

Todd Martin's Raw Report for September 8

WWE Raw Report

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Date: 09/08/08 from Fort Wayne, IN.

The Big News: Chris Jericho was able to weasel his way out of another tough predicament, but next week he has to face CM Punk in a cage match.

Show Analysis:

Chris Jericho came out to start the show. I think he will work well as champion, but they really devalued the title in the way they got it to him. Jericho revealed bruises on his body given to him by supposed good guy Shawn Michaels. Jericho pointed out their match was unsanctioned so Michaels accomplished nothing while Jericho later won the title. Jericho described this as good things happening to a good person. He said that he outsmarted Batista to win, and now everyone must respect how good he is, better than Michaels.

Mike Adamle came out and congratulated Jericho. However, he pointed out Punk lost his title without having the chance to defend it. Thus, next week it will be Punk vs. Jericho in a cage match. He further announced Jericho vs. Batista for this week. Jericho's performance here was good, but he went a little too long.

Beth Phoenix beat Mickie James. Candice Michelle was at ringside, and they said she would meet the winner for the women's title at No Mercy. This is nothing compared to the number they did on their titles last night, but it makes little sense that she's gone forever, scores one pin in a six woman tag and immediately gets a title shot. She also inexplicably giggled whenever the camera panned to her. Beth threw Mickie into the post. Mickie hit a huracanrana and Thesz press, but Beth used the Alabama slam for the pin. There were a lot of blown spots here.

William Regal beat Jamie Noble. Layla was at ringside, after Noble hired Jillian Hall to serenade her. Noble hit a spinning head scissors and Regal responded with an exploder. Noble landed an enzuigiri but his attempt at a running somersault senton fell into Regal's knees. Regal then hit a running knee for the pin. Regal informed Noble that happy endings only happen in fairy tales, and offered his arm to Layla. Layla reluctantly took it and they walked off together.

Charlie Haas beat JBL via count out. Haas made his entrance out of the trunk of JBL's limo. He called himself Charles Haas Layfield, and the crowd chanted "CHL." He made fun of JBL. An annoyed JBL said that he deserves respect and stomped off. JBL was counted out and Haas celebrated heartily. I really do enjoy this Haas gimmick. They should have him do some old gimmicks.

Batista and JBL had a discussion backstage. Batista thought Haas's routine was funny. JBL said that both he and Batista are main eventers, and they shouldn't tolerate disrespect from these uppity guys on the undercard. JBL said he has nothing in common with Haas. Batista agreed, because Haas actually won his match on the show. It would appear they are integrating his backstage reputation into his on-camera character, which I think is a smart way to package him.

Rey Mysterio and Evan Bourne beat Miz and John Morrison. Rey has some new tattoos. Before the match, he said that he doesn't know why Kane attacked him, but that he will stand strong and will be nobody's victim. Rey and Bourne hit a cool double team moonsault spot, and then Rey flipped Bourne with a plancha into a huracanrana on the floor onto Morrison. Bourne went to the top, but Morrison knocked him off with an enzuigiri.

The heels briefly worked over Bourne, but he tagged Rey and Rey came in with a double springboard crossbody. Morrison flipped Rey into Miz, but Rey gave Miz a huracanrana. Rey followed with a somersault senton on Morrison but was tripped by Miz when he went for the 619. Morrison went for a springboard kick into Rey but hit Miz instead. Rey used a whirly bird, hit the 619, and Bourne used the shooting star press for the pin on Morrison.

This was a fun match, and the crowd reacted big to the end. It reminded me of the sort of midcard workrate matches that used to be a staple on Nitro and then later Raw. I wish WWE brought in more guys like Matt Sydal so they could use this as a regular feature. I think the show would benefit from a weekly fast-paced and athletic 10 minute match with limited storyline repercussions. Another positive of this match was they used it as an opportunity to talk a lot about ECW and its stars. It was a subtle way of getting Raw fans to think about trying out ECW again.

After the match Kane appeared on the screen. He said that he will face Rey next week one-on-one. He added that he chose Rey to be his victim. That's kind of kinky. I'm getting a Candyman vibe. Be my victim, Helen. Kane said he cho-cho-chose Rey for special reasons, and then held up the old Kane mask. So evidently that was where they wanted to go all along and the thing with Rey's mask was primarily to swerve people. This storyline is a neon billboard screaming for thoughtful long term booking.

Randy Orton came out and said that it is a tragedy he lost his title because of the collarbone injury. He contrasted that to CM Punk, who got lucky and then had karma catch up with him. Orton posited that he did what he did to Punk because he was concerned for his safety. He felt Punk should thank him, because he would have been exposed in the scramble and beaten repeatedly. That's what Patrick Cote should have said to Ricardo Almeida after he beat him.

Orton added that Jericho owes him thanks too. He said that when he's healthy he'll take the title from Jericho. Cody Rhodes, Ted DiBiase and Manu came out to take credit for setting up Orton for the kick. Manu noted all their fathers are Hall-of-Famers, so Orton's no better than any of them. DiBiase said that what they did to Punk was impressive. Orton slapped DiBiase and left. Presumably they are just taking their time in pairing these four together. I think that it's a really smart pairing. Orton will give the other three credibility, and they can become a kind of second version of Evolution.

Cody Rhodes, Ted DiBiase and Manu the Wild Samoan beat Cryme Tyme and Kofi Kingston. The heels worked over Kofi with a Manu body slam and DiBiase double foot stomp off the second rope. Shad tagged in and hit a press slam on Rhodes and power slam on DiBiase. Manu tagged in and hit a neck breaker on Shad for the pin. Shad's neatly trimmed beard completely undermines the rest of his look. He badly needs to let that thing go.

Santino defeated Gene Snitsky. Santino prior to the match said that with a three week Intercontinental Title reign he is already 19 days better than the Mountie. There was an enormous missed opportunity here for Santino to botch the lyrics of the Mountie's theme song. He vowed to be the best IC champ of all the times. Snitsky then stormed out looking like the Warlord. That's not a favorable comparison. Snitsky hit a clothesline, elbow drop and punches. He went for a kick in the corner, but Beth pulled Santino out of the way and he rolled up Snitsky for the pin.

Batista vs. Chris Jericho didn't last long. Prior to the match, Jericho confronted Mike Adamle. He said it was unfair for him to have another tough match after 2 matches at Unforgiven. Adamle responded that he did Jericho a favor by placing him in the scramble, and Jericho owed him a favor. He then had a change of heart. After Batista dominated early with a powerslam, Adamle came out and said that he misdiagnosed Jericho's condition. Adamle said he needed a competitive match, and announced Jericho and JBL vs. Batista in a handicap match.

Chris Jericho and JBL beat Batista. Jericho and JBL got along fine despite the fact JBL tried to murder Jericho earlier this year. That's the sort of detail they should at least make a token explanation for in the name of storyline consistency and logic. The heels worked over Batista, but Batista came back with clotheslines. He went for a Batista bomb on Jericho but Lance Cade got on the apron. Batista knocked him off, allowing JBL to hit the clothesline from hell and Jericho stole the pin. After the match, JBL and Cade beat up Batista, but Batista then came back with a spear on JBL and spine buster and Batista bomb on Cade.

Final Thoughts:

I don't really much in the way of overarching thoughts about this show. There were things about it I liked and other things about it I didn't. Overall the show was entertaining enough and they are making some useful tweaks on a number of major characters.

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