

Monday Night Raw – April 28, 2014: Someone Turn On My John Cena Night Light

Monday Night Raw

Date: April 28, 2014

Location: Scottrade Center, St. Louis, Missouri

Commentators: Michael Cole, John Bradshaw Layfield, Jerry Lawler

It's the go home show for Extreme Rules and we've got most of the card set. The main stories are of course Daniel Bryan vs. Kane and Evolution vs. Shield with the latter being the bigger match of the two. Things are still solid after Wrestlemania but it feels like something is missing as we head into the follow up. Let's get to it.

We open with a recap of the Wyatts vs. Cena last week and Bray cradling Cena's head to end the show in a disturbing scene.

There's a cage around the ring in the arena and here's John Cena to a good reaction. Cena had a disturbed look on his face and wants to know why the fans put him in a 3-1 handicap match last week. He seems hurt by the idea because the fans gave him no chance last week. John believes the statement that you either die a hero or live long enough to see yourself become the villain. Ten years ago in this building, John Cena was drafted to Raw (it was nine years ago) and the fans cheered for him.

Now it's ten years later and the fans aren't cheering him as much because they've moved on to Bray Wyatt. Cena knows that he can't do this forever and he has to step aside at one point. He loves that idea though because he sees a bunch of people in the locker room ready to take his spot like Reigns, Rollins, Cesaro and Bryan. Cena even knows names like Adrian

Neville and Sami Zayn from NXT because they have the same passion that he has to entertain the people.

Bray Wyatt doesn't have that passion because Wyatt's passion is Bray Wyatt. On Sunday, the Wyatt Family will be kept out and Bray's message will be kept in. If Wyatt escapes, his message and corruption will continue to manipulate and the world won't have a chance. The Wyatts hack the feed but we only hear what sounds like a group of children singing He's Got The Whole World In His Hands.

The lights come back up and there's a whole choir of children on the stage in black robes singing the song. Bray and the Family come out with the lantern to sing as well and the children follow him to the ring. Bray gets them to sing about having the whole Cenation and the Big Bad Monster in his hands as well.

The lights go out save for the lantern and when they come back on, all of the kids are wearing the sheep masks. Cena has no idea what to do. One of the kids is sitting on Bray's lap as he laughs like a demonic villain. A closeup of the kid's mask takes us to a break. This was one of the most bizarre and disturbing things I can ever remember watching.

Tag Team Titles: Usos vs. Ryback/Curtis Axel

Usos are defending and the challengers now have team music. We even get Big Match Intros before it's Axel vs. Jey to start. Cole suggests that the Usos are in trouble here, despite being on fire for months and beating this team before. A quick cross body puts Axel down and it's off to Ryback who misses a splash, allowing for the tag off to Jimmy. The challengers are sent to the floor and there are the double dives to put them down. Jey is holding his ankle though as we head to a break.

Back with Axel cranking on Jimmy's arm as the trainer is checking on Jey's ankle. A running knee to the head puts Jimmy down and it's off to Ryback for a series of covers and two

each. Jey is able to knock Ryback down and suplexes Axel down onto him, allowing for the tag to a taped up Jey. The injury doesn't seem to matter as Jey comes in with a cross body for two on Axel and a superkick to Ryback. There's a Samoan drop and the running Umaga attack for two but a blind tag brings in Ryback.

A spinebuster gets two on Jey and Ryback pounds on his own chest. The Meat Hook is blocked by another superkick and Jey fires off some chops, only to be taken down by a regular clothesline. Shell Shock is countered into a sunset flip for two but Ryback takes him down again. The Usos make their own blind tag though, so as Axel hits the PerfectPlex, Jimmy dives in with the Superfly Splash for the pin on Curtis at 11:16.

Rating: C-. So what was the point of the injury? It didn't change a thing about the match and Jey barely sold the thing at all, so why bother having it except for some drama that was broken up about three minutes later? The division is very thin at this point and we have a bunch of talent with nothing to do. Why this isn't a layup for WWE's creative team....really doesn't surprise me.

Adam Rose debuts next week.

Heyman tells Cesaro to not listen to RVD about Heyman's morals or business practices. This of course turns into a discussion about Undertaker's Streak being broken when he messed with Heyman. Paul admits that he's a ruthless liar and completely unethical but he takes his clients to the top. That's all Cesaro needs to hear.

We recap Kane attacking Bryan last week. Stephanie will apologize later tonight.

Kane's mask is in its case.

Sheamus vs. Titus O'Neal

Titus jumps Sheamus during his entrance and sends him into the barricade a few times. Sheamus tastes the post as well before being sent into the ring for some right hands to the face. He says he's ready to go though and we have a bell. Titus is on him again and hammers in the corner as Sheamus still has his shirt on....but he hits the Brogue Kick anyway for the pin at 35 seconds. And the annoying booking of Sheamus continues.

You should Bolieve.

Dolph Ziggler is in the ring in street clothes to talk about how this is his favorite time of the year. The weather is nicer, the girls look a little bit better, and the superheroes return to the ring. He's talking about explosions, things being thrown all over the place and total chaos. But enough about his place on a Saturday night. Here's a clip from the new X-Men movie. Ziggler brings out X-Men star Hugh Jackman who plays to the crowd quite well.

Jackman talks about how much he loves Raw because anything can happen. Ziggler says that's true and shows us a clip of Hugh knocking Ziggler out so Zack Ryder could get a pin. Dolph says Jack Swagger has hit him harder than that and they bury the hatchet. This brings out Damien Sandow in a Magneto costume to brag about how a supervillain is now played by someone with intelligence.

They trade some insults and Sandow says tonight the two of them will meet their fate. Jackman touches the cape as Ziggler looks like he's about to lose it. Sandow displays his "power" by trying to pull the microphone out of Jackman's hands but gets hiptossed and Zig Zagged instead. I'm not sure what to say about this one.

We look at Evolution reforming and Shield destroying a bunch of people on Smackdown.

Cesaro vs. Jack Swagger

Before the match, Heyman has a joke for us. Knock Knock. Who's there? Mike. Mike who? Mike lient Brock Lesnar conquered the Undertaker's Streak at Wrestlemania. Heyman promises to never mention the Streak again before bragging about Cesaro winning the battle royal.

Swagger tries an early suplex but gets countered into rolling gutwrench suplexes. They head outside with Cesaro being sent into the barricade for two before Swagger cranks on a double chicken wing. Swagger loads up the Vader Bomb but Heyman goes after Zeb's mustache for a distraction, allowing Cesaro to hook a German suplex for the pin at 3:17.

Rating: D+. This feud isn't doing much for me but it's cool to see Cesaro throw people around like they're children. Heyman going after the mustache was a great touch and the match was more entertaining than it should have been. I don't care much for Swagger though and he drags things down when he's on screen.

We look at the opening segment again.

Cena has nothing to say about what happened earlier.

The mask is still in the case.

Cody Rhodes vs. Alberto Del Rio

Del Rio quickly takes him down for two but Cody comes back with a clothesline and slam for two of his own. Not that it matters as Alberto hits him in the head again and gets another near fall off a belly to back suplex. Cody hits a dropkick but walks into the tilt-a-whirl backbreaker to set up a chinlock. Back up and the springboard dropkick is countered with a punch to the ribs, setting up the armbreaker from Del Rio for the submission at 3:20.

Rating: D+. I'm guessing this is for angle advancement as it was basically a Del Rio squash. My goodness I can't remember

the last time I actually got to type that. The match was nothing special and I wish it had been Goldust doing the job instead of someone like Cody who might have a lengthy future.

Cody walks away from Goldust again post match.

Heyman and Cesaro have a meeting in the back.

Alexander Rusev vs. Xavier Woods

Squash for about 40 seconds until R-Truth runs in for the DQ. The team knocks Rusev to the floor and stands tall before their handicap match on Sunday.

We see John Cena granting three Make-A-Wishes this morning.

RVD is ready to beat Bad News Barrett tonight. Zeb Colter comes in and suggests an alliance against their common enemy in Paul Heyman but RVD declines.

Los Matadores vs. 3MB

McIntyre and Slater here. The pre show match on Sunday is a, I kid you not, Wee L C match involving all of these guys plus the small ones. McIntyre sends Diego into the corner to start before it's off to Slater. Heath doesn't do all that well and it's quickly off to Fernando who cleans house. The announcers of course spend the match making short jokes as Torito Gores Mahal's groin into Hornswoggle's head. Back in the ring and Slater hits an elevated DDT on Fernando for the pin at 2:19. JBL: "OH MY GOD 3MB WON! BARRY HOROWITZ IS ROLLING OVER IN HIS GRAVE AND HE'S NOT EVEN DEAD!"

Post match Hornswoggle misses a dive and crashes on the floor. Torito dives on 3MB.

Here's Stephanie for the apology to Bryan. She calls out the champ and gets both him in a neck brace (minus belts) and Brie Bella who leads the YES chants. Daniel says he almost believed Stephanie when she was telling Kane to stop last week but

she's full of lies. Stephanie says she deserves that and the truth is she and HHH never wanted Bryan to be WWE Champion. Emotions ran high and got out of control.

Bryan says Stephanie's emotions ran high, so how do you think his wife felt when the Authority was trying to take him out and had to let him do it on his own. Stephanie apologizes again and says she knows what it's like for your husband to be in an ambulance. She's sorry on behalf of the entire family for unleashing the demon and for everything else she's done. Daniel still doesn't buy it so she asks him to come down to the ring to convince him face to face.

Bryan says he's going to see a liar if he gets in the ring and that Kane will be here at the snap of a finger. His head hurts and he can't move his neck, but he's never given up in his life. He's been cleared for Sunday and if Kane takes him down, Bryan is taking Kane with him. Stephanie says she can give them something to make up for what happened last week. She offers Brie a Divas Title match tonight but Bryan says he'll be there with her. The match is right now.

Divas Title: Paige vs. Brie Bella

Paige is defending. Before the match we cut to the back and see that the mask is gone. They trade some holds to start with Brie taking over with a flying mare and dropkick for two. Paige screams a lot and slams Brie into the mat before getting two off a northern lights suplex. Brie comes back with a kick to the face and a hard running knee. She goes up top but gets punched in the gut, setting up a nice superplex to put both girls down. Not that it matters as we've got Kane.

Daniel is waiting for him in the aisle but Kane comes up through the ring and tries to pull Brie down. Bryan tries to make a save but the neck injury slows him down. Kane stalks Brie as Bryan is down on the floor. He drags her to the hole but Bryan comes in with I think a wrench to knock Kane silly.

Of course he sits up as Bryan tells Brie to get out. A chokeslam leaves Bryan laying. She gets back in like an imbecile and has to scramble away from Kane as he tries to drag her into the hole. Bryan is helped to the back by medics. The match went to a no contest at about 2:20.

Back from a break and a doctor is checking on Bryan when Stephanie comes in again to apologize. Bryan says he'll be at Extreme Rules and will make her regret dragging Brie into this. Brie yells at Stephanie and calls her something you don't say to your boss.

We look at the opening segment again.

Cena says the choir freaked him out but he knows the crowd hasn't turned their backs on him. The crowd was still reacting to him and that gives him hope. Cena is ready for Sunday and will buy Bray a singing mule. The singing ends on Sunday.

Bad News Barrett is on his podium and has some BAD NEWS for RVD. The slogan for the company is Then, Now and Forever. RVD should only be Then, because he's only living on the past.

Intercontinental Title #1 Contenders Tournament Finals: Rob Van Dam vs. Bad News Barrett

Winner gets Big E. for the title on Sunday. Feeling out process to start with Rob taking him down to the mat with a headlock. Barrett misses a charge and falls to the floor, setting up a moonsault from the apron to take down Bad News. Back in and Barrett sends Rob out to the floor almost immediately before doing the thumb pointing. They head inside again with Rob getting two off a rollup but getting thrown into a kick to the ribs in the corner.

Back from a break with Barrett holding a chinlock. Winds of Change get two and a neckbreaker gets the same for Barrett. We hit the chinlock again for a bit before Rob fights up and nails a superkick. Some clotheslines and the step over kick

look to set up Rolling Thunder but here's Cesaro for a distraction. Swagger intercepts Cesaro but Rob has to duck the Bull Hammer. Rolling Thunder connects but Cesaro distracts him from the Five Star, allowing Barrett to get his knees up. Bull Hammer sends Barrett to Extreme Rules at 11:22.

Rating: C-. The match was dull at times but this should set up Cesaro vs. Van Dam to flesh out Sunday's card a little bit. Barrett is much more interesting in this character and has looked great since Wrestlemania. I can't imagine Big E. holds the title and that's the right idea at this point.

Post match Cesaro goes after Van Dam but Swagger lays him out with a gutwrench powerbomb. Van Dam beats up Swagger though and hits the Five Star on Swagger.

We look at Shield destroying people on Smackdown again.

Shield says they've passed Evolution by. Rollins holds up his fist and says it's the new symbol of excellence (the name given to the four fingers of the Horsemen). Reigns says Evolution looks more like the past.

Ambrose has to defend the US Title against Alberto Del Rio, Ryback and Curtis Axel in a handicap match on Smackdown.

Randy Orton vs. Roman Reigns

Orton has Batista and HHH with him and comes out to the Evolution theme. Before the match, HHH says Shield is starting to remind him of Evolution. There's a problem with that though: Evolution is still here and they'll never be that good. Shield hits the ring...and here's Ric Flair.

Ric looks bombed and asks if this is St. Louis, Missouri. He's had a lot of fun in this town but says it's great to be back in a ring with people who know what this business is all about: dominance. Flair talks about everything coming full circle, including greatness. Tonight he's surrounded by

superstars who exemplify power, style and greatness. By that he means the Shield and shakes all three of their hands. With that he leaves and Evolution is shocked.

We actually get a bell at 11:05 and Reigns hammers away but gets caught by a headbutt and right hands. They head outside and fight over a suplex with Reigns getting the better of it. Orton reverses a whip to send Reigns into the steps before taking it back inside for a chinlock. A hard clothesline puts Reigns on the floor but he fights out of the Elevated DDT.

The running clothesline and a right hand have Orton reeling and Reigns heads to the floor for the apron dropkick. Back in and HHH breaks up the Superman Punch as the brawl is on. The fans are WAY into this as Ambrose is thrown across the announce table. Back inside and the Superman Punch connects but Reigns goes to the floor to get in on the fight for the DQ at 4:50.

Rating: C. This was a good moment for Reigns as he looked like he was capable of hanging with the guy that was World Champion coming into the main event of Wrestlemania less than a month ago. The match on Sunday is going to be NUTS and it should main event the PPV. I'd love to see a full match between these guys and it's good to see Reigns getting some solo time.

Post match Evolution destroys Shield with spinebusters and slams. HHH loads up a Pedigree on Ambrose but Rollins makes the save with a springboard knee to the face. HHH is left alone and Reigns lays him out with the spear. Orton and Batista try to break up the Triple Bomb with chairs but get kicked in the face, allowing Shield to stand tall to end the show.

Overall Rating: C+. This was a rollercoaster of a show but the problem was it all had to follow that opening segment. There was just no way they could trump that all night long and it never did. I'm fired up for Sunday and the top three matches all look great on paper. The builds have worked perfectly and

I'm looking forward to Sunday. More importantly, things seemed a lot more organic instead of scripted this week and that's a VERY positive sign for the future.

Results

Usos b. Ryback/Curtis Axel – Superfly Splash to Axel

Sheamus b. Titus O'Neal – Brogue Kick

Cesaro b. Jack Swagger – German suplex

Alberto Del Rio b. Cody Rhodes – Cross armbreaker

Alexander Rusev b. Xavier Woods via DQ when R-Truth interfered

3MB b. Los Matadores – Elevated DDT to Fernando

Paige vs. Brie Bella went to a no contest when Kane interfered

Bad News Barrett b. Rob Van Dam – Bull Hammer

Roman Reigns vs. Randy Orton went to a no contest when Evolution interfered

Remember to follow me on Twitter @kbreviews and pick up my new book of on the History of Clash of the Champions at Amazon for just \$3.99 at:

And check out my Amazon author page with wrestling books for under \$4 at:

Smackdown – April 25, 2014: Marvel Wishes Their Shield Was This Awesome

Smackdown

Date: April 25, 2014

Location: Giant Center, Hershey, Pennsylvania

Commentators: Michael Cole, John Bradshaw Layfield

Things have started to pick up for Extreme Rules with Kane attacking Daniel Bryan on Monday and Shield throwing down the gauntlet to Evolution. Other than that we have a lot of the card set or obvious as we head into whatever they're calling PPVs now. Hopefully something actually happens tonight. Let's get to it.

Opening sequence.

Here's Vickie Guerrero to open things up. She says the Authority has the night off and will be giving the Shield a match against eleven people tonight. We'll get to that later though because it's now time for the great debate between Paul Heyman and Zeb Colter, accompanied by their respective clients. Zeb goes first and thanks everyone for allowing this to happen but wants to talk about the night after Wrestlemania when these two men attacked him with a change of plans. He says no one knew Cesaro's name ten months ago when he came to Colter for help. Time runs out as Colter talks about everything he did for Cesaro.

Heyman's response mainly consists of talking about Brock Lesnar breaking the Streak. He goes on about 15 times with the same statement and the crowd eats it up. Colter: "SHUT UP!" Heyman: "I can't shut up because if I do, you might not know that my client Brock Lesnar conquered the Streak at Wrestlemania." When Paul's time is up, Colter talks about Heyman lying all the time and owing everyone money.

Colter: "Why did you steal Cesaro?" Heyman: "Because I'm the 1 behind the 1 in 21-1 when Brock Lesnar conquered the Streak." Heyman says Cesaro was already a Paul Heyman Guy when he won the Andre battle royal, which he repeats about 10 times as well. Colter says that's a lie and turns over his podium. This is between the two of them and Colter wants Heyman to be a man. "I'd be happy to look at you like a man but we're one man

short grandpa.” The managers are about to go at it and are split up as we take a break.

Cesaro vs. Jack Swagger

I’m surprised this wasn’t saved for the PPV. Cesaro shoves him around to start and hits a running uppercut in the corner followed by another to drop Swagger in the corner. Jack sends him out to the floor, only to have Cesaro ram him into the barricade to take over. Swagger fights out of a chinlock and grabs a belly to belly suplex followed by a double arm trap. Cesaro easily powers up and hits a spinning springboard European uppercut to wake up the crowd a little bit.

Jack will have none of that and slams Cesaro down, setting up the Vader Bomb for two. Both guys fall out to the floor and we take a break. Back with Swagger trying to run the corner but getting knocked down for a top rope European uppercut and two. Jack comes right back and tries the Vader Bomb but has to settle for the Patriot Lock when Cesaro raises a boot. Cesaro is quickly out but gets caught in a slam for two. A tiger bomb puts Swagger down and the fans want the Swing. They get what they want and the Neutralizer is good for the pin on Swagger at 8:44 shown of 12:14.

Rating: C. This was better than I was expecting it to be with Swagger continuing to be decent in the ring while working his formula but getting beaten in the end. Cesaro getting a clean win isn’t a bad thing at all, especially when it’s what should be the big blowoff to the story. I’m not sure what Cesaro does at Extreme Rules now though, unless it’s a rematch which isn’t something we really need to see.

Post match we have...Shield? Cesaro leaves as the trio circles the fallen Swagger and the beatdown is on. Swagger takes the Triple Bomb and Ambrose says HHH told them to adapt or perish. Apparently Jack Swagger failed to evolve. Reigns says they’re just getting started.

We look at Bryan being taken out of the arena on Monday. Cole says Bryan had a neck contusion and is already getting better. Bryan will be on Raw Monday.

The same video about Paige from Raw is shown again.

Tamina Snuka vs. Natalya

Natalya easily takes her down into a leg lock to start and hits a bad looking dropkick. Tamina comes back with a kick to the chest to knock Nattie outside and an elbow to the back gets two. The Samoan drop gets a big pop but Natalya rolls away before the splash. Tamina kicks away from a Sharpshooter but gets caught by a discus lariat for two. Natalya springs up from the mat and gets kicked in the throat for the pin at 4:05.

Rating: C-. Better match than I was expecting here until the kick at the end was botched. Tamina is decent enough in the ring to be a first victim for Paige on Sunday and hopefully Paige can have a better match than the messes she's had over the last few weeks against people like Aksana.

We recap Evolution vs. Shield.

Shield lays out 3MB in the back.

Vickie is on the phone with presumably HHH and is told to take the night off to be replaced by Brad Maddox.

Curtis Axel vs. Jey Uso

Nothing wrong with the singles matches to set up the Tag Team Title match. A quick elbow drops Jey but Axel gets caught in an early chinlock. Curtis shoves him throat first into the ropes and hits a running knee to the face to knock Jey into the corner. Axel drops a running elbow for two but misses a charge into the corner. Jey comes back with some quick strikes until Axel rams him face first into the buckle a few times. The neckbreaker into a cutter is good for the pin on Jey at

3:40.

Rating: D. Very basic match here but it was only kind of interesting. The problem here is Axel and Ryback have won like two tag matches and are now the #1 contenders because they've cleaned out most of the division in that winning streak. It amazes me how the division can go from hot to this in a matter of months, but it's what happens when you have teams beat each other at random and don't let two teams get built up.

Video on the Saudi Arabia trip.

Bolieve video.

Here are the Wyatts with something to say. The spotlight shows a cage around the ring and Bray starts talking about how love determines the power you have. Love is a wildfire with beautiful flames and a fine wine that brings warmth to those who drink it. You have to live it and feel it to know it's real. Cena needs to get the people to love him so they'll do anything for him and that's exactly what he's done.

Now he's lost their love though and Bray loves his style. On Monday Cena's people put him in a three on one handicap match like a piece of meat being thrown to the wolves. Bray's words are razor blades and they're working just like he planned for them to. He and Cena have a date with destiny at Extreme Rules and the cage will define their world.

All the blood, sweat and tears Cena has shed to fight for the people has led them here, trapped in a box like a rat with a snake. Bray lays on the middle rope and says Cena's nightmares have become Bray's dreams come true. One by one the fans will all follow Wyatt, who says he can see them from the top of the cage. Bray starts singing and the fans join in to complete the awesome segment.

Wyatt Family vs. Cody Rhodes/Goldust

Cody starts by dropkicking Luke's leg out before it's off to Goldust to hammer on Rowan. A bulldog drops Erick again and it's back to Cody as the brothers start working on the arm. Rowan slams him into the mat and Bray gets on the mic to ask if the fans are impressed by what they see. Harper catapults Cody's throat into the middle rope before it's back to Rowan to crank on the neck.

Bray is yelling at the fans as Harper puts Cody in the Gator Roll. Rhodes finally fights up and hits the Disaster Kick to bring in Goldust off the hot tag. Goldust dives on both Wyatts as everything breaks down. Harper rolls Goldie up for two but gets caught in a powerslam for another two. Cody goes up top but Luke sends Goldust into the corner to knock Cody to the floor. The discus lariat is good for the pin on Goldust at 5:07.

Rating: D+. It's nice to see the Wyatts getting back to what made them awesome and I'm ok with the Rhodes Brothers wrapping up their run as a team. There's nothing left for them to do, but it does make me think the Outlaws' reign was completely worthless and the titles should have gone from the Brothers to the Usos.

Shield takes out Brad Maddox.

Santino Marella/Emma vs. Fandango/Layla

No match as Shield jumps Fandango and gives him the Triple Bomb off the stage through some tables. That should write him off TV for awhile.

Adam Rose is coming.

We look at Bryan getting injured on Monday.

Shield vs. Alberto Del Rio/Ryback/Titus O'Neal/Damien Sandow/Bad News Barrett

Axel has been attacked in the back as well so it's 5-3. Ryback

takes Rollins down with a headlock but a dropkick puts Ryback down, allowing Shield to start making their fast tags. Ryback catches Rollins diving off the top for a slam and it's off to Titus for more power. He misses an elbow drop though and it's off to Ambrose for some knees to the face. Reigns gets two off a clothesline before Dean comes in again. Titus drives him into the corner as the announcers actually hype up the PPV six man. Everything breaks down for a few seconds and Shield clears the ring as we take a break.

Back with Barrett putting Ambrose in a chinlock before getting two off a big boot. Del Rio comes in for a quickly broken chinlock followed by the enziguri for two. Dean is sent to the floor before being thrown back in so Ryback can splash him for two. We hit another chinlock followed by a spinebuster for two as Rollins makes the save. Dean avoids a charge in the corner and makes the tag to Reigns to clean house.

Everything breaks down with the Shield in control and Reigns hitting the running boot to the apron on Sandow. Del Rio and Barrett look to charge Roman but Rollins gets on the apron and they bail. Rollins dives on Ryback and both he and Ambrose dive on Titus and Sandow. Reigns nails the Superman Punch to Del Rio on the stage and it's Sandow being sent back into the ring. A dropkick from Ambrose sets up the spear for the pin at 10:20 shown of 13:50.

Rating: C+. Now THIS is what the Shield needs to do before the match against Evolution. They may have had some issues for part of the match but by the end it was a decimation of five names with a former World Champion in the mix. This was a team dominating to set up a showdown with another team that could dominate anyone they face. Want to find out what happens? Watch Extreme Rules. It's that simple and they made it work here.

Titus and Ryback get speared as well and the latter takes the Triple Bomb to end the show.

Overall Rating: B-. This was all about setting up the PPV and it worked very well. I'm fired up for the six man and I want to see the other matches even more now. The wrestling wasn't all that great but it wasn't that kind of a show. Shield taking over is something that hasn't gotten old yet and that's the big story for the night. It's an entertaining show that set up future stuff which is a good use for Smackdown.

Results

Cesaro b. Jack Swagger – Neutralizer

Tamina Snuka b. Natalya – Superkick

Curtis Axel b. Jey Uso – Neckbreaker into a cutter

Wyatt Family b. Cody Rhodes/Goldust – Discus lariat to Goldust

Shield b. Ryback/Alberto Del Rio/Titus O'Neal/Bad News

Barrett/Damien Sandow – Spear to Sandow

Remember to follow me on Twitter @kbreviews and pick up my new book of on the History of Clash of the Champions at Amazon for just \$3.99 at:

And check out my Amazon author page with wrestling books for under \$4 at:

Monday Night Raw – April 22, 2014: The Honeymoon Is Over

Monday Night Raw

Date: April 21, 2014

Location: Baltimore Arena, Baltimore, Maryland

Commentators: Michael Cole, John Bradshaw Layfield, Jerry Lawler

Things should pick up a bit before Extreme Rules tonight as

the roster is back from Saudi Arabia and Daniel Bryan is back from his honeymoon. The interesting question now is what happens with the World Title situation as Evolution vs. Shield is taking over the main event scene and leaving Bryan in the dust. This rings of Chris Benoit back in 2004 but Benoit was nowhere near as over as Bryan is now. It's going to be a great test either way though. Let's get to it.

Here's the champ to open the show and for once, Brie Bella is in the ring for a YES chant. Well she's certainly a better looking cheerleader than Bryan. They chant together until Stephanie and her horrible song interrupts. Stephanie congratulates Bryan on winning the title at Wrestlemania and getting married in the same week. The newlyweds talk about how amazing and simple their ceremony was but Stephanie has a present for them: a title defense against Kane at Extreme Rules.

Stephanie recommends that Brie get out of the ring because here comes the Big Fried Freak. Or at least his music as there's no Kane. Bryan slowly backs Brie to the floor and Kane pops up to choke Daniel. Stephanie says that's enough as Kane stalks Brie. Bryan tries to fight back and sends Kane into the steps but the monster rams him into the barricade.

We actually get a tombstone on the floor and here are EMTs to save Bryan. As usual this is a bad idea with Kane around as he breaks up the stretcher and tombstones Bryan on the steps in a SICK landing. Bryan is put on the stretcher again but Kane picks him up and gives him a third tombstone onto the table which DOESN'T BREAK. Bryan is DONE as we go to a break.

Back from a break and Daniel is being taken out of the ring on a stretcher as Stephanie offers her condolences and holds up the titles. Those replays make things look even more sick.

Intercontinental Title #1 Contenders Tournament Semi-Finals:
Bad News Barrett vs. Sheamus

Barrett does his usual schtick before the match. Sheamus gets pounded into the corner to start but comes back with forearms of his own followed by the rolling fireman's carry. Some more forearms put Barrett on the floor and Sheamus DIVES off the top with a cross body in a cool looking spot. Back in and Barrett fights out of the ten forearms before kicking Sheamus off the apron as we take a break.

We come back with the guys still brawling and Sheamus hitting the ten forearms and top rope shoulder for two. Irish Curse gets the same but Barrett grabs the Winds of Change for two of his own. Barrett loads up the Bull Hammer but Sheamus ducks under and hits White Noise for an even closer near fall. They slug it out and a Cactus Clothesline puts both guys down on the floor. Barrett gets back in and Sheamus gives chase, only to charge into the Bull Hammer for the pin at 10:32.

Rating: C+. Take two big strong guys and let them beat the tar out of each other for ten minutes at a time. That's a BIG win for Barrett as well, who is amazingly getting over with a strong character and a good finisher on top of that. Sheamus is going to be fine no matter what happens to him, arguably making him far more valuable than he was as World Heavyweight Champion.

Bo Dallas vignette.

Hugh Jackman is guest hosting Raw next week so we look at him helping Zack Ryder helping beat Dolph Ziggler in September 2011.

Pick Cena's opponent tonight: Luke Harper, Luke Harper/Erick Rowan, Luke Harper/Erick Rowan/Bray Wyatt.

We've got Wyatts. Bray says he remembers the first time he was struck with truth. It tasted bitter but he loved the intensity of how real it was. Free will has become man's biggest illusion. It's promised to you just in time to take it away again. What has it given you? Nothing but a nation full of

sheep led by wolves and owned by pigs. Tonight would be a wonderful night for change though because the power is in the fans' hands. Tonight free will does exist and John Cena will learn the truth.

The truth is they stand against him, whether it be either of the brothers, in a steel cage, or inside your own mind. At Extreme Rules, two monsters will enter but on this night it will not matter which one has the sharpest teeth or the sharpest claws. One thing will remain the same: they do not love Cena anymore because Bray is taking them with him every single time they cross paths. Bray leads the fans in He's Got The Whole Worlds In His Hands and tells the brothers to sing. Awesome moment.

Los Matadores/El Torito vs. 3MB

It's Hornswoggle/Mahal/McIntyre here. McIntyre and Diego get things going but it's quickly off to the little guys to continue this horribly pointless feud. They slug it out until Torito takes him down with a headscissors followed by a spinning springboard headbutt. Drew breaks up the pin and wants a piece of Torito but it's Slater taking a gore between the legs for his efforts. Torito gets picked up but kicks Drew low, allowing the masked men to pick him up for a double belly to back suplex plus a seated senton from Torito for the pin at 2:50. For the love of all things good and holy, not at Extreme Rules.

We look back at Evolution beating up Shield last week.

Evolution arrives.

Here's Evolution with something to say. HHH can barely talk due to what sounds like a bad sore throat so it's quickly off to Orton to brag about how awesome Evolution is. We get a video on Evolution with a few shots of Flair thrown in for history's sake. Batista brags about the number of titles the three of them have and says Shield has nothing to brag about.

Cue the Hounds of Justice but Evolution immediately bails.

Ambrose says that they've lost fights before and they're not humbled this week. He says there's a reason HHH hired them to protect HHH and Orton. They are the meanest, nastiest, dirtiest animals in this industry. These dogs are hungry and ready to fight. Rollins says they have every right to be angry after what happened when Evolution had twelve other guys around them. In two weeks at Extreme Rules it's Evolution vs. the Hounds of Justice in an all out war.

Then there's nowhere for them to run and all three members of Evolution is going to be looking out for themselves. At Extreme Rules, Evolution is ripped to pieces and the reunion comes to an abrupt halt. HHH put a nail in his own coffin and the Shield is the hammer that drives it home.

Reigns says last week Evolution gave them an ultimatum. This week they have one for Evolution. In a few seconds he's dropping this mic and coming up the stage for a fight. Evolution can try to fight like men, or they can cower away and hide. Here comes the Shield and here's the midcard to stand in front of Evolution. HHH says it's option three: adapt or perish.

We look at the opening segment again.

New Adam Rose vignette.

Network plug.

Usos vs. Rhodes Brothers

Non-title with Ryback/Axel on commentary. Jey and Goldust get things going with a feeling out process and the golden one getting taken down. Off to Cody tho gets taken down as well while Ryback tells a story about his dad tending bar for Curt Hennig and Razor Ramon back in the AWA days. Totally random but interesting.

Back to Goldust who takes over on the arm and rams it into the mat for some control. Ryback talks about how he's been watching Goldust for nineteen years now which is a totally fair argument against him. In a very sudden ending, a superkick takes down Goldust and another is good for the pin on Cody at 3:10.

Rating: D+. This was much more of a story than a match and it looks like the Rhodes Brothers are wrapping up as a team now. To be fair it's not like they've done anything in a few months now so they might as well be split up with the division actually having some depth now. Ryback was interesting on commentary to say the least.

Cody and Goldust shove each other post match and here comes the split. Ryback/Axel jump the Usos as well.

Emma vs. Layla

A distraction from the guys lets Layla take over quickly and she stomps Emma down in the corner. Layla cranks on both of Emma's arms and mocks the dance a bit as Fandango leads cheers. Emma takes Layla down as Santino lays out Fandango with the Cobra. Emma pulls out a cobra of her own and lays out Layla for the pin at 2:20. Again, NO MORE OF THIS.

The cobras want each other post match.

The announcers talk about Legends House.

John Cena says it's up to the WWE Universe tonight. We get the dueling chants and he thinks Bray might have everyone in his hands.

Intercontinental Title #1 Contender Tournament Semi-Finals: Cesaro vs. Rob Van Dam

Before the match we see Heyman talking about his clients and going on about Lesnar conquering the Streak. We take a break and come back with him still ranting about it until RVD's

music cuts him off. Feeling out process to start with Van Dam's kicks being caught into a big slam for two as the announcers debate how great a manager Heyman really is. A middle rope kick to the face drops Cesaro but he comes back with a nice suplex for two. Rob misses a charge into the post and Cesaro kicks him even further into the post as we take another break.

Back with Van Dam's sunset flip being countered by a jumping stomp to the chest for two. We hit the chinlock for a bit but Rob comes back and kicks Cesaro in the head to escape. A hard clothesline and kick to the face set up Rolling Thunder for two. The Five Star is broken up by a STIFF uppercut but another kick to the head sets up the split legged moonsault from Rob for another near fall. Yet another spinning kick misses and Cesaro hits a running uppercut to the back of the head and rolls Rob to the mat.

They slug it out and a rolling cradle gets two for Van Dam, only to have Cesaro nail a tiger bomb for an even closer two. Cesaro loads up the Swing but here are Swagger and Colter for a distraction. Van Dam gets in another kick to send Cesaro outside and Swagger comes for a closer look. Rob tries to dive at them but jumps into a sweet uppercut to the jaw from Cesaro. Rob is thrown back inside as Swagger posts Cesaro, allowing for the countout to send RVD to the finals at 13:19.

Rating: B-. Good stuff here with the styles working together perfectly here. The ending was somewhat predictable as you already had Barrett waiting in the finals for the winner. At least the match was good getting there and Barrett should be a lock to win next week. Good match here and far better than I was expecting.

Post match Cesaro goes to swing Colter but has to settle for Swagger instead.

We look at Bryan getting destroyed again.

Cesaro and Heyman come up to RVD in the back and say Colter and Swagger won that match for Van Dam. Rob suggests Cesaro stay as far away from Heyman as possible.

Paige vs. Aksana

Non-title again. The announcers immediately start hyping up Tamina as a tough Diva as Paige throws Aksana across the ring by the hair a few times. Aksana comes back with some choking and throws Paige down as the announcers make fun of Aksana's very notable tan. She crawls around on the mat but Paige slams her into the mat over and over again to take over. A series of clotheslines has Aksana in trouble but she comes back with a throw, apparently supposed to be a spinebuster. Paige comes back with a guillotine choke and some knees to the head, setting up the Scorpion Cross Lock for the submission at 4:42.

Rating: D+. I'm feeling sorry for Paige as they keep putting her in there with this chick. Aksana is gorgeous and looks great with the dark hair, but at the end of the day she just can't do it in the ring. The crawling around stuff looks stupid and the whole thing isn't working at all. Therefore, let's use HER to get Paige over because that's playing to Paige's strengths right?

Alexander Rusev vs. Sin Cara

Truth/Woods vs. Rusev at the PPV which should cement the ending here. Cara fires off his chops but gets caught in mid air, setting up the knees against the ropes and fall away slam to the masked man. Some jumping knees in the corner drop Sin Cara as Lana is very pleased. Sin Cara actually gets two off a sunset flip and staggers the Bulgarian with a Tajiri elbow. A kick to the head and missile dropkick put Rusev in the corner but Alexander just runs him over. An overhead suplex drops Sin Cara and the Accolade gets the submission at 2:59.

The 3-1 handicap match wins the poll with 53%. Harper on his own got a very surprising 39% with the 2-1 getting less than

10%.

John Cena vs. Wyatt Family

The Wyatts surround the ring to start before all three charge the ring at the same time. Cena is down so Bray calls them off as the bell rings. Harper gets us going and drives elbows into the back of Cena's head to keep control. Off to Rowan who whips Cena into the corner but gets caught in a fallaway slam and it's off to Bray. The leader of the Family dances with Cena for a bit before screaming loudly.

Back to Harper who gets caught by a Stinger Splash but runs John over with a hard elbow to the jaw. Cena muscled Harper over with a German suplex but Luke tags Rowan back in for more stomping. Harper quickly gets another tag but is almost caught in an STF. Rowan makes a fast save and Harper stays in to send Cena hard into the steps. Bray looks down and we take a break.

We come back to see Cena missing a cross body and falling out to the floor. John comes back in and runs over Harper but Bray easily counters a tornado DDT by PLANTING him with a release Rock Bottom. He hammers away and sends Cena shoulder first into the post. A headbutt rams Cena's head into the steel again before Rowan comes back in to crush Cena's skull a bit more.

John fights back but it's back to Bray who loads up the spider walk. Thankfully Cena realizes how easy this is and runs him over with a clothesline to start his comeback. Cena starts his finishing sequence and hits the AA on Bray, only to have the Family come in for the DQ at 14:00.

Rating: C. The match was going fine but you knew there was no way this was having a clean finish. I'm not sure why you don't have Cena take the loss here as it's not like losing a handicap match here is a big deal. Bray needs to get the big win over Cena and hopefully that comes at Extreme Rules. Not bad but I don't like the ending.

Post match the Wyatts beat Cena down and Bray hits Sister Abigail. He says in time, all things come to light before singing a bit more with his hand on Cena's face to end the show.

Overall Rating: C+. Some stuff got done tonight but the main event has more problems caused by real life. Daniel Bryan being written off TV again to deal with the sudden passing of his father (legitimate story and certainly worth missing some time) hurts things as he's starting to lose some of the awesome heat he put together with Wrestlemania. That being said, the Shield vs. Evolution match is looking AWESOME and everything is going well there. The midcard scene was solid tonight as well so we'll go with a good show that has some worrying issues.

Results

Bad News Barrett b. Sheamus – Bull Hammer

Los Matadores/El Torito b. 3MB – Double belly to back suplex/Top rope seated senton to McIntyre

Usos b. Cody Rhodes/Goldust – Superkick to Rhodes

Emma b. Layla – Cobra

Rob Van Dam b. Cesaro via countout

Alexander Rusev b. Sin Cara – Accolade

Paige b. Aksana – Scorpion Cross Lock

John Cena b. Wyatt Family via DQ when all three members were in the ring at the same time

Remember to follow me on Twitter @kbreviews and pick up my new book of on the History of Clash of the Champions at Amazon for just \$3.99 at:

And check out my Amazon author page with wrestling books for under \$4 at:

Intercontinental Tournament Brackets

The winner gets a shot at Big E. at some point in the future, likely Extreme Rules.

Here are the tournament brackets.

Mark Henry

Cesaro

Rob Van Dam

Alberto Del Rio

Sheamus

Jack Swagger

Dolph Ziggler

Bad News Barrett