

Monday Night Raw – April 2, 2012: LESNAR!

Monday Night Raw

Date: April 2, 2012

Location: American Airlines Arena, Miami, Florida

Commentators: Michael Cole, Jerry Lawler

Tonight is the show after Wrestlemania and we basically start the new year in WWE. The Rock beat John Cena last night in a good match that didn't quite live up to its hype. Other than that, HHH couldn't break the Streak, which shouldn't surprise anyone. I'm not sure what comes next on this show, which is what makes tonight fun. Let's get to it.

We open with a state of the shows speech by Ace but Punk interrupts, saying that everyone knows that Ace is a giant tool box. Ace says that Punk is defending tonight against Mark Henry. This is the era of People Power according to the boss.

Theme song.

Here's Rock for the real opening. The fans chant his latest catchphrase for awhile to keep him from talking for awhile and he does the goosebumps thing. He talks about how he came back 14 months ago and they've done it all since then. It wasn't until last night that Rock stood before 70,000 people and won at Wrestlemania in Sun Life Stadium. Now he can truly say he's come back...home.

Rock explains the goosebumps thing again and says he has to thank Cena. The fans of course think he sucks because it's what they're programmed to do. Rock says it's an honor to have competed against Cena in the biggest match of all time, and all that matters is they made history for the fans. Rock thanks the people for being there for him last night and for always being behind him.

For some reason Rock talks about being cut from the Canadian Football League. "Do you realize how much you have to suck to be cut from the Canadian Football League?????" He thanks the people for making him the people's champion and promises this is only the beginning. The fans chant Thank You Rocky and Rock talks about having a vision last night after partying in Miami. He shows off a bit of the dancing he did (drawing a whistle, apparently from a male Cena fan) and asks if the people want to hear his vision. The vision is that one day he'll be WWE Champion.

US Title: Santino Marella vs. Jack Swagger vs. Dolph Ziggler

Basically it's a handicap match here as both guys corner him. Swagger gets him in the corner and Ziggler kicks him down. There are the sit-ups from Ziggler and Swagger rides him on the mat. Santino fights back with right hands and dumps Dolph to the floor (required great bump) but Swagger runs him over with a tackle as we take a break. Back with Santino in trouble again, more or less just like it's been all match so far.

Ziggy holds him but Santino gets in a boot and a Saito Suplex to Ziggler. He takes over on Jack and loads up the Cobra but Dolph grabs a neckbreaker to put him right back down. An assisted Fameasser gets two as Jack looks like he wants to make the save. Yep we're in triple threat formula territory now. Swagger suplexes Ziggler but the Vader Bomb eats knees. Ziggler dropkicks Swagger and walks into a slingshot. Cobra to Swagger keeps the title at 6:51.

Rating: C-. This was any triple threat match that you've seen in a long time. The face gets beaten down for awhile, the heels don't get along, the face steals the win to keep the title. There's nothing wrong with that and it worked decently here, but it's something we've seen time after time.

Post match they go after him (after falling for the LOOK OVER THERE gag) and almost catch him on the stage, but Brodus

freaking Clay comes out as backup for Santino. Ziggy charges at him but runs into the headbutt. Swagger won't jump him so Clay, the dancers and Santino have a little dance party. LOUD Funkasaurus chant during him staring down Swagger/Ziggler too. That's a really good sign.

Lord Tensai vs. Alex Riley

Tensai has some Japanese guy with him to throw salt. It's clearly Albert/A-Train even though all of his face other than his eyes is covered. Cole says it's known that he's a former WWE Superstar who went to Japan and dominated before coming back. I'm not sure if I like that or not but it's one way to go. He's in red trunks and arm bands and has Japanese symbols across his face diagonally. His face is uncovered now but we haven't heard his old name yet. Total domination with tons of elbow strikes and headbutts and Riley is out. Chokebomb ends this via referee stoppage at 2:46. Standard debuting monster squash.

Riley is almost up a few seconds later so Tensai throws on a claw post match. He spit something on his hand before putting the hold on. They never said A-Train or Albert.

We hear again about how Cena is going to call out Rock tonight for the fallout from last night. We've gotten two clips of him saying he had to win last night, so the question is how he'll react to it.

Raw World Title: Mark Henry vs. CM Punk

Punk gets overpowered to start but manages to get in some strikes. Those get him absolutely nowhere. Well, unless you count face down on the mat and getting pounded on somewhere of course. Either way, Henry dominates him with pure power. Punk's back is still hurt from the Jericho match last night. There's a bearhug but it never goes on fully, as Punk pounds away and DDTs out of it for two. Running knee to the head gets the same. Henry gets in another shot to the back and sets for

a Vader Bomb, but Punk gets in a shot to break it up.

That doesn't really matter though as Henry drills him again and tries a second time. This time Punk moves and Henry crashes down. Henry manages to run him over though and we take a break. Back with Punk diving into a clothesline but getting caught by Henry. He knocks the champ down again and it's nerve hold time. Punk fights out of that and chops the tar out of Henry.

A high kick puts Henry down and a very slow climb sets up the Macho Elbow. It hurts Punk's back again but he manages the running knee in the corner. No bulldog though. Another knee looks to set up the bulldog but Henry throws Punk to the floor. That combo works about 2% of the time. In a very surprising ending, Punk doesn't beat the count back in and Henry wins by countout at 13:00.

Rating: C+. Good stuff here with Punk fighting the odds and trying to hang in there, but I'm not sure I like the ending. It obviously sets up a rematch for Henry which is the right idea, and I think I can live with that. Not a bad match at all, but it wasn't my favorite for some reason. Maybe it's Henry not being that interesting anymore. Actually scratch that about the ending. The match was for the title so there was no other way to end it if that's how they're going forward, which is ok.

Post match Henry gives him the World's Strongest Slam on the floor. The fans want Lesnar. Ace and Otunga come out to say that Punk is going to be defending the title on a much more consistent basis. Jericho pops up and says that it looks like Punk needs a drink. He pulls out a bottle of what looks like whiskey and pours it on Punk's head, ala Raven or Lawler/Roberts in 1996. Jericho slips on the booze in a funny bit. Jericho goes to get another bottle and breaks this one over Punk's head. Punk's hand shaking is a nice touch.

Here's Sheamus, but he's immediately cut off by the returning Alberto Del Rio in I believe a Lamborghini. Scratch that it's a Mercedes. Del Rio says he wouldn't lose in 18 seconds. Sheamus has a new challenger and his name is Alberto Del Rio, according to Ricardo in a great bit. The fans chant SI SI SI SI in another funny bit. The crowd has been great for the most part tonight. Ace has granted Del Rio a match on Smackdown with Sheamus and if he wins, he gets a future title match. Del Rio's mic goes out and he goes to get another, but turns around into the Brogue Kick. Cool ending to the segment.

Bryan and AJ were watching and Josh pops up. Bryan glares at Josh and that's that.

Cody Rhodes vs. Kofi Kingston

It's weird seeing Cody without the title. Kofi starts fast with a spinning cross body but he walks into the Disaster Kick. He sets for something else but here's Big Show with the title. Show has a clip of last night with Cody's Embarrassing Wrestlemania Moment. Ok that's pretty good. Cody walks into Trouble in Paradise for the pin at 1:50.

More Cena and Rock clips with Cena talking about how he had to win.

Henry is ticked off in the back and Abraham Washington of all people comes in to say it's time for a change for Mark. Washington offers to manage him and leaves Mark with one of his cards.

Here's Eve who says that last night was her Wrestlemania moment. She manipulated Ryder and can manipulate any man, except the GM, Johnny Ace. People Power!

The Miz vs. Zack Ryder

Cena has just arrived apparently. Ryder takes Miz down with a forearm and pounds away. A sunset flip is rolled through for

two for Ryder. He kicks Miz into the corner and is very aggressive here. Miz kicks him down and hooks a chinlock. That's broken quickly and Ryder gets two knees up to Miz's face. Cole compares Eve to Jane Eyre. For some reason I don't think there's a big crossover between Bronte fans and Raw fans, but I could be wrong. Broski Boot gets two. Miz throws Ryder's shoulder into the post and the Skull Crushing Finale gets the clean pin at 2:58.

Overall Rating: B+. This show clicked very well. First of all, it FLEW by. We seemingly have the next world title matches lined up, with two potential challengers for both champions. There's a new manager around now and Tensai's debut was...well it was ok I guess, but it was nothing that came off to me as great. Really good show, although the wrestling needed to be a bit better.

Orton vs. Kane on Friday.

Here's Cena for the big callout. There's going to be a LONG overrun tonight as it's 10:58 when his music starts. Cena says that everyone in life faces defeat, which is paraphrased here but the real line was a Muhammad Ali quote. Cena says he didn't ever think he would lose. During the whole year it never crossed his mind because if you think that way you've already lost. A true champion believes he can win even through his most disappointing loss.

Cena says there was a lot of speculation as to how he'd react to this. Would he lash out? Would he make excuses? The fans chant that he's a loser. Cena says people have wondered if this was the day he finally lashed out at the WWE Universe. The fans chant YES YES YES in a good bit. Cena says that's not going to happen, drawing heat on the level that he got in the stadium last night. Cena is a man and he was beaten. He admits defeat and apologizes to his supporters. Cena thanks the rapper from last night and gets booed again.

Now let's address the rumors about calling Rock out. He's not going to do that because he doesn't want to fight Rock and they've called each other out for a year. The fans want Lesnar and Cena stops for them to chant it. He says that it's always an interesting crowd at Raw and he wants Rock. Cena invites him down to the ring to talk because he doesn't want to fight. John says he thinks Rock is the greatest in WWE history. Cena wants one more moment of celebration for Rock in the middle of the ring. The fans still want Lesnar. Cena starts a yes chant and says Bryan owes him one. No Rock yet.

LESNAR! HE'S BACK! He poses on the stage (with Cole sounding like he's calling a Superstars main event) and circles the ring before getting in. Cena applauds him and Lesnar picks him up for a HUGE F5. He kicks Cena's hat away and stands tall to end the show.

Overall Rating: A. This show clicked very well. First of all, it FLEW by. We seemingly have the next world title matches lined up, with two potential challengers for both champions. There's a new manager around now and Tensai's debut was...well it was ok I guess, but it was nothing that came off to me as great. Really good show, although the wrestling needed to be a bit better. And then Lesnar came back, to make it a HUGE show.

Results

Santino Marella b. Jack Swagger and Dolph Ziggler – Cobra to Swagger

Lord Tensai b. Alex Riley via referee stoppage

Mark Henry b. CM Punk via countout

Kofi Kingston b. Cody Rhodes – Trouble in Paradise

The Miz b. Zack Ryder – Skull Crushing Finale

Remember to like me on Facebook at:

<http://www.facebook.com/pages/kbwrestlingreviewscom/117930294974885?sk=wall>

Lord Tensai Debuts

They acknowledged that he's a former WWE superstar but never said his name. He didn't have anything covering his head so it wasn't a secret or anything. I like that WAY better than pretending no one knew who he was because it's not like he has a forgettable face. Tensai squashed Alex Riley.

Thoughts on the debut/character?

Rock Wants To Be WWE Champion

That's his announcement tonight. It's better than just challenging someone I think.

Thoughts on this?

Raw Might Be Delayed On Monday

My Kentucky Wildcats will be playing for the national championship so I might be a little preoccupied. I'll be recording the show and the review will be up as soon as possible, but this takes precedent. Sorry guys.

Wrestlemania #28: John Cena vs. The Rock

How do you follow HHH vs. Undertaker inside the Cell? With this. We've finally arrived at this. In the words of Jesse Ventura, this is what the term main event is all about. At the end of the day, nothing else on the show matters besides this match. This is the match that a lot of so called experts (including one with the initials K. B.) said would never happen in a million years. Yet low and behold, here it is. I'm not sure if you can call this match about passing the torch because Cena already is the top guy and has been for years while Rock hasn't been on top arguably in about 11 years.

Still though, to call this anything but huge is an understatement. This is one of the few legitimate dream matches left for WWE and it has to come close to living up to the expectations. I say close to because I don't think it actually can live up to or surpass them, not with the hype given to them. The match is going to be great as it's Rock vs. Cena, both of whom deliver on the big stage. I'd expect it to go at least 25 minutes if not over half an hour, which is a long main event in modern WWE. After that you have to worry about Rock's cardio, whereas Cena could possibly rival 1986 Flair in that department.

As for a prediction, I have to go with Cena. At the end of the day, I don't see the value in Rock beating him, maybe popping up on Raw the next night and then bailing. I'm not

completely locked on that, but I think it's what I have to go with. As for Cena turning heel, again I see no need for it to happen, which we've gone over many times before. As for interference....I'm not sure. There are reports of people like Miz, Batista or even Brock Lesnar interfering in it, but I'm not sure I'd buy anyone but Brock as a candidate for that. The others aren't people I see meaning much otherwise, but Brock vs. Rock or Cena is a huge main event to set up for WM 29 before we get the only match worthy of the main event of Wrestlemania 30: John Cena vs. The Undertaker.

Oh and if they do a rematch at Summerslam or Mania next year, I won't be shocked but I'll be annoyed. It'll likely happen though.

Thoughts/Predictions?

Wrestlemania #28: Hell in a Cell – Undertaker vs. Triple H

The End of an Era. What Era that is isn't clear but one is ending. This is the match that has arguably gotten the most build or at worst the second best. It's basically the culmination (to date) of the last three Manias before it, with Shawn not being able to stop the Streak, the betting his career against it, then his male life partner/occasional attempted murderer HHH failing to do so as well. Now it's

Taker vs. HHH in the match they both made famous which is something huge. The best thing about the gimmick aspect of the match: it feels like it belongs here. There's no reason to not put these two in the cage because it adds a level of intensity to the match that it might not have otherwise.

On the other hand, we have a second gimmick in this match in the form of a guest referee in the form of Shawn Michaels. I really don't get what he adds to this. The promos have been very good to pretty good in this and the best was Shawn and HHH talking, but I don't really see what him being in there with the two of them will do. These two don't need a third big name in there. I mean, it's Undertaker vs. HHH in the Cell. What I do think it needs though is something on the line for HHH. If he loses, so what? He hasn't put anything up. The way one of their talks a few weeks ago went, it seemed like this was going to be Streak vs. Career but that didn't happen, which I think could have helped the match a bit.

As for a prediction, it's the Streak. If there's one sure thing in wrestling, it's that you don't bet against the Streak. Shawn can be in there, the rest of DX can be in there, the 82nd airborne can be in there. You don't bet against the Streak. Last year during their match I never once moved during every one of the near falls on Undertaker because it just wasn't going to happen. That wasn't true in the first Shawn match, which is why I like that one more. The more interesting question is will there be blood, and I think we'll see some. The prediction is Taker with one of his 9 or so finishers.

Thoughts/Predictions?

Wrestlemania #28: Intercontinental Title – Cody Rhodes (C) vs. Big Show

Remember last year when Cody was Dr. Doom? Neither do I. This has been a pretty well built up match. There's a story behind it and Cody has done a great job of setting up the idea that Show can't win the big one on the big stage. As for a winner, the signs would point to Big Show, but at the end of the day I'm not sure if I can picture Big Show as the Intercontinental Champion. Cody needs to get away from the title so he can move onto the world title scene. There's also a chance though that Cody loses on purpose but keeps the title, which I think is what is going to happen. Since I like to play things safe though, I'll go with Show winning the title.

Thoughts/Predictions?

Wrestlemania #28: Randy Orton vs. Kane

Because of a handshake from last summer. This is the only match that I think isn't as predictable as the rest. I don't think this feud ends here and I think the match ends with Orton taking the chokeslam for the pin. The rest of the show

looks like it's very easy to call out each match but there needs to be a heel that wins a match on here other than Team Johnny. Kane vs. Orton is a feud that doesn't make a lot of sense so therefore the feud needs to go on longer than most of this show right?

Thoughts/Predictions?

Wrestlemania #28: Team Teddy vs. Team Johnny

Thuggin N Buggin vs. REALLY FREAKING BORING In case you can't remember, it's Teddy with Santino (Captain)/Kofi/R-Truth/Booker T/Ryder/Khali vs. Johnny with Otunga (Captain)/Christian/McIntyre/Henry/Swagger/Miz.

This has basically been the fun team vs. the serious team. The winner gets to control both shows and for the life of me I can't imagine that Johnny's boys go down here. The talk on the shows would imply that Eve costs Ryder's team the match. On the other hand there's a possibility that someone is going to turn (no idea who) and cost his team the match. I'm surprised Alberto isn't involved in this match but maybe he'll interfere or something. Either way though, I can't imagine Teddy wins because Raw isn't made for tag matches.

Thoughts/Predictions?

Wrestlemania #28: Divas Tag Match – Maria Menunos/Kelly Kelly vs. Beth Phoenix/Eve Torres

Can Maria wear the Giants bikini? So this is the celebrity match this year and it's with the girls. The Divas Title hasn't meant anything, even though Beth has held it for what, six months now? The story that's going on from Smackdown would suggest that AJ is the next champion but that's months in the future. Here though, I can't imagine the celebrity loses. Has one of them ever lost at a PPV? On second thought, does it matter either way? This is there for a chance to give people a breather between the major matches.

Thoughts/Predictions?