

Monday Night Raw – October 30, 2017: No. Moving On.

Monday Night Raw

Date: October 30, 2017

Location: Royal Farms Arena, Baltimore, Maryland

Commentators: Michael Cole, Corey Graves, Booker T.

It's time for the fallout show as we're less than three weeks away from Survivor Series and Raw is reeling from Smackdown's invasion last week. The interesting part is whether or not Smackdown will be back this week as it's time to get ready for the real battle. Hopefully it's as entertaining as last week. Let's get to it.

We open with a long recap of last week's invasion.

Opening sequence.

Kurt Angle is in the ring and the Raw roster is on the stage. Last week was taking friendly competition too far and that was a slap in the face of the people who work here every week. He put them in harm's way and that will never happen again. Cue the returning Stephanie McMahon to talk about how Monday Night Raw will be celebrating twenty five years on January 22. The show is still going strong and that's where she and Kurt come in. Angle has lead by example and has even earned her respect.

Stephanie pauses for the YOU STILL GOT IT but blames Angle for last week's siege. It took twenty seconds to ruin Raw's history and that's all because of Angle falling for Shane's lies. Stephanie goes on a rant about how Angle RUINED, yes RUINED, Raw's legacy last week in one incompetent moment. Therefore, Angle better hope that he still has it because he's going to be team captain at Survivor Series. If things don't go the way she wants, he's out as General Manager.

Post break Stephanie is leaving and Angle is very sorry. Stephanie mentions Mick Foley as another threat to Angle's job. As Stephanie leaves, another limo comes up, containing the Miz. Angle isn't happy with

him being late so he's defending the Intercontinental Title tonight. Miz wants to know who but Angle won't tell him for being late. Of note: Bo Dallas was back.

Angle being all apologetic and scared here does nothing for him, but it certainly makes Stephanie look like the queen of the world. You know, BECAUSE WE HAVEN'T ESTABLISHED THAT ENOUGH IN THE LAST FIFTEEN YEARS!

Bayley vs. Alicia Fox

Fox comes out in an airline captain's outfit (well, the female wrestling version) and says this is your captain speaking (eh kind of clever). She has business to tend to so we have a replacement.

Bayley vs. Nia Jax

Bayley charges right at her to start and basically bounces off of the monster, landing on the floor in a heap. Back with Nia holding a chinlock, followed by a pair of running splashes in the corner. What looked to be a Vader Bomb is broken up and Nia is dumped to the floor. Bayley dives off the apron with some right hands, followed by a kick to the face for two. We hit a guillotine choke but Nia shrugs it off without much effort. A spear and the legdrop end Bayley at 7:24.

Rating: D+. You know all those times that Nia has defeated Bayley before? This is the most recent one. The match was yet another destruction of Bayley, who will be the exact same character next week. That's one of the biggest reasons characters from NXT don't work in WWE: there's no development. Bayley had that crisis of confidence over the summer, came back, changed nothing, and is right back where she was months ago. That's poor writing and a lack of storytelling, which is why Bayley (along with so many others) isn't interesting anymore.

Alicia picks Nia to be on the Raw team. Nia goes to leave but Samoa Joe of all people is back. Post break, Joe says he knows some people here missed him but he didn't miss a single one of them. Therefore, when he's beating the heck out of someone, he'll be imagining it's all of the people.

Samoa Joe vs. Apollo Crews

Joe wastes no time in chopping Crews in the corner and it's not looking good early on. Crews fights back with a good looking dropkick and some right hands in the corner but Joe isn't about to be suplexed. A kick in the corner drops Crews and Joe throws his gum at Titus O'Neil. Crews scores with an enziguri but the Toss Powerbomb is countered with a headlock takeover. The Rock Bottom out of the corner plants Crews and it's the Koquina Clutch for the tap out at 3:39.

Rating: D. Samoa Joe gave Brock Lesnar all he could handle on pay per view but he broke a sweat against Crews on Raw? Joe is one of the best monsters on Raw and for some reason they won't have him squash a jobber to the stars. This was WAY more competitive than it needed to be and it's not like this company has much credibility when it comes to making new stars at the moment (but they can push Kane of course).

Post match Joe chokes Titus out as well.

Quick look at Raw 25 coming up in January featuring Undertaker, Shawn Michaels and...Kevin Nash?

Intercontinental Title: The Miz vs. Matt Hardy

Matt is challenging and wastes no time in trying a small package for two. A backslide gets the same and these early pinfall attempts are working at making Miz sweat a bit. Miz bails to the floor and we take a break. Back with Matt getting crotched on top and a neckbreaker out of the corner getting two. You can tell Miz is working here as his hair is hanging off the side of his head.

Miz puts him on the apron and gets two off a kick to the head. Back in and Miz hits the corner clothesline but the top rope ax handle is blocked. Instead Miz crotches himself in the corner to put both guys down. Matt gets two off a bulldog and drops his middle rope elbow to the back of the neck.

A regular middle rope elbow (that's a new one) gets two, followed by the Side Effect for the same. Matt scores with a moonsault of all things for

two more but Miz is right back with the YES Kicks. A Twist of Fate out of nowhere plants Miz but he rolls to the apron. Back up and Miz snaps his throat first across the ropes, setting up the Skull Crushing Finale to retain at 13:02.

Rating: B. This was much better than I was expecting and a lot of that is because of Matt knowing how to make you buy into his near falls. There's no reason to really believe that Matt is going to end Miz's long title reign here but they pulled off a good match. I'm not sure who is taking the title from Miz, but he's less than two months away from the second most combined days as champion of all time so it's not happening anytime soon. More than likely at least.

We recap the opening sequence, making sure to show how amazing Stephanie is, just in case you forgot in the last 40 minutes.

Alexa Bliss comes in to see Angle and mocks the idea of Mickie James being a serious contender. Angle isn't cool with that and makes Bliss vs. James for the title in the main event.

Asuka vs. Stacie Cullen

A spinning backfist drops Cullen and it's time for some hard knees to the face. Asuka kicks her in the head and the Asuka Lock is good for the submission at 1:42.

Angle grabs a walkie talkie and says the invasion is happening again. It turns out to just be Daniel Bryan and we take a break. Back with Angle yelling at Bryan for wanting to be here to finish the job. Bryan says no but Angle threatens to have the Raw roster destroy him right now. Angle promises to come to Smackdown and even things up.

Recap of Brock Lesnar answering Jinder Mahal's challenge and Mahal's response.

Bryan is still in Angle's office for no apparent reason and sums up what happened in a phone call. The lights go out and we take a break. Back with Bryan in the dark ranting about the door being locked. He says something is wrong and Kane shows up to chokeslam him through a table

(off camera of course).

Finn Balor vs. Cesaro

Balor takes him into the corner to start and shouts BAR. That's still a stupid name so Balor headlocks him down instead. A tilt-a-whirl backbreaker gets Cesaro out of trouble though and he uppercuts Finn into the corner. Balor sends him outside though and the running apron kick to the face drops Cesaro. Sheamus gets in a cheap shot though and we take a break.

Back with Cesaro hitting the pop up uppercut for two, followed by the apron superplex (that never gets old) for the same. We hit the Sharpshooter for a bit with Balor easily powering out. That means a Sling Blade into the corner dropkick, followed by Balor hitting a good looking running flip dive onto both guys. A top rope double stomp to the back gives Balor the pin at 11:28.

Rating: B-. At least Balor got something back after that pretty ridiculous loss to Kane last week. Hopefully he gets a nice run at the pay per view as he still needs to shake off the Bray Wyatt feud. Cesaro losing in a singles match doesn't mean much as he's not likely to be getting a singles push anytime soon.

Post match Kane comes out and Tombstones Balor on the stage. HE'S KANE! DOES ANYONE THINK HE NEEDS TO BE BUILT UP TO FACE STROWMAN? And at the expense of Finn Balor? Good grief is there anyone else you want to put Kane over?

Seth Rollins vs. Kane

I WAS KIDDING!!! Cesaro and Sheamus are still at ringside along with Ambrose. Rollins just looks better in the Shield gear. Seth's early shots have little effect so he scores with some dropkicks through the ropes. The suicide dive is broken up though and Kane runs him over with a clothesline. Rollins hammers away in the corner and kicks at the knee, only to get dropped with an uppercut. You can't say Kane's offense is complicated yet it still works well. The side slam gives Kane two and we hit a chinlock.

Back up and an enziguri gets Seth out of trouble and the Blockbuster (still love that move) gets two. A suicide dive is blocked though and Rollins is down in a heap. Back in and Seth's springboard...I think clothesline is shrugged off as Sheamus and Cesaro are stomping on Ambrose. Another springboard is countered into a chokeslam for the pin on Rolling at 5:42.

Rating: D+. The problem here is obvious: pushing Kane is fine but the idea of having Kane go over Rollins and Balor in back to back weeks for the sake of setting up Kane vs. Strowman is nonsense. Kane is one of the biggest stars ever and is a monster by definition. That's not something which requires a lot of effort but for some reason we're sacrificing far more valuable wrestlers for the sake of pushing the guy.

Post match Dean hits Dirty Deeds on Kane but Sheamus and Cesaro come in to help beat him down. Ambrose and Rollins both get Tombstoned, making it THREE former World Champions Kane has decimated in the span of ten minutes. Oh and one thing missing when the Shield was being beaten down: anyone chanting for Reigns to make the save. Isn't that interesting?

We look at the opening sequence. Again.

Bryan is being stretchered out.

Miz and the Miztourage are ready to celebrate and go into their locker room. They find a bag of trash, which Miz interprets as Braun Strowman coming back. Terror ensues.

Post break Miz runs into Braun and asks him for help with Strowman. Kane says he's on his own.

Recap of Strowman being destroyed at TLC.

Heath Slater/Rhyno vs. Karl Anderson/Luke Gallows

This is a Trick or Street Fight, meaning the ring is surrounded by Halloween decorations. For costumes, we have Santa and Mrs. Claus vs. Chad 2 Bad/Tex Ferguson (from Southpaw Regional Wrestling) respectively. Slater is sent into a bucket of apples to start so Rhyno makes a save and puts pumpkins on their heads. Heath finds some candy corn kendo sticks

but it takes too long to set up a table.

Anderson and Gallows beat Slater down, including shoving pumpkin filling in Slater's face. Karl crotches himself on a skeleton (though just go with it) and there's a pie to the face. Slater makes the save with the kendo sticks but gets beaten down again. Anderson puts a pumpkin on his own head and Gallows does the same, blinding himself in the process. It takes too long though and Rhyno gets off a table, setting up a spinebuster to put Anderson through said table for the pin at 4:50.

Rating: F. No. Moving on.

Cesaro and Sheamus tell Miz that Strowman couldn't possibly be back yet. They're no team though. So is this supposed to be WWE's version of a horror story? Just because it's October? It was more effective when Reigns attempted to murder Strowman and it's not exactly spooky, especially when Strowman is likely back this week or next. On a related note, is Kane getting this kind of a push because he's a monster and it's the Halloween season? If so, that's rather dumb even by WWE's limited standards.

Elias, with a new guitar, is in the ring for a song. He sings the Ballad of Jason Jordan, complete with shots of Jordan being hit with a guitar last week. Jordan comes out to clean house and breaks Elias' new guitar.

Miz and the Miztourage go to leave but Angle cuts them off, saying they're staying or else.

Here are Enzo Amore and Drew Gulak to mock Angle again. Kalisto isn't getting the title back you see and Gulak is ready to help prove that. Gulak says Kalisto is S-O-F-T, which doesn't sit well with Enzo.

Kalisto vs. Drew Gulak

Drew jumps him to start but charges into a boot in the corner. Kalisto's middle rope corkscrew dive and the handspring enziguri sets up the hurricanrana driver. The springboard Salida Del Sol ends Gulak at 59 seconds.

Post match Enzo lays Kalisto out.

Miz is trying to find a way out.

Women's Title: Alexa Bliss vs. Mickie James

James is challenging and scores early with a running kick to the chest. The hurricanrana out of the corner has Bliss reeling and a dropkick puts her outside. Back from a break with Bliss working on a neck crank before switching to a chinlock (totally different you see). Something like an STO gets two and Bliss stands on Mickie's hair for good measure.

That's enough to fire Mickie up but Bliss slams her off the top to take over again. An enziguri off the top lets Mickie score with the Thesz press for two. Some rollups are good for some two counts but Bliss punches her in the face for the pin to retain at 11:25. Seriously it was just a right hand.

Rating: D. Well that happened. This was a lot of chinlocking and not much else, which doesn't make for a strong main event. I was hoping for something like Charlotte vs. Sasha Banks here but instead I got little more than a bad women's match. James isn't the most interesting challenger and losing to a right hand is about as low as you can go.

Miz and the Miztourage go to leave and, after cutting back to Bliss celebrating, get in the car, where of course there is a camera waiting. They pull off and are immediately stopped by a waiting garbage truck. Braun comes out of the garbage as we keep cutting to Miz and company in the vein of a bad horror movie.

Strowman poses (in clean clothes despite BEING IN A GARBAGE TRUCK FOR EIGHT DAYS) and chases them out of the limo. They head into the arena, where Bliss is still posing, where Strowman throws Dallas onto the stage. The Miztourage save Miz from going through the table so Strowman takes them to the ring for FIVE running powerslams. Axel goes through the announcers' table to end the show.

Overall Rating: D-. This is a show where two good matches were powerless to save the show. I'm not even sure where to begin, but we'll start with Stephanie. Yeah I know it's her character and we know that's what she does but come on: the legacy of Raw is destroyed? That's what we're

taking out of last week's show?

The same show that had Buzz Aldrin, Florence Henderson and that cowboy whose name I can't remember as "guest stars"? The same show that had a Rosie O'Donnell vs. Donald Trump minis match? The same show that had Jim Ross' unconscious head the against the back of Vince's underwear before Vince, in a cowboy hat, skipped around the ring with his pants around his ankles? NONE OF THAT compares to last week? That's what we're supposed to buy as a top story?

Ignoring the Halloween street fight (On the night BEFORE the show THAT ACTUALLY AIRS ON FREAKING HALLOWEEN!), there's the whole booking the show like a horror movie. Strowman looked like Michael Myers and Kane (who was originally based on Myers) it beating World Champions into the ground. The more I think about it, the more I think they really are pushing monsters like this for the sake of the season of the year, which is as dumb as you can get. Maybe Kane was supposed to be Wyatt, but I can't imagine Wyatt getting this kind of a push no matter how much more sense it would have made.

On top of that, as of now, we're not even getting the match that the finishing segment seems to be setting up. Based on what we saw, Strowman should be going after Miz and the Intercontinental Title. What are we getting instead? Strowman vs. Kane and Miz vs. Corbin. After Survivor Series, do you think Strowman is going to go after the title? Of course not, because he'll want revenge or something like that. That's fine once in awhile, but when is the last time you remember a feud being after the title? Let them build that thing up once in a while instead of always going for the personal stuff.

The problem here comes down to one simple thing: Kane and Stephanie McMahon came out as the dominant forces on this show. We have two weeks to go before Survivor Series and at the moment, we know one member of the Raw team. In theory people like Kane, Balor and Strowman will be included (it's not like there are many other options) but none of this has focused on the pay per view.

All we hear about is how it's Raw vs. Smackdown and champion vs. champion

but that's not enough. The titles aren't on the line and I need a lot more than bragging rights to draw my interest. There's nothing going on for this show and, other than Kane and Stephanie (and Strowman, to a lesser degree), there's no reason to care about most of what's coming up. Aside from the raid, all we have to go on is some graphics and a one off raid. Things could change, but this show was a disaster that turned me off on the pay per view.

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