

Todd Martin's WWE Raw report and UFC 100 preview

WWE Raw Report

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The Big News: WWE Night of Champions will be headlined by Triple H vs. Randy Orton vs. John Cena. It's like deja vu all over again.

Show Analysis:

"Million Dollar Man" Ted DiBiase came out to start the show. He had his old Million Dollar Belt. He brought out Cody Rhodes and Ted DiBiase, Jr. Ted Sr. said that he was in control of Raw. He noted there would be no title matches before Night of Champions but that he would have some fun on Raw. He announced DiBiase and Rhodes vs. Edge and Chris Jericho for Night of Champions.

Ted Sr. then asked Cody if Henry should be punished for what he did to Randy Orton last week. Rhodes said yes, so Ted Sr. made Rhodes vs. Henry. Rhodes wasn't pleased with this. Ted Sr. then said that he knows Orton is holding back Ted Jr. He said that Orton is using Ted Jr. Thus, he made DiBiase vs. Orton for Raw.

Edge and Chris Jericho beat the Colons. The heels worked over Carlito. Carlito eventually tagged Primo, who came in with dropkicks, a spinning head scissors and springboard crossbody. Edge gained the advantage and tied Primo into the ropes. Carlito went to untie Primo, but then was caught by an Edge spear when Primo was untied. An angry Carlito came in the ring and distracted the referee. Jericho hit the code breaker on Primo and Edge followed with a spear for the pin. This was a short but good match.

After the match, Carlito threw Primo into the post, attacked him with punches, and threw him into the announce table. Ultimately it isn't a big deal, but to me two brothers splitting up ought to take place over a longer period than two weeks.

Legacy met backstage. Orton said that when he beats DiBiase, it won't accomplish anything. DiBiase took umbrage at that. He said that his father was better than Orton's father, and that he will beat Orton.

Mickie James and Gail Kim beat Maryse and Alicia Fox. Mickie hit a neck breaker on Fox, knocked Maryse off the apron, and hit a low dropkick. Gail came in with clotheslines, a huracanrana and a springboard crossbody. Maryse gave Gail a high kick from the apron and tagged herself in. She worked over Gail briefly, but Gail then hit a weird move that involved pulling Maryse into her leg for the pin.

Cody Rhodes met with Ted DiBiase Sr. backstage. Rhodes had some money for DiBiase to get out of the match with Henry, but DiBiase said it wasn't enough. He said that Rhodes is the son of Dusty Rhodes, and he despises Dusty. He said that the fact Rhodes is in the Hall of Fame and he isn't is a travesty. He told Rhodes to go do the match or he would put Rhodes in polka dots. He should have threatened to buy off Rhodes' girlfriend with a fur coat.

Mark Henry beat Cody Rhodes via count out in a brief match. Rhodes went for a crossbody off the ropes, but was caught with the world's strongest slam. Rhodes rolled out to the floor and just left.

Randy Orton beat Ted DiBiase. Orton worked over DiBiase with a DDT and chin lock. DiBiase hit a shoulder block off the ropes. Orton went for the RKO but DiBiase countered with a back slide. DiBiase followed with a power slam and went for dream street, but Orton escaped and hit the RKO for the pin. The match was pretty good but ultimately it seemed like it kind of underdelivered based on what they were trying to do.

MVP hosted the VIP Lounge with Jack Swagger as the guest. MVP called Swagger a fraud for what he pulled against Orton. Swagger said, "I went to the University of Oklahoma, you know what that means." "That you couldn't get into a better school," MVP retorted. Swagger said no, it means that he is a D1 athlete.

Swagger referred to MVP spending time in prison and said the only thing MVP has been MVP of is the prison basketball league. MVP said that unlike Swagger he is never afraid of a fight. Swagger said he doesn't fight criminals and left. MVP said that since Swagger came to Raw he hasn't fought at all, and basically called him out. This was a very good talking segment.

Backstage, Ted DiBiase Sr. was excited and said that he was proud of Ted DiBiase Jr. for his efforts against Orton. Ted Jr. wasn't having it. He accused Ted Sr. of setting him up to fail, and that it's always about Ted Sr. Ted Sr. softly said that it wasn't like that at all. Ted Jr. slapped him. I can't speak highly enough of this little angle. It worked so unbelievably perfect. It was so simple and relatable. The father is looking out for his son's best interests and wants to see him succeed, but the son just doesn't understand and lashes out. I loved this angle.

Evan Bourne beat Kofi Kingston. This was good, but way too short. They did a quick series of pinning combinations. Kofi used a half crab and they traded head locks. They went for a few more pinning attempts. Kofi ran into the corner and hit heads with Bourne, allowing Bourne to hit the shooting star press for the pin. Big Show came out afterwards and laid them both out. I don't have high hopes for a feud that seems to emphasize these midgets can only compete with Big Show two on one.

Triple H and John Cena fought to a no contest. HHH sent Cena into the post, and hit a back breaker, suplex and knee drop. Cena responded with shoulder blocks and the five knuckle, but HHH escaped the FU. HHH hit a face buster and spine buster. Cena countered the pedigree, but missed a top rope rocker dropper. They went for a series of pin attempts. Cena applied the STF but HHH got to the ropes. Cena went for the FU but HHH grabbed the ropes. They hit a double clothesline, and then Rhodes and DiBiase just ran in and attacked both to end the match.

After the match, Randy Orton came out and said that there was no winner and thus he won't be facing either at Night of Champions. That sounds like the sort of thing they usually do in these situations. But no, Ted DiBiase Sr. came out and said there was no loser and that Orton will face both HHH and Cena at Night of Champions.

On the plus side, this was a good match and they did a strong job trying to make it feel important. On the minus side, this was the second time in three weeks they hyped the hell out of a Raw main event and then delivered the lamest of non-finishes.

Final Thoughts:

This was a good show. It was just a straight forward wrestling show built around wrestling matches and setting up future feuds. The additions of Swagger and Bourne help Raw, and it was fun to see the Million Dollar Man this week. It sure would be nice to have a fresh main event program at some point during 2009, though.

Finally, UFC 100 is this weekend. Leading up to the event, I've written an 8 part series on different aspects of UFC history. The pieces are as follows:

1. The Pioneer (includes Royce Gracie interview):

<http://www.cbssports.com/mma/story/11761069>

2. The Dark Days (includes Kevin Randleman, Jens Pulver and Pat Miletich interviews):

<http://www.cbssports.com/mma/story/11786392>

3. The New Ownership:

<http://www.cbssports.com/mma/story/11809856>

4. The Explosion of '06:

<http://www.cbssports.com/mma/story/11834618>

5. The TUF Credibility Rise (includes Kenny Florian interview):

<http://www.cbssports.com/mma/story/11859059>

6. The Comedian (Joe Rogan interview):

<http://www.cbssports.com/mma/story/11882047>

7. The Most Notable Cameos:

<http://www.cbssports.com/mma/story/11905867>

8. The Next Generation (includes Georges St. Pierre interview):

<http://www.cbssports.com/mma/story/11928031>

I'll be in Vegas this weekend to cover all the UFC 100 events, so check out CBSsports.com for all sorts of coverage of the event. I'll also be on Tagg Radio on Saturday right before the show, and you can listen to their live preview of the event from Vegas 5PM-7PM Eastern, 2PM-4PM Pacific at <http://www.taggradio.com/>.