

## Todd Martin's Raw TV report for September 22

WWE Raw Report

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The Big News: Chris Jericho is awesome.

Show Analysis:

Chris Jericho came out to start the show. He got incredible heat, to the point he could barely hide his satisfaction about it. He said that Shawn Michaels is trying to re-write history. He tricked Mike Adamle into a ladder title match and tricked the fans into thinking he revolutionized the ladder match.

Jericho said that you can't trust Michaels, but you can trust Jericho because Jericho is an honest man, a good man, and he always tells the truth. Jericho said that he has won three different titles in ladder matches and won more high profile ladder matches than Michaels. Jericho noted that Michaels scarred up his back but he still walked out champion because he's better than Michaels. He added that he will finish off Michaels at No Mercy.

Randy Orton came out, complete with tons of new tattoos on his arms. I like how he keeps appearing before he is fully healed. It teases his in-ring return and makes people want to see it. Orton noted that if he didn't kick Punk Jericho wouldn't be champion. Orton again said he would beat whoever wins at No Mercy for the title.

Jericho said that Orton talks trash that he can't back up. He labeled Orton a dreamer and a big mouth. He then threatened to attack Orton, but Orton said he had an agreement with Mike Adamle. He couldn't touch anyone and nobody could touch him or they would be suspended. Jericho wished Orton luck and left.

This led to a furious CM Punk charging out. I'm glad that he's angry about being screwed out of the title, but this anger was kind of undermined by the fact he was smiling when he came out to the ring last week. Punk went eye to eye with Orton, and then attacked Orton. Adamle then came down to punish Punk, but he was cut off by Shane McMahon. Shane said he would usually respect Adamle's edict, but not on this night. Shane never really explained why, which to me was a glaring logic hole.

After overruling Punk's suspension, Shane announced Punk vs. Cody Rhodes and a main event of JBL and Jericho vs. Batista and Shawn Michaels. They panned to the crowd where there was a guy who seemed so unbelievably excited that he was going to get to see this random tag match. I'm not sure why, but it was great nonetheless. This was a fun opening segment.

CM Punk beat Cody Rhodes. Punk hit some kicks early. Rhodes used a crossbody but Punk rolled through. They traded punches, and Punk applied an ankle lock. Punk hit a spinning back fist, hard kicks, knee lift, high knee and go 2 sleep. This was a good intense performance by Punk. After the match Manu and Ted DiBiase attacked but Kofi Kingston made the save.

Backstage, Adamle was embarrassed about being overruled. Shane said that he's doing a great job but sometimes you've got to step on some shoes to accomplish what you want. Kane entered the room and derisively sneered at Shane. It was a nice touch to acknowledge the old feud. Kane wanted Rey Mysterio, and Adamle made the match for No Mercy.

Beth Phoenix confronted Kelly Kelly backstage. Santino had a nose guard to sell an injury from Batista last week. Okay, so it was really just so Santino would look silly. Beth accused Kelly of laughing at Santino and vowed revenge. Santino began mocking Batista when Batista came up from behind. Santino shrieked like a girl and hid behind Beth. Beth said

that if Batista screws with them Santino will beat him up.

Santino Marella beat Deuce. Santino brought back the Honk-a-Meter, and he is now 59 weeks away from besting the Honky Tonk Man. Deuce got no reaction, and this was generally a pretty hot crowd. Deuce went after Santino's nose with punches, but Santino rolled him up for the pin.

Kane beat Evan Bourne. Bourne hit a front kick, enzuigiri, low dropkick, kicks and moonsault to the floor. Kane retaliated with a tilt-a-whirl back breaker and Oklahoma stampede of all moves. He then won with the choke slam. Afterwards Rey tried to make the save but Kane gave him a big boot and choke slam. I was worried when I read about this match but they gave Bourne a lot of offense so as to not bury him.

Jamie Noble asked Shane McMahon for another match with William Regal. Randy Orton arrived and Shane kind of blew off Noble. Orton wasn't pleased with Shane's decision. Shane said he respects Orton, but that Orton is getting off easy after what he did to Punk. Orton threatened Shane with trouble.

Kelly Kelly beat Beth Phoenix. Beth nailed some punches early and a power bomb into the corner. Kelly hit a springboard crossbody. As Kelly was coming off the ropes, Santino tripped her. Beth went to attack Kelly but nearly hit Santino and Kelly rolled up Beth for the pin. After the match Beth and Santino went to attack Kelly, but Batista made the save. Santino sucker punched Batista, but Batista grabbed him, pulled back his nose guard and sent it into his face, and then speared him. The nose guard spot was funny.

Miz and John Morrison beat Cryme Tyme. They built this up through an apparent internet grudge with both teams making fun of each other. The heels crotched JTG and worked him over. Shad got the hot tag and came in with back drops. Cryme Tyme set up for the G9, but Morrison tripped JTG and Miz rolled up Shad for 2. Shad hit a face first suplex on Miz for two. Morrison then sent JTG into the post and used an enzuigiri on Shad for the pin.

Chris Jericho told Mike Adamle that Shane was testing him. Jericho said that Shane wanted to be challenged. This led to Adamle changing the main event to a handicap match. Charlie Haas then did a comedy vignette built around him screwing up Mr. Perfect spots. He screwed up in basketball, golf, pool, boxing, air hockey, football and even dance dance revolution. This was a funny vignette.

Chris Jericho, Lance Cade and JBL beat Batista and Shawn Michaels. In the attention to detail department, Michaels and Batista were cool despite the fact Michaels' last feud before Jericho was with Batista. The heels worked over Michaels, who eventually tagged in Batista.

Batista came in with shoulder blocks, a clothesline, a spine buster and a power slam on Jericho. He tagged back Michaels, who hit an elbow off the top. Jericho came back with a bulldog on Michaels but missed the lionsault and tagged Cade. Michaels hit a flying forearm but he was distracted by Jericho and Cade hit a sit down power bomb for the pin.

Final Thoughts:

I thought this was a very good show. There was some fun comedy, good wrestling, and strong booking of the top characters.

My biggest observation from the show is just how good Chris Jericho has become.

I was a big fan of Chris Jericho dating back many years. I was at the Baltimore Arena in 1997 when Jericho first started his initial heel turn, and I got so much enjoyment out of Jericho's shtick in WCW. From Monday Night Jericho and Ralphus to Quasi-Juice and Stinko Malinko, Jericho was so damned entertaining. I was certain he would be a main event heel when he went to WWE.

While most people continued to like Jericho's work in WWE and felt that he was held down by politics, I always thought there was something missing in Jericho as a main event performer. He was hilarious as a character, but he couldn't project seriousness when he was involved in top programs. It felt like everything was fun and games.

I consistently would receive e-mails from or talk to people who wanted Jericho to be pushed stronger as a main eventer,

but I could never muster up much enthusiasm for the idea. Jericho was a good performer, but I didn't see him as a guy who could do money programs as a heel or as a face. I enjoyed watching Jericho perform, but I never much cared if he got his revenge or if the other guy got revenge on him.

Well, if there was something missing in Jericho all those years (and maybe it was just that the writing handicapped him), it is missing no longer. Jericho is a revelation as a main event heel right now. He could always wrestle, talk, and portray an amusing sarcasm. He still has all those things, but he has added a genuinely loathsome heel demeanor.

Jericho had nuclear heat tonight, and his smarmy, hypocritical, self-righteous inconvenient truth-telling character makes you want to see him get his ass kicked. In short, he has a genuine main event presence, and one that feels genuinely fresh and different.

Jericho is working so well that I think he warrants a long run with the title. He can feud with Michaels, Batista, Punk, Orton and eventually Cena. That's enough feuds to last you past WrestleMania, and I think as Jericho gets more and more heat it will really build anticipation for someone to take the belt from him. Jericho is catching fire right now, and I think the character is only going to get hotter in the coming months as they get more and more heat on the guy.

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