

Todd Martin's WWE Raw TV report for December 28th

WWE Raw Report

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The Big News: JBL earned a Royal Rumble title shot, with help from Shawn Michaels.

Show Analysis:

Rey Mysterio came out to start the show. He said that he respects Shawn Michaels and understands his troubles, but that they have a problem. Michaels came out. Rey told Michaels that he knows Shawn is a good person. He asked Michaels to be honorable and face Rey one-on-one with the winner advancing to the fatal four way. Michaels accepted but JBL came out and vetoed that. He ordered Michaels to leave, and after Michaels left Snitsky jumped Rey. John Cena made the save.

Randy Orton met backstage with Cody Rhodes, Sim Snuka and Manu. Orton said their group would be bigger than the Horsemen, Evolution or DX, but that he wouldn't tolerate losers. He said that all three of them would wrestle on Raw, and that if any of them lost, they would be out of the group. I like the idea of an initiation, but the key to it working is that the junior members have to prove themselves to be valuable members of the team.

Cody Rhodes beat CM Punk via count out. William Regal was at ringside, and they announced he will meet Punk for the title next week. After all that build they probably should have saved it for a pay-per-view. Punk hit a crossbody off the top but Cody rolled through for a two. Punk hit a tope and high knee on the outside, but was distracted by Regal and Cody rolled into the ring for the count out. This was such an awful, contrived finish. Punk beat up Cody after the match but Regal came in with a running knee for Punk. They keep saying they want this group to be some legendary group, but at this point it's Randy Orton and the Spirit Squad.

John Cena met with Stephanie McMahon backstage. He was annoyed that he was just scheduled to do commentary for the main event, and said this was lame. Speaking of lame, Cena then cut one of those lame, goofy promos that make Cena look like the most obnoxious loser on the face of the planet. Cena asked for a match that would "change life on his planet." This was ungodly awful scripting. Goldust then did a comedy promo that miraculously may have been even worse than Cena's. He told a series of jokes. Not one was remotely funny.

Melina won a battle royal to earn a women's title shot. Beth and Santino did commentary. Katie Lea eliminated Candice and Jillian dumped Kelly. Mickie took out both Katie and Jillian. Melina finally eliminated Mickie to win. Melina hasn't been good since returning nor has the audience taken to her, but it's her "turn" so this was no surprise. Melina and Beth fought after the match and Rosa jumped the barricade to help Beth.

Chris Jericho backstage was annoyed about being named jerk of the year by WWE Magazine. He said that the real jerks are the fans. Sim Snuka then defeated Superhaas Charlie Snuka. Sim hit a knee drop, used a choke and landed a high knee. Haas came back with a flying forearm and back breaker but Sim got up his knees when Haas went for the superfly splash. Sim then hit a head kick for the pin.

John Cena, Rey Mysterio, Kofi Kingston and Cryme Tyme beat Mike Knox, Kane, Dolph Ziggler, Miz and John Morrison. The heels worked over Kofi briefly, and he made the tag to Rey. Rey was going wild when Rey caught him with a punch and Miz power bombed him down. The heels then put the boots to Rey. Rey came back with a reverse top rope huracanrana on Morrison and tagged Cena.

Cena hit shoulder blocks on Knox. Kane went for a choke slam but Kofi broke it up with a dropkick off the top. Cena gave Knox and Dolph the Cena slam and teamed with Kofi for a simultaneous five knuckle shuffle and high double leg drop. Kofi gave Dolph trouble in paradise and Cena hit the FU on Knox. Cena tagged Rey, who hit Knox with a top rope splash for the pin. This was a very fun match.

Kelly Kelly backstage told Randy Orton that she protected him from Kane and thought that the night they had together was special. She wanted to know why he's avoiding her. Orton said it wasn't that special, that he used her, and that she's pathetic. He said he didn't need her as a distraction. Kelly did a great job selling this. And by great job selling this I mean that she was so unbelievably bad looking upset that they would have been better off dressing up Jim Duggan in drag and hoping people would be fooled into thinking it was actually Kelly.

Matt Hardy beat Manu. Matt hit a baseball slide, elbow drops and side effect. Manu avoided the twist of fate, and hit a neck breaker and corner avalanche. Matt then hit the twist of fate for the pin. So, the final scorecard for the initiation process: one junior dork fluke win, one junior dork clean loss and one junior dork win over one of the lowest guys on the totem pole.

JBL won a four way over Shawn Michaels, Randy Orton and Chris Jericho. Jericho hit the code breaker on JBL but Michaels made the save. Michaels tagged in and pinned Jericho with sweet chin music. Orton and JBL fought back and forth. Orton went for his kick but Michaels tagged in. Orton tried the RKO on Michaels but Michaels escaped and pinned Orton with sweet chin music. That was Michaels' cue to lie down for JBL. Michaels hesitated forever and couldn't do it. He instead stood there and let JBL give him the clothesline from hell for the pin.

Final Thoughts:

This show was a mixed bag. On the positive side, they nicely set up their key programs through WrestleMania, with Randy Orton against John Cena and JBL against Shawn Michaels. Hopefully they just stick with the obvious and avoid trying to swerve people. This show also had a good 10 man tag and a pretty good main event as well. On the negative side, there was a fair amount of bad comedy, and the Legacy angle once again buried Orton's teammates when they should be and presumably are trying to help them.