

NXT – January 4, 2011

NXT

Date: January 4, 2011

Location: Tucson Convention Center, Tucson, Arizona

Commentators: Todd Grisham, Josh Matthews

It's the first elimination week for this season which is the best thing that could have happened as the show is being dragged down by the awful guys they have on here. I can't imagine it's not O'Brian or Novak that is gone tonight. I fell asleep before the show came on so this is being written after the show and I had it spoiled for me by accident although I can't say I was stunned with the result. Let's get to it.

We open with a montage of the rookies interacting with their pros and how it's the first elimination tonight. Nothing we don't know in other words.

Wow these guys have been wild and young for awhile now. Shouldn't it be tamed and older by now?

Striker is on the stage with the rookies and announces that the winner will get a tag title show with their pro. Tonight there is a Pro's Challenge in the form of a battle royal. The winning pro will have the option of trading their pro if they so choose. Cool. Before we start though, Ricardo Rodriguez comes out and offers to take Alberto's spot for some reason. Ok then.

Battle Royal

Immediately Bryan picks Ricardo up and puts him in an airplane spin for a mind blowing 30 seconds. The other pros stand around and cheer Bryan on, saying how long can you do that for. Truth takes mercy on Ricardo and throws him out. It's DiBiase, Bryan, Masters, Zigler and Truth in there if you're

not familiar with the Pros. Ziggler puts out Bryan and shouts that Bryan has no idea how good that felt.

DiBiase gets a low bridge to put Truth out. Sorry for the lack of commentary here as it's hard to talk about battle royals. Masters tries to put DiBiase out so Ziggler comes up behind them and dumps both guys out to win at 3:50. Yeah it was rather short but I think that was the point.

Rating: C. Yeah there wasn't much to this at all so we'll just call it right in the middle. Ziggler more or less dominated this, getting rid of three of the five eliminations including the second biggest star in the match in Bryan. It was way too short to get a fair grade so the C isn't saying it was average but more along the lines of I have no idea if it was good or not.

Ziggler talks about how he never liked Novak and trades him for Saxton. That's certainly an upgrade. Then again the coat is more valuable than Novak so it's not like an upgrade is hard in this case. Novak vs. Saxton next.

Byron Saxton vs. Jacob Novak

Novak starts off all aggressive prompting a funny reaction from Ziggler who shouts WHY DIDN'T YOU DO THAT WHEN YOU WERE WITH ME? This is rather boring and the crowd certainly seems to agree with me on that point. Ziggler keeps screaming things at Saxton and is definitely the most entertaining part of the match. Novak is one of the least interesting characters I've seen in a very long time.

There's nothing interesting about him at all and his time on offense here is putting me to sleep, which is saying a lot as I slept for a long time earlier tonight. Saxton makes a comeback while Dolph tells Novak that he sucks. This match is setting records for clotheslines used. Saxton reverses a suplex into....uh....I'm not sure to call it. He hooked a Tazmission looking hold and rocked Novak forward and then

backwards into a mat slam with Saxton sitting out the other way. It was pretty stupid if you didn't get that but it ended this at approximately 5:40.

Rating: D-. Just boring beyond belief here and it took me a long time to sit through the nearly six minutes this received. Saxton would definitely be better suited as a mouthpiece or a backstage character as he doesn't have much to offer in the ring. Very bad match and dull beyond belief.

Curtis is talking to Truth about how they can work together as a wolf pack roaming through the Arizona desert. Truth doesn't know what Curtis is talking about and Curtis isn't sure either. Curtis vs. Clay is later.

Raw Rebound is about the cage match and doesn't mention the whole WORLD TITLE MATCH or anything like that. Not important at all.

We get a clip of the way too excited Bateman talking to Bryan. Bateman offers his advice on the love triangle with the Bellas because he was called Dr. Love in high school. Bryan: "No you weren't." Bateman: "Ok no I wasn't but I still know what I'm talking about." Funny stuff. There's a double date next week. Bateman says they're about chicks and AMERICA, as he pulls a random flag out from behind him. I'm liking this guy a bit more every week.

Ziggler and Saxton affirm their love for each other with Ziggler telling Saxton to stay away from Vickie which is no issue. There's a battle of the mic competition later. Apparently it's next.

Time for the Battle of the Mic. To update the immunity point standings:

Curtis: 5

Bateman: 3

Novak: 1

Saxton: 1

O'Brian: 0

Clay: 0

Good thing Clay has that thing called talent to get him through this safely. Naturally this is worth four points so that the previous weeks mean far less. Basically this is a talk-off. First up is Clay vs. Curtis. Clay talks about how funny it was to see Curtis go through that table last week at his hands. Curtis says it was funny that time when he hit Clay in the mouth, which hasn't happened. Curtis naturally pops him in the mouth. The crowd picks Curtis and Brodus is eliminated.

Bateman vs. Saxton is next. Bateman says that Saxton's voice destroyed ECW and says that Saxton is the lovechild of Carlton Banks and a shorter Carlton Banks. Saxton's reply is that no matter what, he's still better than Bateman. Both of these were really bad and Saxton is out.

Novak vs. O'Brian is next and I need a stiff drink. Novak talks about the rat thing and plays up the whole rat thing. O'Brian makes a bunch of stupid jokes but the delivery is definitely better. O'Brian wins this by a mile as he definitely should.

Round 2 is where you have to insult both guys. Curtis makes fun of Bateman's haircut. He says he likes rats so he has nothing to make fun of for O'Brian. Striker likes rats too.

Bateman says that Curtis looks like he belongs on To Catch a Predator. Conor is a lot like Conan, minus the talent.

O'Brian makes Your Mama jokes and somehow these are the funniest lines in the whole thing. O'Brian wins it and he actually should have. Curtis has the immunity points lead still though.

Johnny Curtis vs. Brodus Clay

Remember that Curtis hit Clay just a few minutes ago. Clay runs him over to start and the beating is on. Curtis gets him to the floor where DiBiase yells at the big man a bit. Brodus uses some of those supelxes to take over. I like this guy pretty well I think and he's definitely the most interesting guy on this season as I've said before. Clay keeps using basic power and we hit a nerve hold.

This is such a change in night and day as compared to the other one on one match as the fans are into this and there's an energy here that is very refreshing. Curtis fights his way up and takes out the knee and hits a spinwheel kick to take over. A top rope shot to the head gets two. For some reason he goes after DiBiase though and a Tongan Death Grip Slam (more or less a chokeslam) gets Brodus the clean pin at 3:32.

Rating: C+. Not a great match at all but the energy in it was really fun. Brodus is very fun to watch as he mixes things up very nicely out there. The Tongan Death Grip is a move I wouldn't mind seeing dusted off and who better than Clay to use it? Decent match and one of the more entertaining ones so far this season.

Post match Striker asks Clay what fuels him and he says it's because he's tired of being cast aside and is the marathon...whatever that means. Elimination is up next.

Curtis says that Clay should go home tonight. To the shock of absolutely no one, Novak is gone first. It's a crushing blow but he got to have this be a learning experience. Ziggler makes fun of him almost the whole time which is rather funny. The next elimination is in two weeks and the points are set to zero.

Ziggler makes fun of Masters again and does his pose thing. Since apparently hitting him in the back is too complex for Masters he tries the full nelson on him and the IC Champion escapes to end the show.

Overall Rating: C+. Better show than previous weeks by miles and miles, but the most important thing is that Novak is gone. Everyone else compared to him is a great save for maybe O'Brian so that's a nice break indeed. Aside from Novak's match there wasn't anything completely horrid here so this was overall a decent enough show. Two weeks can't get here soon enough to get rid of rat boy though, despite him showing some decent delivery here tonight.

Monday Night Raw – January 3, 2011

Monday Night Raw

Date: January 3, 2011

Location: University of Phoenix Stadium, Phoenix, Arizona

Commentators: Josh Matthews, Michael Cole

It's the first show of the year and we have a huge main event in the form of Miz vs. Morrison in a falls count anywhere match for the WWE Title. Apparently that's going to be opening the show which kind of negates the whole main event thing. Also we'll get to see the next step in the Punk vs. Cena feud. Let's get to it.

Theme song opens us up.

Raw World Title: The Miz vs. John Morrison

No Lawler due to the beatdown last week by Miz. Morrison takes down Riley to start and we hit the floor very quickly. Morrison fights both guys off and comes off the top of the big W with a huge cross body for two. Back to the ring as that was a very quick segment up there. Missile dropkick gets two for

the challenger. The running knee gets two also as Riley interferes. Morrison DESTROYS Riley and we take a break as the paramedics attend to him.

Back with Miz setting up a piece of railing up against the stage. He can't suplex Morrison through it for awhile but Morrison tries one too many counters and winds up taking a backdrop into it for two. Back towards the ring again with Miz in control. They slug it out in the ring with Morrison taking over again.

Morrison gets Miz down and goes for Starship Pain. Miz rolls out of the way and gets the Reality Check for two. He charges but rams into the post. Starship Pain hits for two and a big kick sends Miz to the floor. Morrison sets up a table and goes for Starship Pain off the top through the table. The champion moves and the table more or less explodes in an awesome looking spot. That somehow only gets two and Miz is ticked off. The Skull Crushing Finale on the floor ends this clean at approximately 22:00.

Rating: B+. This was a good brawl and a solid back and forth match. I'm not sure if I get the point of having Morrison use his title shot on the first show of the year rather than the Rumble but there's time to see what they've got planned I suppose. This had some good spots and there were a few moments of possibility that the title could change hands. Good stuff but it never hit the level they wanted it to I don't think.

There's a #1 contenders match later in a cage.

Back with a new backstage interviewer who is with Miz. Miz goes on about how he's WWE Champion and is still awesome.

We recap the Natalya vs. Melina issues with Cole saying Natalya needs to get over it.

Melina/Maryse/Alicia Fox vs. Natalya/Brie Bella/Eve Torres

Quick break between the intros. Those are some lackluster partners for Natalya. Maryse and Brie brawl to start with Maryse controlling. Brie is sent to the floor and the twins switch under the ring. Off to Natalya and Alicia and Natalya is more concerned with getting at Melina than Alicia. Butterfly suplex puts Alicia down and Natalya goes after Melina. The champion gets clotheslined over the top rope and here's Melina officially. Natalya drills her with a spinning forearm and brings in Eve. Not much of a showdown there. Eve hits a spinning neckbreaker to end it at approximately 3:00.

Rating: D+. I'm not sure what the point was to having Natalya be all about getting to Melina and then having them be in at the same time for maybe 4 seconds. The Twin Magic was incredibly quick and didn't serve much purpose at all. I'm not sure what the actual point to this was but it didn't work that well.

Uso Brothers vs. Santino Marella/Vladimir Kozlov

Pretty sure this is non-title but I'm not sure. Vladimir and I believe Jimmy start us off. After some brief Russian dominance we're off to Santino to a big pop. This is looking like a squash so far. I'm glad they've giving Santino some real offense such as the sambo stuff. Back to Kozlov and the crowd dies almost immediately.

The Usos take over with basic jobber offense for a little while. Santino comes back in and cleans a few rooms. He isn't doing enough to classify it as cleaning house you see. Kozlov comes back in illegally to try and help out his partner by growling at an Uso. Somehow this works but Kozlov winds up getting sent to the floor. Vlad gets stuck on the ropes for a bit so Santino has to finish shoving him over. Santino sets for the Cobra but walks into a Samoan Drop for the surprising pin at 4:02.

Post match Tamina and Santino hit a double Cobra on Jey. You

never would know they had just lost the match based on how well they're taking it.

Rating: D. Pretty ugly match here with the crowd completely dying when Santino wasn't in there. The Usos aren't exactly an interesting team but they're better than nothing I suppose. It gives them actual challengers which they've been needing since they won the belts. Weak match though.

Tough Enough is officially coming back. Oh joy.

Punk is on his way to the ring.

Back from a break with the new leader of Nexus. Punk says he loves being in Phoenix and that he's been bust all day looking for Cena. He couldn't find him anywhere though and that he, ahem, couldn't see him. Cena isn't here this week because of Punk and what happened last week.

Punk talks about being a leader of men and that Nexus saw this and they almost begged him to be their new leader. We see a clip of the Nexus beatdown from last week and Punk's GTS. Punk talks about hustle, loyalty and respect and how it's just a catchphrase to Cena but to Punk it's very real. Cena can't win this fight and Punk is taking over both Nexus and Monday Night Raw.

Here's Wade Barrett who isn't thrilled with this at all. Barrett says that Cena isn't here because of a beating he gave Cena in a match in Pennsylvania earlier in the week which is true kind of. Barrett also says he's the leader of Nexus, not Punk. Punk says Nexus needed new management and now has it. Wade says that Punk is a liar, including about being straightedge.

Punk says let's ask Nexus who the liar is and Barrett agrees, calling down the troops. I like how they come out in the V formation like an army. We get an E-Mail almost immediately and tonight there's are three participants in a match in the

cage for the title shot at the Rumble. It's Barrett vs. Punk vs. Sheamus vs. Orton. They finally have something that looks like an e-mail on the screen too. Ah apparently only Barrett or Punk can be in the cage.

Barrett says he'll take the spot as the leader of the Nexus. Punk says take it as he's a talker not a fighter. If Barrett wins the match then Punk will work for him and Barrett can be the leader. If Barrett loses he's out of Nexus and Punk is officially the leader.

Del Rio is here? Nice surprise. I love that car he's in which is a red and white Chevy from the 1967. He says it's his destiny to be world champion and that he'll show that tonight. It's his destiny to win the Rumble and be in the main event at Wrestlemania. R-Truth apparently disagrees. Truth says that Alberto's destiny is to go back where he came from.

Alberto Del Rio vs. R-Truth

Truth dominates early on with his usual unorthodox offense. A clothesline puts Alberto on the floor almost immediately and a dive over the top puts Del Rio down as we take a break. Back with Truth hammering away on Alberto in the corner. Del Rio gets in a shot to break the momentum and hits a Codebreaker onto the arm.

Off to an armbar as we talk about how Del Rio has taken out various people on the Smackdown roster and wants to take out more. Truth tries to fight back but can't do his flip out of the corner due to the arm. A modified arm drag gets two and it's back to the arm. Truth manages to send Alberto to the floor and starts taking over with his one good arm. And never mind as Alberto sends his arm into the post and the Cross Armbreaker (with very little torque on it at all) ends this clean in 10:00.

Rating: C+. Better than I expected here given that R-Truth is a guy I can't get into at all. Del Rio gets another nice win

to further his push even more which is something he needs, especially before his big match with Rey on Friday. Nice little match here with Truth being able to hang in there for awhile but at the end being overwhelmed in the end.

Barrett talks to Nexus and says that he can make each and every one of them champions like he did Slater and Gabriel. Punk comes up and calls out Barrett when Barrett says Punk is using Nexus for his own gain. Punk says they're all pulling for him. Barrett leaves and Punk shakes all of their hands.

Over to Orton who says last year meant nothing and that the only thing he cared about was Miz cashing in. Orton says he was FAR too nice as he actually held back a bit and didn't punt Jericho. He says that nice guys finish last and implies that isn't happening anymore.

Cage match is next.

Randy Orton vs. Wade Barrett vs. Sheamus

In a cage and the winner gets Miz at the Rumble. We're going old school here as it's escape only. Cena might be back next week. BIG pop for Orton. Sheamus and Orton beat down Barrett early on but Sheamus tries to run away, only to be stopped by Orton. Barrett takes over off the distraction and goes for Wasteland which is acknowledged as the move that injured Cena. Orton tries to escape to no avail.

Sheamus tries to escape to complete the set of people trying to get out. Orton almost goes through the door but turns back around to coil up in front of the other two. Cole says Orton couldn't have made it out, but it was pretty clear he could have. Odd indeed and we take a break.

Back with Orton almost all the way out until Sheamus makes the save. Barrett helps to finally pull him back in and the two evildoers take over again. Orton tries for the elevated DDT on Sheamus but has to stop to keep Barrett from getting out. He

tries for a double elevated DDT but Barrett fights out of it. Sheamus blocks as well and sends Orton into the steel.

Orton gets taken down by the two UK dudes but since one is Irish and one is British they start fighting amongst themselves. Barrett goes up but slips, allowing Orton to make another save. Superplex puts Barrett down as are Orton and Sheamus. Sheamus gets up and beats the tar out of Barrett but can't get through the door thanks to Orton.

Barrett sends Sheamus into the cage multiple times and adds a pump handle slam. Orton is back up though and gets taken down almost immediately by a Boss Man Slam. Barrett tries to escape but Sheamus slows him down. Wade kicks him down but instead of going out he tries a top rope elbow which gets knees. Sheamus doesn't take the chance to get out either and gets taken down by Orton's clotheslines.

Powerslams to both guys and the Angle Slam to Sheamus. Elevated DDT to Barrett but Sheamus slows Randy down. They slug it out on the top rope until Barrett kicks said rope to crotch both guys. Both guys are down now after a pair of big boots. Barrett is the only person up so he tries to climb out. Here's Punk though, climbing into the cage and offering his hand. He'd help a lot better to just open the door for him but whatever.

Barrett takes his hand but Punk goes all Scar to Barrett's Mufasa and pulls the armband off and shoves Barrett back into the ring. Sheamus puts Orton down and the door is open. And of course there's the RK0 to Sheamus so that Orton can go through the door at 19:40 to get the title shot at the Rumble. Oh joy.

Rating: A-. I liked this better than the opener actually. The escape only worked very well and it does two things as it sets up the PPV and gets Barrett out of Nexus (not mentioned at all post match). This was a more old school style with the false finishes and saves. I like the lack of pinning as it makes it

feel more about survival than winning. Very good match to close out Raw.

Overall Rating: B+. Well you certainly can't complain about a lack of wrestling here with two very good matches that both ran about twenty minutes. Throw in a ten minute Alberto match and you're looking at nearly an hour of wrestling on a two hour and ten minute show. This was fun stuff as we're in Rumble mode now and things are starting to click. Good stuff here, although I'm not looking forward to Miz vs. Orton at all.

Results

The Miz b. John Morrison – Skull Crushing Finale

Natalya/Brie Bella/Eve Torres b. Melina/Maryse/Alicia Fox – Spinning neckbreaker to Melina

Uso Brothers b. Vladimir Kozlov/Santino Marella – Samoan Drop to Marella

Alberto Del Rio b. R-Truth – Cross Armbreaker

Randy Orton b. Sheamus and Wade Barrett – Orton escaped the cage