

Monday Night Raw – January 30, 2017: JOE IS GONNA DE-BUT! JOE IS GONNA DE-BUT!

Monday Night Raw

Date: January 30, 2017

Location: Laredo Energy Arena, Laredo, Texas

Commentators: Michael Cole, Byron Saxton, Corey Graves

We're past the Royal Rumble and that means we have about five weeks before Fastlane, which is getting close to the Wrestlemania season. The big story for Raw last night was Roman Reigns having the World Title won until Braun Strowman cost him the title, likely setting up something down the line. Other than that we have Stephanie McMahon confronting Seth Rollins for calling HHH out at Takeover: San Antonio. Let's get to it.

Here's a ticked off Kevin Owens and a less ticked off Chris Jericho to start things off. Owens is happy to have proven Mick Foley wrong when he beat Roman Reigns because he is the best, the guy and the one. Owens thanks Jericho for having the guts to get in the cage last night and brings up Jericho breaking the record for the most time spent in the Royal Rumble.

Jericho has spent nearly five hours in the match (Over nine Rumbles, which breaks HHH's record of just over four hours in the same number of Rumbles. That's VERY impressive.) and of course Chris gets in some bragging. The only reason he didn't win was a terrible case of vertigo...and here's Braun Strowman to cut them off.

Braun cuts Owens off and says he did what he did because he can't stand Roman but now he wants the title shot that Owens promises. Kevin backs off so Braun shows us a video of Owens promising him the shot. Strowman wants his chance tonight but here's Mick, in a full green plaid suit, to interrupt. Foley doesn't seem to care about Owens being banged up and makes the match for later.

Sami Zayn vs. Chris Jericho

Non-title. They fight over a wristlock to start until Sami takes over with those armdrags. If it works for Ricky Steamboat, it can work for Sami. They head outside with Sami scoring with a dropkick and the moonsault off the barricade takes us to a break. Back with Jericho getting two off an enziguri and a top rope hurricanrana, only to dive into the Blue Thunder Bomb for two. Jericho bails to the floor for a chase scene, capped off by a tornado DDT back inside. The Helluva Kick is countered into the Walls but Sami is right next to the ropes. The exploder sets up the Helluva Kick to give Sami the clean pin at 11:49.

Rating: C+. Not bad here and I'm all for Sami getting a pay per view title match. You can also go with the fact that Jericho was in the Rumble for an hour last night to explain the loss away a bit. The rematch should be fun too and if it means Sami getting a title, there's nothing bad to be seen.

Bayley wants Cesaro and Sheamus to hug before their six person tag later tonight. Charlotte, Anderson and Gallows come in to laugh a bit.

Long video on Seth Rollins vs. HHH. They cover pretty much everything here, save for WHY HHH DID THIS FIVE MONTHS AGO that is.

Owens tries to talk Stephanie out of the title match but she has to deal with Rollins first.

Tony Nese vs. Mustafa Ali

Nese runs him over to start and hits a hard crossface forearm to the face. They trade clotheslines and it's Ali hitting a rolling neckbreaker for two. Nese breaks up the inverted 450 and Ali takes a NASTY looking crash. Thankfully he's ok enough to take the running knee to the face to give Tony the pin at 3:52.

Rating: C. Nese is starting to grow on me and would be a solid choice for a midcard heel in the division. The posing makes him look like a huge heel and that's exactly what the division needs right now. Not exactly a heel, but more characters with basic development. Ali is the same as he's

a solid hand in the ring and a few tweaks could make him quite valuable.

Post match Austin Aries asks Nese about his lack of charisma but Tony says he doesn't have to answer his critics.

Here's Rollins to call out Stephanie for a little change of pace. Rollins knows Stephanie is disappointed that he called her out but she disappoints her husband every night. Stephanie laughs off the insults (of course) and we hear about how she wants HHH to stay away because Rollins is bringing the dark side out of her husband.

Rollins hasn't been a champion since Money in the Bank and missed Wrestlemania last year because of injury so the Authority, and Stephanie in particular, deserves an apology. Rollins apologizes for exposing HHH as a gutless snake that he is because HHH won't face him like a man.

HHH is scared because he knows Rollins is the greatest threat to HHH's legacy ever. Seth goes a step further and suggests that Stephanie knows it too but she says Seth disgusts him. That earns a threat of Rollins invading the next Board of Directors meetings or showing up at Stephanie's front door. "What's going to happen when one of your kids answers the front door Steph?" Stephanie says she lied: HHH is on his way tonight. Seth actually saved a lot of face here and that's the best possible outcome for him.

Bayley/Cesaro/Sheamus vs. Charlotte/Anderson and Gallows

The guys start and they're on the floor for a break less than a minute in. Back with Anderson dropping a knee until Cesaro dives over for the hot tag to Sheamus. House is quickly cleaned until Charlotte breaks up the ten forearms. That goes as well as you would expect so it's an assisted White Noise for two on Gallows. It's off to the women and a quick Bayley to Belly puts Charlotte away at 7:30.

Rating: C-. This was nothing for the most part but at least it sets up Bayley vs. Charlotte II, despite Charlotte winning clean last night. They couldn't do a simple hook of the tights or something to give us a reason to have another match? Anyway, this match showed how badly we need a few more tag teams because this feud is nothing.

Stephanie yells at Foley for making the title match for tonight but Mick doesn't buy her saying that HHH's music playing last week was just a mistake. Foley hints that HHH won't be showing up so Stephanie glares him out the door.

Here's Neville to celebrate his Cruiserweight Title win. The title is his crown but the fans never cared about him no matter what he did. Cue former champion Rich Swann to say he can't listen to this garbage any longer. Neville is great and Swann respects him for it but Neville demands that Swann kneel before the king. The fight is on and Neville is sent running.

Sasha Banks vents to Bayley about losing and agrees to fight Nia Jax again.

We look at Goldberg eliminating Brock Lesnar last night.

Owens vents about Foley but Jericho implies he won't have his back tonight.

Universal Title: Kevin Owens vs. Braun Strowman

Owens is defending and I'll put the over/under for Reigns interfering at four minutes. Jericho is on commentary and for some reason, Strowman goes over and chokeslams him through the table. Owens bails to the floor at the bell and some right hands have no effect. A dropkick puts Strowman on the floor but he runs Kevin over with ease back inside.

Kevin is knocked into the barricade and this is one sided so far. The way too long charge sends Strowman head first into the post though and Owens adds a Cannonball against the barricade. A backsplash and frog splash give Owens two but Strowman comes back with the powerslam. Cue Reigns though and it's a DQ at 4:40.

Rating: D+. Yeah what else were you expecting here? This might as well have been a big countdown to Reigns coming out and going after Strowman, which is probably one of the top matches at Fastlane. It's not the most interesting match in the world but if Strowman goes over, it could mean something.

Roman Superman Punches and spears Strowman but Braun pops up.

Brock Lesnar arrives.

Here are Lesnar and Paul Heyman for a chat. Heyman talks about how every legend has an asterisk next to his name because there's always an exception. Andre the Giant was undefeated for fifteen years until Hulk Hogan beat him. Ronda Rousey was undefeated until she met Holly Holm. People like John Cena and Kurt Angle have amazing legacies but BROCK LESNAR. That leaves Goldberg as the argument against Brock and that must be eradicated. We get to the point: Lesnar wants one more fight with Goldberg at Wrestlemania.

Sasha Banks vs. Nia Jax

Banks is still banged up coming in and Nia goes right after the bad leg. The knee is sent into the apron and post before we hit a leglock. The referee stops the match at 2:08.

Nia won't let go of the hold so Bayley comes in for the save.

Rusev/Jinder Mahal vs. Enzo Amore/Big Cass

Texas Tornado rules and we're ready to go after Enzo and Cass' big speech. It's a big brawl to start and we hit the early break. Back with Cass getting double teamed because Enzo is, again, beaten down on the floor. Enzo's high crossbody is broken up and it's Amore getting beaten down for a change. Cass fights back and makes the save as Enzo pulls Mahal to the floor. A big boot drops Rusev and the Bada Boom Shaka Lacka is enough for the pin at 9:40.

Rating: D+. We're somehow to the point where Enzo Amore just pinned Rusev. Let that one sink in for a minute. Anyway, these guys are firmly to the point where they're fighting because they've been fighting and there isn't much of a story to it anymore. Cass needs to beat Rusev in the singles match and move on, maybe towards the belts finally.

HHH arrives.

Sneak peak of WWE 24.

Goldberg will be here next week.

Here's HHH to talk about Rollins. HHH goes over his history with Rollins and takes credit for most of his success. With HHH by his side, Rollins would become the man and the face of the WWE. All Rollins had to do was hold up his end of the bargain but then his knee gave out, which was like spitting in HHH's face.

Rollins was a failure when he came back because he didn't take any responsibility for everything falling apart. HHH is the one that deserves an apology because Rollins tried to blame him for everything being a big mess. The reason HHH doesn't come out here anymore is because he doesn't want to be the guy that ends careers anymore.

Every day he puts on this suit and ties this tie while trying to be a creator. Every day he tries to create the next Seth Friggin Rollins but now he's done trying. The jacket and tie come off, drawing a HHH chant. HHH calls Rollins out so here we go...but SAMOA JOE makes his debut and lays Rollins out from behind. Joe annihilates Rollins as HHH leaves. The fans are very happy with Joe as he Koquina Clutches Rollins out to end the show. OUTSTANDING debut here as Joe looks like a killer.

Overall Rating: D+. Other than a few moments here and there (mainly the highlight packages), you wouldn't know that the Royal Rumble was yesterday. This felt like a long, mostly uninteresting show but at least we're starting to see Wrestlemania. I mean, Lesnar vs. Goldberg isn't the most interesting thing in the world and I have a bad feeling it's going to be for the title but at least it's something. Joe was the big story tonight though and that's a very good thing.

Results

Sami Zayn b. Chris Jericho – Helluva Kick

Tony Nese b. Mustafa Ali – Running knee

Bayley/Cesaro/Sheamus b. Charlotte/Anderson and Gallows – Bayley to Belly to Charlotte

Braun Strowman b. Kevin Owens via DQ when Roman Reigns interfered

Nia Jax b. Sasha Banks via referee stoppage

Enzo Amore/Big Cass b. Rusev/Jinder Mahal – Bada Boom Shaka Lacka to Rusev

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