulldog out of the corner for two. Punk's springboard clothesline is caught in the Side Effect for two. Twist of Fate is countered into a GTS which is countered into a sunset flip which is countered by Punk sitting on Hardy for the pin. Nice ending.

Rating: C+. Another short match here but this one was a little more fun than the previous one. The ending was pretty quick and that's a good thing as it was certainly entertaining for a

four minute match. Punk was on a roll at this point and he would win the world title in about two months. Matt would get the US Title on Sunday.

All we have as far as a bracket is Jericho vs. Punk in the semi-finals.

Tonight it's Barack Obama vs. Hilary Clinton. That's the really stupid match I warned you about. We see it in Smackdown vs. Raw 2008 for a preview.

We get a clip from Raw last week of HHH vs. JBL when Orton ran in and HHH got double teamed. The fatal fourway on Sunday (those three plus Cena) is now an elimination match.

JBL says this Sunday he'll take his place on top of the WWE. He was in the New York Times today.

King of the Ring First Round: Finlay vs. Great Khali

Khali is having issues with Big Show around this time. Horny is at ringside of course. Finlay charges at Khali but gets shoved down almost immediately. Khali shoves him down but misses a legdrop. Finlay pounds away but Khali shrugs him off and sends him to the corner. Horny comes in with the club but Finlay saves him. The chop puts Finlay down and Khali wraps Finlay's leg around the post....for a DQ? Apparently so. Too short to rate but this was nothing of note.

Big Show comes out but Khali won't go for him until Sunday.

Finlay is helped out because of the knee attack.

King of the Ring First Round: William Regal vs. Hornswoggle

Twenty seconds, Regal Stretch. Finlay comes in to help but Regal beats him down and attacks the knee. Regal is GM at this point so shenanigans seem to be up.

The brackets are set for the semi-finals:

Jericho

Punk

Finlay

Regal

Video on the annual post Wrestlemania European tour.

Here's Shawn for a little chat. Apparently Batista isn't happy about Shawn retiring Flair at Wrestlemania so Shawn wants to talk about it right now. They have a match on Sunday with Jericho as referee for no apparent reason, although it would set up a six month feud between Shawn and Jericho. Here's Batista and Shawn if Batista wanted to face Flair at Mania, which is what Jericho suggested on Smackdown.

Batista asks if that would make Shawn feel better. This isn't about Flair anymore, but rather about Big Dave and Shawn. He respects where Shawn is, but not how he got there. He'll finish this with Shawn at Backlash. Shawn appreciates the honesty but he's everything Batista says he is. Whether Dave likes it or not, Shawn is Mr. Wrestlemania and there definitely is blood on his hands. Batista is going to need luck on Sunday. Shawn goes to leave but Batista spins him back around. Shawn gets into superkick position but Batista just walks past him and leaves.

Hilary Clinton gives the kind of promo/speech that a famous person gives when they talk to a wrestling audience that they don't understand. This one isn't terrible though as she mainly talks about how she'll fight for America and lists some of her issues. It's very corny, but I'll give them points for at least talking like this. Obama and McCain will talk later.

Hardcore Holly vs. Carlito

Just...why? Oh this is something to do with the tag titles. Holly and Rhodes are champions coming into this. Carlito has his partner Santino with him. Feeling out process to start

with Holly mainly in control. Carlito comes back with a backbreaker for two. Off to a chinlock which doesn't last long. Carlito works on the back some more but misses a charge. Holly makes his comeback with clotheslines and the dropkick but his back gives out. He loads up the Alabama Slam but his back gives out again. Backstabber gets the pin.

Rating: D. This wasn't much. This would presumably set up the match on Sunday but it didn't happen for some reason. Then again, no one cared at all about the tag titles so it's not like anyone cared. This was really just a breather to allow everyone to transition from the first half of the show to the second.

HHH says he'll win.

King of the Ring Semi-Finals: Chris Jericho vs. CM Punk

Both guys are tentative to start but both get quick twos. The first big move is Jericho draping him over the top rope out of a suplex. Punk tries a springboard but Jericho kicks his legs out and Punk is in trouble. Jericho tries a hammerlock but Punk takes his head off with a clothesline for two. They trade rollups like at the end of Punk's other match but no one gets a pin. Walls are countered into a rollup for two.

Jericho hits an enziguri for two and this is getting good. Punk snaps off a powerslam for two. GTS is countered into the bulldog and Jericho loads up the Lionsault. It looks strange as Jericho tried to land on all fours because Punk had his knees up. Either way he stopped himself and hooks the Walls but Punk makes a rope. Jericho goes up but Punk high kicks him down. He puts Jericho on his shoulders and the GTS sends Punk to the finals clean.

Rating: B-. These two always work well together and this was no exception. Punk got a win here which made him look a lot stronger, which is what someone like Jericho is great at. Even four years later Jericho is still putting people over but it

still means something, which is a great sign for a veteran like him.

Senator Obama gives a very corny speech, concluding with "do you smell what the Barack is cooking." Just...no.

King of the Ring Semi-Finals: William Regal vs. Finlay

Finlay has the bad knee coming in. Regal circles him to start but gets monkey flipped to the floor. Regal sends him into the steps and he hits knee first. Back in the ring and it's time for a slugout. Regal goes shoulder first into the post for two. Finlay tries a fireman's carry but the knee gives out. Back to the forearms and a rollup gets two. Regal hits him in the head with a knee and puts on the Regal Stretch. Finlay passes out to send Regal to the finals.

Rating: C. These two always have good matches as they're always physical. The more I see of Finlay the more I appreciate him as he was really good at stuff like this. There was nothing for him to lose out there and he was going to be adequate at worst no matter who you put him out there with. Good stuff but short.

McCain uses a lot of wrestling lines and says go vote.

We run down the card for Backlash.

Cena says that you've heard everyone talk tonight and he has as good a chance as anyone else, but the advantage he has is he doesn't have to go through himself.

Let's get this over with.

Hilary Clinton vs. Barack Obama

There's a Bill impersonator with Hilary, who comes out to Real American. No one reacts AT ALL. Obama comes out to Rock's theme and I guess is the face in this. They're impersonators in case you didn't get that. It's so weird seeing and hearing

people not care at all about Hogan's music. I mean there's NOTHING. This is one of those times I feel ashamed about being a wrestling fan. They both cut promos on each other and Hilary's is far better, as she's played by a chick from SHIMMER. The fans still don't care.

Is this supposed to be funny? Are we supposed to be this stupid to find this entertaining? Rock's theme gets ZERO reaction either and Obama has huge ears. King gets the only funny line of this by saying that if Obama were facing Mike Tyson in this it would be a buffet. They have a "match" which isn't completely terrible as both are played by wrestlers. Obama hits a Rock Bottom but Bill breaks up the People's Elbow. Cue Umaga for a Spike to Obama and a Samoan Drop to Hilary. Bill runs away. This got TEN MINUTES.

Here are a bunch of face Divas to introduce the new Women's Champion Mickie James. She beat Beth who was considered unbeatable so it was a big upset. It still amazes me how much more interesting the Divas were just a few years ago. Mickie thanks the other girls but gets cut off by Beth and some other evil girls. Remember when there were twelve Divas that could be in one segment and could all have at least a passable match? Beth says it's not if she'll win the title back, but when she'll win it back. Michelle slaps Beth and the brawl is on.

Mr. Kennedy is coming back.

King of the Ring Finals: William Regal vs. CM Punk

Punk comes in with bad ribs because of the matches earlier. Regal is basically in his second match after the Horny match and beating an injured Finlay. Punk starts off fast with some kicks in the corner. He tries the bulldog but gets suplexed down and it's off to a bow and arrow hold. Punk fights up from that and hits a spinning kick to the knee.

Regal grabs the arms and forces him right back down to the mat

as is his custom. The idea is that it's strikes vs. grapples which is about as natural as you're going to get with these two. Punk fights up again and hits a BIG kick to the head to stagger Regal. Spinning backfist sets up the high kick for two. That sounded great. Punk loads up the GTS but Regal grabs the rope. He escapes and hits the knee trembler, followed by the Stretch. Punk hangs on for almost thirty seconds but finally has to tap to give Regal the tournament.

Rating: C-. This was too short to mean much but it gave Regal some more psychosis to work with which was a really entertaining time. Then it just stopped cold because it was getting too good and that's how WWE works. Punk giving up because of the rib injury is ok because Regal didn't win fairly (coming in at a big advantage), which is fine.

Regal's psycho look while he sits on the throne is still great.

Here's Orton for the main event but first he brags about how awesome he is and how his title reign will continue after Sunday.

Randy Orton/Edge/Chavo Guerrero/John Bradshaw Layfield vs. John Cena/HHH/Kane/The Undertaker

Orton is Raw champion, Edge is challenging Taker on Sunday, Chavo is challenging Kane, JBL is challenging Orton, Cena is challenging Orton, HHH is challenging Orton, Kane is ECW Champion, Undertaker is Smackdown champion. Now that's a packed main event. How out of place does Chavo look here though? After the entrances take forever to get through we're ready to go. Seriously, there were ten minutes spent on entrances PLUS a commercial. That's ridiculous.

Taker and Orton look to start but Edge jumps Taker in a surprise. This goes badly for the Canadian as a big clothesline puts him down. Old School hits (hasn't that been called old longer than it wasn't called old?) and we take a

break after 40 seconds. Back with Chavo tagging Edge in to work over a downed HHH. The spear is countered into a spinebuster and there's the tag to Cena.

He starts his finishing sequence very quickly on Edge but Chavo low bridges him on the Shuffle attempt. JBL throws him back in clean which shocks Jerry. Off to Orton who does nothing so it's JBL again. Russian legsweep gets two as does a clothesline. Edge comes in and the Cena chants begin. Edge gets a big boot and it's off to Orton for a chinlock. Cena stands up but it's a double clothesline and both guys are down.

The tags are made to Chavo and Kane with the Big Bald cleaning house. All of the evil team goes down and a side slam puts Chavo down. The top rope clothesline mostly gets shoulder and everything breaks down. Chavo counters a slam attempt into a DDT but as he goes for the Frog Splash Kane chokeslams him down. Out of nowhere though Edge spears Kane for the pin.

Rating: C. It's a main event tag match and that's about it. They covered almost everything and they had the most secure winner at the PPV (Kane) take the fall which is a good thing. Not a bad match but it's just a way to throw everyone into the main event at once, which is fine for building up the PPV main events.

Edge takes an FU post match, HHH takes the Clothesline, RKO to HHH and a double chokeslam to JBL and Orton. Undertaker stands tall to end the show.

Overall Rating: B. This was a really entertaining show that went by fast. I'd have liked to see some better wrestling in there but the matches had to be fast due to the tournament. I'm glad they didn't go to any double eliminations as in an eight man tournament that's kind of excessive. Good show though and I want to watch Backlash now so that's a great sign. Good stuff.

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Monday Night Raw – April 15, 2013: Bad Night To Be A Champion

Monday Night Raw\

Date: April 15, 2013

Location: BI-LO Center, Greenville, South Carolina

Commentators: John Bradshaw Layfield, Michael Cole, Jerry Lawler

After last week's bizarre show with the most interesting crowd in years, we're now in a far different kind of city in front of a far different kind of people. The main story is that Ryback turned on Cena last week to presumably set up a match for the title at Extreme Rules. Other than that we have Ziggler as the new world champion and Sheamus appearing to feud with Mark Henry. Let's get to it.

We open with a recap of Ryback turning on Cena from last week. Punk is also here tonight.

Randy Orton/Sheamus vs. Big Show

Sheamus starts and is immediately sent back into the corner. He tries to fight out of it but his headlock is countered by a belly to back suplex from Big Show. A hard chop sends Sheamus to the apron but he comes back with some shoulders to the ribs and the forearms to the chest. A top rope shoulder gets two for Sheamus but the Brogue Kick is easily blocked and

Sheamus is sent to the floor. Back in and Show chops Sheamus' chest half to death before getting two off the Final Cut.

Off to a quick nerve hold but Sheamus fights up, only to be caught in a side slam for two. Show loads up the Vader Bomb but Sheamus counters in an impressive looking electric chair. There's the hot tag to Orton who pounds away with everything he's got. A nice dropkick sends Show to the apron for the Elevated DDT. The RKO is countered but Sheamus breaks up the chokeslam with a Brogue Kick. RKO finishes Show at 6:10.

Rating: C-. Well that happened. Seriously I don't know what else there is to say here. Big Show was at a disadvantage and got beat relatively cleanly. You would think that there was a feud for months between these guys but Orton and Sheamus had no animosity here and Big Show lost like it was no big deal, so I guess we're just moving on.

We look at 3MB interrupting HHH but getting beaten up by Shield.

3MB says they're calling out Shield.

Here's 3MB to do just that but instead of Shield, they get Brock Lesnar for a big old beating of the band. Slater gets two nasty F5's onto the barricade until Heyman comes out to call off the monster. Heyman says that Lesnar is ready for a fight and wants one with Triple H. At Wrestlemania, HHH knocked out Brock Lesnar which proves that HHH is a real man. Brock however doesn't see things that way. Now the rivalry is 1-1, so we need a third match at Extreme Rules. Since it's going to be extreme, we'll make it an old fashioned steel cage match.

US Title: Antonio Cesaro vs. Kofi Kingston

Cesaro gets a mic and yodels all the way to the ring. Kofi gets a quick rollup and backslide for two each but misses a splash into the corner. A hard clothesline puts Kofi down and there's the gutwrench suplex for two.

Cesaro hooks a quick chinlock but Kofi comes back with some strikes of his own. The Boom Drop hits but Trouble in Paradise is ducked, allowing Cesaro to hit the big European uppercut for two. We take a break and come back with Cesaro pounding away with headbutts and punches in the corner.

Kofi comes back with the SOS for two and Trouble in Paradise sends Antonio to the floor. Back inside and Kofi gets two before going up top. His cross body is caught in a tilt-a-whirl backbreaker for a VERY close two but Cesaro charges into a boot in the corner. Kofi tries a springboard cross body but gets caught in the Neutralizer position. They trade some VERY fast near falls until Kofi hits Trouble in Paradise for the pin and the title at 9:25.

Rating: B-. The early part was dull stuff but that pinfall reversal sequence was awesome. The problem here is simple though: we've seen this like five times now from Kofi. Kingston is good in the ring and will give you a solid performance every night, but he's not going to do anything special with the belt, primarily because he's not going to be given the opportunity to do so. Either way, decent match here.

Kofi says he brought the US Title back home.

We look at Ziggler cashing in last week to win the title. By that I mean they show us the entire match.

Here are Ziggler and company with something to say. Ziggler talks about how great a moment his win was last week but now he needs to top himself. He's going to start by being better than anyone else ever and not caring about the fans booing him. You show off when you're better than everyone else, but he backs it up every single night. Ziggler talks about the perks that come with being champion but here's Del Rio to interrupt.

Del Rio says he'll get his title back because he wants his rematch right now. Vickie comes out and says the match is starting RIGHT NOW. Alberto is barely able to walk here.

Smackdown World Title: Dolph Ziggler vs. Alberto Del Rio

Before the bell rings, here are Swagger and Colter to interrupt. Colter says that it was because of Swagger that Ziggler won the title, so it should be Swagger getting the title show. Alberto decks Swagger but as he turns around to face Ziggler. Jack pulls Alberto to the floor and wraps the leg around the post. The Patriot Lock messes up the ankle even more so no match.

HELL NO vs. Prime Time Players

Next week it's Bryan/Kane/Taker vs. Shield from London. Bryan and Titus start things off with the hard kicks to O'Neal's chest for two. Young comes in and has some better luck, allowing him to take over on Bryan. Back to Titus for a fall away slam before it's back to Young for a chinlock. Bryan fights up for the hot tag to Kane who cleans house and gets two off a side slam. The top rope clothesline gets two so it's the chokeslam to set up the top rope headbutt for the pin at 3:32.

Rating: D+. This is one of those matches that I never need to see again. We get it: the champions can beat up the Players and can beat them in about four minutes no matter what disadvantage they may be at. I know this because I've seen it happen about eight times now. Nothing to see here other than the champions on TV as usual.

Ryback (not even in the arena) talks about how Wrestlemania was the greatest night of Cena's career and the worst night of his own. Cena could only go down and Ryback could only go up. We get a clip of the beatdown last week and Ryback says he wasn't going to wait at the bottom of the ladder anymore after everything he had been through. Ryback talks about Cena giving Ryback his title shot when he was injured.

It made Ryback feel like he belonged but a promise of friendship from Cena is just a guarantee to sit in the backseat. Ryback talks about how Cena left him alone as we see clips of Shield destroying him over the

last few months. We see Cena eliminating Ryback to win the Rumble and then Cena leaving Ryback alone to fight Shield and give up the pinfall because Cena had his title shot at Wrestlemania already. Last week Ryback waited for Cena to mention him but it never came, so it's time for Ryback to step out of Cena's shadow.

R-Truth vs. Wade Barrett

Non-title here. Barrett pounds away to start but Truth comes back with a side kick to the face. Barrett shrugs it off and puts Truth on the top rope before pounding away on the chest. Off to a seated abdominal stretch before Truth fights up and hits some clotheslines. The ax kick misses but Little Jimmy hits for the pin at 3:02.

Rating: D. Not that this means anything because there's a battle royal on Main Event for the #1 contendership. It also doesn't help that one of Barrett's finishing moves is basically the same thing as taking a Little Jimmy, so the ending was kind of confusing. Also, is there a point to Barrett having the title anymore? He's lost twice in 8 days as champion now.

Teddy Long comes in to see Brad Maddox and Vickie Guerrero and suggests Swagger vs. Zigler tonight. Apparently it's happening later.

Great Khali/Santino Marella vs. Rhodes Scholars

The Scholars talk about being dwarfs on the shoulders of giants on the way to the ring. Sandow and Khali start things off with the giant hitting a loud chop in the corner. Off to Cody who wants and gets Santino. Rhodes takes over and pounds away before bringing in Damien for more of the same. There's the Wind-Up Elbow for two but Santino makes his comeback with the usual. The Cobra takes down Sandow but Cody bails to the floor. Hornswoggle hits him in the ribs with a mini Cobra to no effect so Khali steps in for the save. During the distraction, Sandow rolls up Marella for the pin at 3:19.

Rating: D+. Just a quick little tag match here as we try to give the Scholars some credibility after losing for so many months on end. If nothing else their characters are still almost perfect, which is more than you can say about most people in the company today. Also, it's REALLY nice to see some random teams like Santino and Khali. WWE has such a huge roster so it's nice to see them use it once in awhile.

Jerry is in the ring and shows us a video of people Fandangoing around the world over the last week. This actually has become a popular trend at the moment. Fandango and his chick come out and dance for a bit before cutting Jerry off during the interview attempt. Fandango asks how Lawler's hips feel.

He asks if some fans want to go Fandangoing but since this is South Carolina, most fans don't seem interested. Before they can do it though, the fans have to pronounce his name correctly. He leads them in a pronunciation and the fans sing the song again. Fandango decides they can't say his name so they can go Fandango themselves.

Cena says he'll be in the ring if Ryback wants to come see him tonight.

Jack Swagger vs. Dolph Ziggler

Non-title again. Swagger pounds him into the corner to start so the champion slaps him. Dolph runs to the floor and jumps Swagger as he comes back in. A big boot puts Dolph down though and some knees in the corner have him in trouble. Dolph gets an elbow up in the corner and takes Swagger down with a neckbreaker for no cover. The Patriot Lock is escaped but Jack manages to crotch Ziggler on the top rope as we take a break.

Back with Swagger going shoulder first into the post and a small package getting two for Dolph. The running Vader Bomb hits the champion's feet and Ziggler makes his comeback. A dropkick and the jumping DDT get two but the Fameasser is countered into a powerbomb position. Swagger drops Ziggler back onto the top rope and gets the quick pin at 9:57.

Rating: C. This match wasn't half bad until the STUPID ending. I can't stand this concept of making the champion lose to get someone into the title hunt. You know an easier way to do this? Have Swagger in control and have Del Rio come out for the DQ. Ziggler doesn't get pinned, Swagger can claim he had the match won, and we get the same result. But hey, why do that when we can just job the champion who has the stigma of being a glorified jobber already?

Post match Alberto pops up and beats up Swagger, putting him in the armbreaker over the stage.

Mark Henry attacks Sheamus again in the back.

Here's Punk with something to say. The fans chant for Punk in one of the few reactions of the night. Punk doesn't say anything for a bit before saying he couldn't enjoy his 434 days as champion because he was always looking around the corner. He wanted that next challenge and found it in the Rock. After that he went after the one that that could be bigger than the title he loved by going after the Streak at Wrestlemania. We get dueling Undertaker/CM Punk chants from the crowd as Punk looks sad. Punk hugs Heyman and walks away beneath the Titantron.

Booker is annoyed at Teddy in the back and makes Ziggler vs. Del Rio vs. Swagger in a triple threat,, presumably at Extreme Rules.

Kaitlyn vs. Nikki Bella

Kaitlyn shoves her around to start and then out to the floor. A baseball slide puts both Bellas down but Kaitlyn is sent into the apron a few times. Back in and Nikki stands on Kaitlyn's hair as Jerry talks about one Bella being larger than the other. Off to a chinlock for a bit until Kaitlyn fights back with some shoulder blocks. The gutbuster hits but we get Twin Magic, allowing Brie to send Kaitlyn into the ropes for the pin at 5:09.

Rating: D-. The Bellas looked hot and that's about it. The Twin Magic thing has been done so many times already, but now that one has a double D cup and the other is maybe $\frac{1}{4}$ of that makes it REALLY difficult to buy as a finish. Then again this is the same company that said Ax and Smash were impossible to tell apart so this is easier to believe.

Sheamus/Orton vs. Big Show/Henry on Smackdown. Should be good.

Here's Cena to call out Ryback. The monster comes out a few seconds later and Cena says he isn't shaking in his boots. He says he issued an open challenge last week to any WWE Superstar but instead of coming at him like a man, Ryback waited to come at him when his back was turned. For some reason we cut to the Shield in the back as Cena talks. Production glitch I'm assuming.

Anyway, Cena says that earlier tonight Ryback made us sit through a highlight reel of excuses. There shouldn't be any excuses though because Ryback should be standing on his own feet. The things Ryback is lacking is something between his ears and something between his legs, not help from Cena. The champion gets ready to fight and they get in each others' faces, but Ryback walks away. With Cena alone in the ring, here's Shield. The announcers keep saying it's 3-2 but Shield only goes after Cena. Ryback just watches as Cena is beaten down and hit with the TripleBomb. Shield stands tall to end the show.

Overall Rating: C-. Let's see: World, Intercontinental and Divas Champions all get pinned, Fandango is WASTED, and we're getting HHH vs. Lesnar III when no one even wanted to see a second one. This was one of those shows where there's good stuff but the bad stuff makes you shake your head so much that you don't even remember the good. I don't know if this was some kind of bizarre punishment for last week or what, but it's REALLY stupid on a lot of counts.

Results

Sheamus/Randy Orton b. Big Show – RK0

Kofi Kingston b. Antonio Cesaro – Trouble in Paradise

HELL NO b. Prime Time Players – Headbutt to Young

R-Truth b. Wade Barrett – Little Jimmy

Rhodes Scholars b. Santino Marella/Great Khali – Rollup to Marella

Jack Swagger b. Dolph Ziggler – Powerbomb into a jackknife

Nikki Bella b. Kaitlyn – Clothesline into the middle rope

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On This Day: April 11, 2011 – Monday Night Raw 2011: Leave The (Canadian) Memories Alone

Monday Night Raw

Date: April 11, 2011

Location: Webster Bank Arena at Harbor Yard, Bridgeport, Connecticut

Commentators: Michael Cole, Jerry Lawler, Josh Matthews

Tonight we'll likely begin the build to Extreme Rules. We didn't have much time last week as the focus was on Mania fallout and of course next year's Wrestlemania main event being set up. It should be interesting to see what Cena does

to fill the next 50+ weeks. No matches on the Raw side have been announced for the PPV so we should get something tonight. Let's get to it.

On Tough Enough there was a teaser that Edge says his career might be over. That came out of left field.

Cole gets a special introduction as the only undefeated superstar in the WWE. "What's up Jerry?"

Here's Cena to open the show properly. He talks about how this is a great time to be in the WWE Universe because last week there was an announcement made that turned WWE upside down. Cena talks about the announcement that was so big it takes a year to digest. The match can't just be a match though, so that match needs to be for the WWE Championship. Therefore Cena needs to win the WWE Championship, so he issues a challenge for right now.

Instead he gets Randy Orton. Orton says that Cena may want a title shot but he had his already and lost. Orton says Cena should step aside and let someone that won their match at Wrestlemania get a shot. Cena gets ready to reply but here's John Morrison. He says we've seen this show (referring to Cena vs. Orton) before but now it's better because John Morrison is involved.

Before that though here come Vickie and Dolph. Vickie says she should get the shot because she pinned Morrison. But if not her then Dolph. Ziggler says he isn't here on Raw to waste his time on Cena. He's never faced Miz for the title so the line starts with him. Don't worry though because everyone will get title shots when he's champion.

We're not done yet because here's R-Truth. He says that the gospel truth is that he's never had a WWE Championship match. I think there's a reason for that Truth. An e-mail says that there's a new concept match. It's a 5 man gauntlet match.

Tonight (presumably) there will be two starting and another enters at a preset interval. You can't get a win until all five are in and the winner meets Miz at Extreme Rules. I think those are the rules at least. It was a bit hard to keep track of.

Lawler vs. Swagger later. If Lawler wins he gets a rematch with Cole.

There's a video of a baby doll with its head taken off. You can see the person holding it, clearly the soon to be debuting Awesome Kong. She laughs crazily.

Divas Title: Eve Torres vs. Brie Bella

Brie allegedly won a Divas battle royal to win this shot. Wasn't that weeks ago and she got the shot already? Eve brings a marker to have an X put on Nikki's hand so we know she's on the floor. That's rather intelligent. Brie takes her down to start but Eve makes her comeback with a dropkick and the standing moonsault for two. Eve gets her in the Tree of Woe and when she's being taken off there's a switch. While Nikki is being taken out Brie sneaks up on her and an X-Factor gives Brie the title at 2:20. Weak match but all the girls looked good from a looks perspective at least.

Sin Cara debuts next.

Back with Eve being all upset about losing and Gail comes in to say she knows how it feels. Eve says all the Divas are the same. Natalya gets the same response. Tamina walks up to get something and just keeps walking. Ok then.

Sin Cara vs. Primo

The fans cheer for Sin Cara as Primo hammers away. He tries to

toss Cara into the air so Sin Cara lands on his shoulders and backflips off. Out to the floor and a slingshot rana sends Primo flying. Primo is thrown back in but gets a baseball slide to send Cara back out. We hit a modified chinlock as Primo is getting way too much offense in here.

Cara chops away and gets another rana to get the crowd going a bit more. Powerbomb is countered into a very fast and hard sunset flip. Primo goes up but gets kicked in the head. They stand on the top rope and Primo falls, sending Cara to the floor. A C4 2000 (Downward Spiral with a backflip off the top) ends Primo at 4:30.

Rating: D+. I haven't seen this big of a blown debut in a long time. Primo controlled the majority of the match and whenever Cara got something going, Primo would hit something to slow him down. You couple that with the botch at the end and this was a glorified train wreck. At least the ending was good.

We get a clip from the end of Raw last week with Corre running in. During the live chat on NXT last week Howard Finkel said that was very stupid of them to do. When the Fink comes down on someone, that's not a good sign.

Corre is in the ring and Barrett says he used to see them as equals, but if they can't hold up their end of the bargain then there's no point in continuing. Gabriel takes offense to it and says the 450 has taken out more people and he's a 3 time tag champion. Slater says WE are three time tag champions. Jackson says he made Corre legit. He gets cut off by Santino's music though.

Here are Santino, Henry, Bryan and Bourne. Santino says if they're the Corre then they're the A.P.P.L.E.: Allied People Powered (by) Loathing Everything (you stand for). This fight is for Kozlov so APPLE POWERS UNITE! And yes Santino really said that.

Corre vs. Apple

This is joined in progress as we come back. The Apple name is hilarious if nothing else. Corre is in control hammering away on Daniel Bryan. I wonder if he regrets leaving being the king of the indies yet. Gabriel gets a hilo for two. After a nice long beating it's the hot tag to Santino who cleans house. Cole makes apple jokes the whole time. Everything breaks down and Bryan throws out a suicide dive to take out Barrett. Cobra is loaded up and a reverse DDT ends Santino at 3:37.

Rating: D+. Nothing special at all here other than to show that Corre is mostly united at least. Bryan sells very well so the match was about as good as it was going to get given what they had to work with. Not a terrible match but all things considered it was just ok. At least the right team won.

We talk about Lawler vs. Swagger and here's JR to be in Lawler's corner. Cole makes fun of Ross so JR tries to break into the Cole Mine. When that fails he hits Cole with his hat. Jerry gets up to take out Swagger and we go to a break.

Jerry Lawler vs. Jack Swagger

If Lawler wins he gets a rematch with Cole at Extreme Rules and gets to pick the stipulations. If Swagger wins then Cole never has to face Lawler again. Cole and Ross are at ringside and are on microphones. Swagger controls with basic stuff to start, namely hammering on Jerry. Cole keeps talking trash as Jerry makes a brief comeback, including taking a brief victory lap around the ring.

Headlock by Swagger is reversed by a belly to back suplex. Ankle lock goes on and Jerry does as Ross says by getting to the ropes. Cole shouts MOMMY at Jerry during the hold. Josh isn't talking during the match. Swagger grabs an armbar and cranks on it a bit. Ross: "Your guy had you in an ankle lock

and now has a wrist lock. Show's how stupid he is!"

Cole calls Swagger Jackie as he rams Jerry into the buckle. Lawler Lawlers Up and hammers away. Cole keeps running his mouth so JR finally blasts him. The distraction allows Jerry to grab a rollup for the pin at 5:18. Swagger's face after it is one of the funniest things I've ever seen.

Rating: C-. A lot of that is for the commentary/talking alone. JR's line is one of the most obvious yet brilliant lines I've heard in a long time and shows the basic lack of psychology that is present in wrestling today. Not a great match or anything but given who was in there, this was solid. And no, I'm not saying this was better than the previous two matches. They're not on the same scale and shouldn't be.

Cole rips into Swagger post match, blaming him for everything and saying he paid good money for his help. It was all Swagger's fault that he lost. Then he slaps Swagger and runs. Jerry grabs the mic and says we need to talk about Extreme Rules. He picks the obvious tag match: JR/Lawler vs. Swagger/Cole. Smart thinking actually. Jerry reminds Swagger that Cole just slapped him in the face. Cole panics as Swagger looks like he's about to eat him.

We get a video package of wrestlers both past and present talking about how great Undertaker vs. HHH was.

Edge is talking to Cena and will be heading to the ring next.

Here's Edge as JR, King and Matthews are doing commentary now. Please, I beg of you, pick a team and stick with it. This rotating lineup in the middle of the show is getting annoying. Anyway Edge says he's going to ramble a lot in this. He says a lot of people thinks WWE doesn't hurt and he wishes that wasn't true. 8 years ago he had a neck injury and had spinal fusion surgery to correct it.

He knew he was wrestling on borrowed time but recently he's

been losing the feeling in his arms. He's taken some tests and managed to make it through Wrestlemania, but the tests tell him he has to retire. The doctors have said he has no choice but thankfully they've found out now and he's not going to be in a wheelchair.

Edge breaks down into tears as I'm thinking this isn't a storyline at all. The fans chant thank you Edge and he says thank you guys. Edge talked to Christian who has been his best friend for 27 years. Edge was mad at himself but he's still a fan of the WWE. He talks about going to Maple Leaf Gardens with Christian and seeing guys like Demolition, the LOD and Hogan.

Then he went to Wrestlemania 6 and saw Hulk Hogan vs. the Ultimate Warrior and said he'd be doing that. Fast forward 18 years and it was him in there against the Undertaker. Now he's won more titles than anyone in WWE history and had his last match in a main event at Wrestlemania and gets to retire as World Heavyweight Champion.

Edge has been in this business for 19 years and he grew up in front of these people. He runs through his career from running through the streets of New York to doing posing for the benefits of those with flash photography to a live sex celebration ("luckily with Lita and not Vickie Guerrero") and he hopes that he's earned the fans' respect.

He's going to miss this and tomorrow he doesn't have to wear tights and now he gets to eat ice cream. He says he'd do it again, even getting hired by JR. He drops the mic and gets a standing ovation. No Alberto, no interruptions, nothing else. If this was a work, give this man an Emmy right now. He does his pose on the stage and his music plays him out. Heavy stuff man.

We're back and everyone, faces and heels, is applauding Edge. Even Vickie, Dolph, Corre, everyone. Dustin Rhodes is there in

a shirt and tie. Still no Alberto or Christian. No word on the title situation yet but I'd assume Christian will take his place in the ladder match for the vacant title.

Cue Miz to a nice pop actually. He's on commentary here.

John Cena vs. Randy Orton vs. R-Truth vs. Dolph Ziggler vs. John Morrison

Two will start and then it's a standard gauntlet match, last man standing wins. Ziggler locks on a chinlock after some back and forth stuff. Lawler asks Miz who he'd prefer to face and Miz says he can't hear him over his awesomeness. Josh is reading something and not seeming to pay attention.

Orton fires off some offense and looks down at Miz. Ziggler hides in the ropes to avoid the RK0. He can't avoid the elevated DDT though and Orton sets for the RK0. The Nexus returns though and distracts Orton, allowing him to be pinned at 2:43. Well I didn't see that one coming. Orton has to fight off the Nexus but Ryan takes him out. Orton is left laying as we take a break.

Back with Truth vs. Ziggler. Miz runs down Truth, wondering which version of him would come up. Lawler asks who Miz would rather face and Miz says he'll face either of them. Chinlock goes on by Ziggler as Miz talks about not getting respect. If Cena wanted icon vs. icon he should have challenged Miz. Miz says he's not a talker. Lawler responds with a facepalm.

The in ring stuff is rather boring, mainly because everyone knows Truth doesn't have a chance here of winning the whole thing. Truth hammers away with right hands and gets a sitout gordbuster for two. Ziggler comes back with a neckbreaker as the fans aren't exactly thrilled by this. Out of nowhere Truth gets a jumping downward spiral to put eliminate Ziggler after 4:00 (all times other than the final are of the two in the

ring, not overall time).

Morrison is next and will face Truth after the break. They exchange a bunch of pinfalls to start us off until Morrison hits a breakdancing legdrop and throws on a chinlock. Miz keeps bashing everyone and is sounding like a less insulting version of Mystery Science Theater. They hit the floor and a double clothesline puts both guys down. Both guys slide back in at nine and we keep going.

Morrison gets all angry and takes down Truth with some running offense, including a leg lariat. Truth reverses into a suplex/Stunner. He picks Morrison up for a suplex but shifts him to the side and catches him in a Stunner. Cool looking move. Morrison gets up and hits his kick off the middle rope but misses Starship Pain. The jumping Downward Spiral sends Truth to the final two at 4:51.

Cue Cena as it's him vs. Truth for the shot at Miz. I didn't see this one coming. We're going to start this up after a break. During the break we're told Edge will surrender the title on Friday. This looks more real every second. Back and we're ready to go. Miz comments on the dueling chants and Cena hits a dropkick to the champ's shock. Cena hammers away and hits a new move: a combination powerslam/side slam for two.

Release fisherman's suplex gets two and Cena goes up top. Top rope Fameasser gets two and I have a feeling this isn't going to be as easy as it seemed. Truth makes the comeback and "hits" (read as it misses by about 8 inches) his spinning forearm for two. The downward spiral (that needs a name) can't hit and Cena initiates his ending sequence. Cena sets for the FU but Miz and Riley run in and hit both guys at the same time for a double DQ I guess. The last pairing ran 5:36 and overall counting commercials it ran 30:40.

Rating: C+. The grade is for the whole thing rather than any individual segment. Hard to really grade this as there isn't

much of a precedent for it and the whole match was choppy. Luckily this had a lot of time as the matches where people are eliminated in about a minute are rather annoying as they're ridiculous any other time of the year. Not bad, but hard to grade. Ending was good though.

Miz says there's no #1 contender and we get an E-Mail. There are now 2 #1 contenders: Cena and R-Truth, and there will be a triple threat match at the PPV. Odd choice but ok then. Cena and Truth have a weird bromance moment for a bit as they slap each other on the back rather fiercely and Truth glares at Cena as he leaves.

Overall Rating: B. Well it can't be said nothing happened here. We have a new stable (and yes I know it's a joke), a new #1 contender, a new champion and one of the biggest stars of all time retired. The wrestling here clearly wasn't the point and for a show with this much going on that's more than understandable.

Results

Brie Bella b. Eve Torres – Sitout Facebuster

Sin Cara b. Primo – C4 2000

Corre b. Apple – Slater pinned Marella after a reverse DDT

Jerry Lawler b. Jack Swagger – Rollup

Randy Orton vs. John Cena vs. R-Truth vs. Dolph Ziggler vs. John Morrison went to a double disqualification when Alex Riley and the Miz interfered

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More Fandango Awesomeness

I can't embed this but my goodness it's amazing. From after Raw.

<https://vine.co/v/btWLDKPHT6a>

Monday Night Raw – April 8, 2013: I've Never Seen Anything Like This

Monday Night Raw

Date: April 8, 2013

Location: IZOD Center, East Rutherford, New Jersey

Commentators: Michael Cole, Jerry Lawler, John Bradshaw Layfield

It's the night after Wrestlemania and we have a new world champion here on Raw. Cena pinned Rock after a somewhat lackluster match, giving Cena not only his 14th world title but his 4th title win at Mania alone. Other than that, HHH still has a job, Undertaker has still never lost at Wrestlemania, Shield is still undefeated and Del Rio retained the title. Tonight is usually a huge show with a big surprise, so let's get to it.

Here's Cena to open the show. We also get a Tweet from Rock saying that he tore his abdominal muscles off the bone during his match last night. Cena says it should be everyone's dream to win in the main event of

Wrestlemania, because you get the adulation, the respect and the cheers (of which he gets very few on all counts). He says the fans have known him for ten years now and it seems they're angry tonight. Actually Cena is upset too because Wrestlemania is over.

However, it's the night after Wrestlemania which is when things happen. Last year he got beaten up by Lesnar but he's still here now. Maybe he'll do a little dance. Maybe with a kick. Maybe with a little shake. "Maybe even a little heel turn?" Anyway he says he's the champion and this is what he wants for a Wrestlemania celebration: to defend the WWE Championship. He doesn't care who it is...and here's Mark Henry.

Henry gets in Cena's face and says that he won his match too, just like the champion. The fans chant for Sexual Chocolate so Cena cracks a joke. Henry yells some more about Ryback so Cena cracks more jokes. Cena agrees to defend the title tonight against Henry but here's Booker T. He says Rock is #1 contender to the WWE Championship (Cena: "Once in a lifetime best two out of three?") because Rock has a guaranteed rematch. Therefore, if Henry wants a shot, he has to beat Cena in a one on one match tonight. Henry promises to put Cena in the Hall of Pain.

Alberto faces Colter/Swagger in a handicap match tonight.

Daniel Bryan vs. Big E. Langston

We get a Tweet from Shield saying that they're going to do something historic. Langston shoves Bryan down to start and hits a hard running charge into the corner to keep control. A delayed backdrop puts Bryan down and Langston pounds away in the corner. Bryan comes back with a bunch of kicks to the chest and a hard one to the head, but an AJ distraction lets Zigler crotch Bryan. As Kane goes after Dolph, Big E. throws Daniel over the top and onto Kane for the save. Back inside and the Big Ending gets the pin on Bryan at 2:17. Total squash.

Kurt Warner, former NFL quarterback, hosts a new reality show called The Moment on USA and is at Raw tonight.

Intercontinental Title: The Miz vs. Wade Barrett

Barrett is challenging after losing the title last night on the pre-show. Wade pounds away in the corner to start but Miz comes back with a left hand and a snap suplex for two. Off to a chinlock by the champion as the fans chant for Barrett. Wade escapes but gets caught in a quick sunset flip for two more and it's back to the chinlock. That's easily broken up as we now talk about the rugby player Barrett is named after. Wade comes back and sends Miz into the ropes for a neckbreaker to the apron as we take a break.

Back with Barrett getting a near fall off the Winds of Change. Miz rolls to the floor so Wade can drop an elbow off the apron for two. Off to a chinlock on the champion for a bit but Miz fights up and pounds away. A running knee and big boot put Barrett down but they botch the Reality Check (the backbreaker went fine but Wade fell down before the neckbreaker started).

The corner clothesline hits a bit better and Miz's short DDT gets two. Wasteland is escaped and Miz puts on the Figure Four, only to have Wade make the rope. Barrett comes back with a quick elbow and goes to the middle rope (since nothing has been done to his leg at all so far right?). Miz breaks it up but gets slammed into the top turnbuckle. Barrett hits the Bull Hammer and regains the title at 13:00.

Rating: C+. The match wasn't bad actually but the booking makes less than no sense. This puts Barrett at 1-2 in the last three weeks against Miz, but he walks out with the title anyway. Naturally there's going to be a third match because that's how WWE works, but this whole feud (what are they fighting over anyway?) is worthless and done for.

Vickie and Maddox are arguing in the back when Sheamus comes in. He wants Big Show tonight but Brad says Sheamus will owe them one. Sheamus glares him down so Vickie says she'll give Sheamus a match. She doesn't say who it's going to be against though.

Randy Orton comes up to Booker in the back and asks for a match with Big Show tonight. Booker says Sheamus has already gotten that match tonight but Orton says Booker is a GM and a Hall of Famer. This makes Booker overrule Vickie and give Orton the match instead. Great. Now we get

battling GMs. Again.

Here are Colter and Swagger with Zeb asking for the fans' support for their handicap match up next against Del Rio. He wants the fans to chant USA when Del Rio comes out.

Alberto Del Rio vs. Zeb Colter/Jack Swagger

The heels have to tag so Swagger starts things off. The fans want Ziggler. Not much of note to start until Swagger is sent to the floor. Del Rio hits a suicide dive to send Swagger into the announce table and hits a running stomp for good measure. A top rope cross body gets two on Swagger but Zeb gets in a cheap shot, allowing Swagger to take out the world champion's knee.

The knee is worked on even more until Del Rio fights back and tries for the enziguri in the corner. It misses by six inches but thankfully Swagger doesn't sell it. They trade some standing switches and there's the Patriot Lock, but Del Rio rolls out quickly. Del Rio puts the armbreaker on over the top rope until a four count but is knocked into the barricade for good measure as we take a break.

Back with Jack hitting a belly to back suplex for two and cranking on the leg some more. Jack misses a charge into the corner and hits the post, allowing Alberto to make his comeback with some clotheslines and the tilt-a-whirl backbreaker. The backbreaker re-injures the champion's knee though and both guys are down again.

A hard kick to Swagger's head gets two but the armbreaker is countered into a belly to belly for two. Off to the Patriot Lock again but Alberto makes a rope. The hold goes on for the third time but Alberto pulls him into the armbreaker as he did last night. Jack taps at 11:06. Colter never got into the match.

Rating: D+. This wasn't terrible but at the same time it's the same.....screw the rating because we've got music.

Post match Alberto has his leg looked at and HERE COMES ZIGGLER!

Smackdown World Title: Alberto Del Rio vs. Dolph Ziggler

The place goes NUTS for Ziggler as he stomps away on the leg and head of Alberto. The Fameasser hits for two but Ziggler misses a splash in the corner. The enziguri in the corner hits for a VERY close two and there's the armbreaker. Ziggler cranks on the bad knee to break the hold and the Zig Zag gives us a new champion at 2:15.

If that's not enough, here's Undertaker. He talks about dedicating the match to Paul Bearer...and here's Shield. They surround the ring and all get on the apron at the same time. Cue Kane and Bryan for the save before there's any contact. As usual, Shield runs when the numbers are even.

In the back, Ziggler says he's going to go show off his new title.

R-Truth/Santino Marella/Zack Ryder vs. 3MB

No entrances for any of these guys in this random tag match. Truth and Heath start things off with Slater being slammed down. Santino comes in, thrusts his pelvis, gets punched once, and bails. Off to Ryder vs. Mahal with Zack getting beaten down on the floor by a cheating McIntyre. Apparently Drew is legal now and hits a big boot to the jaw for no cover.

Off to Slater for some more beating before it's back to McIntyre for an armbar. A neckbreaker puts Drew down and there's the hot tag to Santino. He cleans house on Slater with his usual stuff but Mahal breaks up a near fall. Everything breaks down and the Cobra is enough to pin Slater at 3:30.

Rating: D. I have no idea what the point of this was. Were they running short or something and needed to fill in five minutes with something like this? None of the guys have anything going on right now so let's spend a few minutes on them here to fill in a gap...I guess?

We look at the week in New York/New Jersey to promote Wrestlemania.

Orton and Sheamus argue in the back. Sheamus says he has this and Orton isn't pleased.

Last night Big Show said he didn't turn on his partners but rather they turned on him. He tagged himself in and yeah, he saved the team from the TripleBomb. Then later on, Orton stole the tag which should have belonged

to him because Orton had to take his thunder. No one is taking Show's thunder again. That's not the route he wants to take anymore. The only thing important to him anymore is himself.

Here's Sheamus to ask who wants to see him face Big Show. He calls out Vickie to make it official but here's Orton instead. Randy gets in Sheamus' face and says that Big Show is his tonight. He asks the fans who wants to see him beat up Big Show and the fans seem pretty split. The solution? TWITTER POLL!

Back from a break and Orton wins the poll 77-23. Before the match though, here are Booker and Vickie. Instead of Orton vs. Big Show, it's Orton vs. Sheamus and the winner gets Big Show. So the poll happened....why?

Sheamus vs. Randy Orton

They shove each other to start and the fans do an OLE chant. Orton hits a snapmare but Sheamus avoids a knee drop. Sheamus hits a pair of knees for his own for two and starts working on the arm. Orton comes back with another knee to the chest as the match keeps going. Randy hooks a chinlock as the fans think a four minutes old match is boring.

Now Sheamus hooks a chinlock as the announcers talk about going to London in a few weeks for Raw. Now the fans chant for Rob Van Dam. Now it's HBK. Orton slowly stomps away as the match is completely ignored. The fans are now chanting for JBL as Sheamus gets two off the rolling fireman's carry. Sheamus goes up top and the fans chant for Lawler. This is BIZARRE. Orton dropkicks Sheamus out of the air and now they're chanting Cole as we take a break.

Back with the fans chanting what sounded like DDP and then ECW as Sheamus makes a comeback. The Irish Curse hits for two as the crowd is doing the Wave. JBL: "I wish Michael would drown in it." Sheamus hits his knee to the ribs and the ten forearms in the ropes as the fans suddenly start cheering along. A suplex brings Orton back in as Sheamus is smiling. Orton's backbreaker puts Sheamus as we get a Randy Savage chant. Even the announcers are giving up at this point.

The powerslam and t-bone suplex put Sheamus down as the HBK chant starts

again. There's the Elevated DDT and Orton loads up the RK0, only to be shoved off into White Noise. I think the fans are booing Sheamus but how can you tell in this match? The Brogue Kick misses and here comes Big Show as I think everyone knew was about to happen. He throws Sheamus into the post, presumably ending the match at 15:10. Fans: "Thank you Big Show."

Rating: N/A. I have almost no idea what happened in this match but the crowd stole the show here. The thing I don't get is that while the match was slow paced, it wasn't THAT bad. This is a case where the fans just did not care what was going on and found ways to entertain themselves. I've never seen anything like this but it was awesome in a way. For an actual grade, we'll go roughly C- or so.

Post match Show KO's Orton and hits a BIG spear on the floor. The fans chant FIRE RANDY as Orton is launched into the announce table. Show picks up the announcers' chairs and tries to throw them into the ring but only hits the ropes both times. Fans: "ONE MORE TIME!" Show walks away instead.

We recap Shield invading Undertaker's speech earlier.

Fandango vs. Kofi Kingston

The fans are still hot and it seems to be for Fandango. Fandango dances around Kofi before Kingston sends him into the corner. The fans are HUMMING FANDANGO'S THEME MUSIC. Not that it matters as Jericho runs in for the DQ at 1:30.

Post match Jericho destroys Fandango by whipping into whatever he can find. They head inside and there are the Walls of Jericho for good measure. Referees finally come out to break it up. A Codebreaker leaves Fandango laying. The referee declares Fandango the winner and from his back in agony, Fandango corrects his pronunciation. The crowd basically starts a dance party to Fandango's music.

Video on Cena's media appearances today.

We look at HHH getting his arm looked at. He's fine apparently.

Here's Heyman (crowd ERUPTS) in the back with something to say. His guys lost last night but it took HHH 23 minutes to beat Lesnar. Shawn and HHH aren't here because of the beatings they took last night at Lesnar's hands. Paul says Lesnar is ready for a fight TONIGHT. That isn't happening though, because Brock doesn't fight for free. Instead, Heyman wants to talk about Punk who is going to tell the fans how he feels....next week.

Rhodes Scholars/Bellas vs. Funkadactyls/Tons of Funk

This was scheduled for last night but got bumped for time reasons. We're joined in progress after a break with Naomi hitting the Rear View on one of the Bellas. Off to Cody but Naomi hits a rana on him anyway. Tensai comes in and launches Cody into the corner before hitting a RUNNING FLIP DIVE into the corner. Cody hits a Disaster Kick to send Tensai into 619 position.

The Bellas smack their hips onto Tensai's head and the Wind-Up Elbow gets a BIG reaction. The hot tag brings in Brodus for his usual stuff and a kind of slide into a cover gets two. Everything breaks down and Sandow is crushed between the big men. A double splash ends Damien at 2:28.

We look at The Moment again.

John Cena vs. Mark Henry

Non-title here and if Henry wins, he gets a title shot at some point in the future. Cena ducks under Henry and dances a bit. He pounds on Henry but gets run over by a single shot from Mark. The fans are behind Henry of course. Mark pounds on Cena in the corner but misses a splash, allowing Cena to pound away. Henry rolls to the floor as we hear about Rock tearing his abdominal muscle off his pelvis bone in addition to having a hernia.

They go back to the announce table so here's a chant for the table. Henry loads up the announce table but Cena escapes the World's Strongest Slam. Mark rams him back first into the post but Cena sends him into the steps and slides back inside for the countout win at 3:29. Seriously that's it.

Rating: D+. Again what can you expect here? They didn't have the time to do much here but what we got wasn't bad. Cena is the kind of guy who could have a good match against Henry if given the time, but again what can you ask for with about two hundred seconds to a match? Nothing to see here.

Post match Henry lays out Cena but Ryback makes the save. Ryback lays out Henry with a Meat Hook...and turns to look at Cena. The fans chant YES but Ryback pulls Cena to his feet. Cena stares at him and Ryback nods. Cena poses on the ropes and Ryback does FEED ME MORE. Cena looks at Ryback...AND THERE'S THE MEAT HOOK! Shell Shock to Cena ends the show and we've got a heel turn.

Overall Rating: C+. I've seen over 40,000 matches and well over 2000 shows. I have NEVER seen anything like this crowd tonight. I'm pretty sure they started because they were bored and then they just took off. As for the show...eh it wasn't terrible, but the first hour SUCKED. I'm sick of these GM's having to hold our hands through every match being made and taking up so much time because saying "these two have issues, tonight they fight" is too complex. Anyway, a lot of stuff happened tonight and it's going to be interesting to see the fallout of it. Good show overall and FAR more interesting than I was expecting.

Results

Big E. Langston b. Daniel Bryan – Big Ending

Wade Barrett b. The Miz – Bull Hammer

Alberto Del Rio b. Jack Swagger/Zeb Colter – Cross Armbreaker to Swagger

Dolph Ziggler b. Alberto Del Rio – Zig Zag

Zack Ryder/Santino Marella/R-Truth b. 3MB – Cobra to Slater

Sheamus b. Randy Orton via DQ when Big Show interfered

Fandango b. Kofi Kingston via DQ when Chris Jericho interfered

John Cena b. Mark Henry via countout

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