

Monday Night Raw – December 25, 2017: I'm Dreaming Of A... Huh?

Monday Night Raw

Date: December 25, 2017

Location: Allstate Arena, Chicago, Illinois

Commentators: Michael Cole, Corey Graves, Booker T.

For reasons of "USA Told Us To Do It", WWE presents a three hour Monday Night Raw on Christmas night. As a bonus, the first hour will feature no commercials, because if there's one thing I think of when I watch Raw, it's that there's not enough material. John Cena is back for another one night shot so let's get to it.

Speaking of Cena, here he is to open things up. Actually hang on a second as Cena says there's something that needs to change. Cena goes outside and says someone is wearing the wrong colors. He takes off his hat and shirt and hands them to a kid with some sort of a disability who is wearing his old orange gear. And that is why Cena comes off as a superhero and is just flat out awesome to boot.

That earns a MERRY CHRISTMAS chant and Cena talks about how WWE is like a family. However, he wants to say cheers to the good and bad times, but cheers on a special day like today. Cue Elias to interrupt for his big spot of getting a rub from Cena. John actually agrees to walk with him but they get cut off by a CM Punk chant. Elias: "CM Punk ain't gonna interrupt me."

Cena says we need to have some fun tonight and grabs a chair so Elias can perform. The lights go down and Elias is about to play but the CM PUNK chants cut him off again. The song starts and of course it insults Chicago so Cena cuts him off and says hit the lights. Cena thinks Elias is the real jerk because he keeps insulting every city he's in.

Elias thinks Cena might be right and offers to do the song again if

Chicago will give him a second chance. He sings again and this time sings a rather nice version before handing it off to Cena for "Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas". Cena starts off but gets punched in the face for his efforts. Elias goes to leave but comes back to stomp away and challenges Cena to a match right now. A referee is fine with this and we're ready to go.

John Cena vs. Elias

Cena, whose shorts look shorter than usual, gets hammered down to start but grabs a desperation headlock. Elias gets two off a release slam before tying Cena in the Tree of Woe. An Alberto Del Rio top rope double stomp gets another near fall but Cena avoids a second attempt.

Cena gets taken down again though and a Batista Bomb gives Elias another near fall. We hit the chinlock to eat up some more time with Elias even flipping forward to get Cena away from the rope. Back up and a hard clothesline gets two on Cena, which does so well that Elias does the same thing again for the same result.

Cena has to pull himself up using Elias' body, earning himself another right hand to the face for two more. A quick STF has Elias in trouble but Cena doesn't have it in full. Elias crawls to the ropes so Cena tries to grab it again, only to have Elias pop up for a jumping knee to the face.

That doesn't even get a cover as Cena rolls outside before grabbing the STF again. This time Elias makes the rope but the damage seems to have been done. Something like a slow motion Drift Away gets two but Elias takes his sweet time posing. Cena pops up and initiates his finishing sequence. The AA is good for the pin on Elias at 16:08.

Rating: C+. Elias got in most of the offense here and that's all you can ask for him here. No Elias shouldn't have won here as it's just a way to give the fans a feel good win and there's nothing wrong with that. You have to imagine Cena will be around for the Rumble and he's going to be a favorite so let him have a win to get some of his mojo back.

Cena salutes the kid in the crowd.

Samoa Joe video.

Jason Jordan comes in to see Kurt Angle but Seth Rollins cuts them off, saying he wants to face Samoa Joe tonight. In a repeat of the same thing he does every week, Jordan says he wants his match against Joe. Angle suggests that they team up to deal with the Bar first but neither seems interested. Kurt makes the match anyway and puts the titles on the line.

The two of them leave and Roman Reigns comes in. Angle gives him Joe tonight, with the Intercontinental Title on the line.

Brian Kendrick and Jack Gallagher are in the ring before Kendrick faces Hideo Itami. Kendrick laughs off the idea of being scared of Itami because the two of them are some of the finest competitors around.

Hideo Itami vs. Brian Kendrick

They forearm it out to start with Itami getting the better of it and demanding respect. Back up and a jumping knee to the face gives Kendrick two. We hit a cross arm choke on Itami but he's back up without much effort. The tornado DDT into the neck snap across the top has Kendrick in trouble and a running corner dropkick makes it even worse. The GTS ends Kendrick at 4:00.

Rating: C-. Itami is a great striker but he doesn't have the best fire in the world. Just shouting RESPECT ME over and over isn't exactly going to make him the most popular guy, but at least he's trying. Let him show off more of his strikes and see what he can do and maybe that'll get him somewhere. As it is though, nothing all that special here.

Video on the announcement of the Women's Royal Rumble, naturally with Stephanie getting most of the focus. Thankfully we do get some reactions from some of the women.

Mickie James, Sasha Banks and Bayley run into the very Christmas themed Miztourage. They sing some Miz themed Christmas carols. The ladies bail in a hurry.

Bayley/Mickie James/Sasha Banks vs. Absolution

Paige forearm Sasha in the face to start before it's off to Mandy. Mickie comes in for a running forearm and it's off to Bayley, who gets a heck of a reaction. It's off to Deville who gets in her hard strikes, only to have Bayley take her back into the corner. The fight heads outside with Sonya hitting a heck of a clothesline to drop Banks and take over. The fans are happy to have Paige back in but it's quickly back to Sonya for a hard knee.

We hit a bodyscissors for a bit before the villains take turns beating on Banks. The announcers continue to drool over Mandy (they have good taste) as she knocks Bayley and James off the apron to break up a hot tag attempt. As is so often the case though, Banks shoves her away a few seconds later, allowing the hot tag off to Bayley so house can be cleaned. Bayley starts throwing suplexes and even knocks Deville off the apron for good measure. A Bayley to Belly gets two on Paige as everything breaks down on the floor. Back in and the Rampaige ends Bayley at 10:14.

Rating: C. Absolution winning is the right call and they're starting to establish themselves with more defined characters. I could go for Rose as more than the eye candy character but to be fair, what else is she supposed to do? Paige is a good leader and Deville is made to be the tough one so it's not like the team needs many changes. Then again almost none of this matters until we get to the Rumble but at least the right team won.

We look at Dean Ambrose's arm being destroyed last week. The injury may keep him out up to nine months.

Renee Young isn't happy to interview Samoa Joe, who has no remorse for what he did to Dean last week. Joe is ready to take the Intercontinental Title when Reigns comes seeking vengeance.

Video on Kane and Braun Strowman becoming #1 contenders to Brock Lesnar at the Royal Rumble.

Kane vs. Heath Slater

Apparently Rhino got Slater this match to toughen him up a bit. Merry Christmas buddy. Kane takes him into the corner for some knees to the

ribs and there's the side slam for good measure. Slater bails to the floor for a breather and a pep talk from Rhyno. As you might expect, Kane throws him right back to the floor and it's time for more pep talking. Back in and Slater's offense is shrugged off, setting up the chokeslam for the pin at 2:13.

Kane goes after Rhyno post match and a quick flurry is cut off by a chokeslam.

Here's Curt Hawkins who has to tell himself to face the facts. 2017 hasn't been his best year but the year isn't over yet. How about a little Christmas miracle tonight? The open challenge is on.

Finn Balor vs. Curt Hawkins

Hawkins grabs a quick rollup for two and gets the same result off the same move. Balor calmly kicks him down and hits the Coup de Grace for the pin at 1:30.

The Miztourage sings to Goldust and throw in a DVD of Santa's Little Helper. Titus Worldwide comes up and Goldust gives them the DVD.

Bray Wyatt talks about how Sister Abigail always hated this time of year. He's ready to face the Woken Warrior because Matt Hardy is surrounded by the fireflies. Bray is here.

Wyatt heads to the ring but Matt runs in and the fight is on. A Twist of Fate misses and Bray bails to the floor. After threatening to DELETE Bray, Matt throws in some maniacal laughter.

The Bar isn't happy with having to defend their titles but they're ready to fight. Sheamus has a gift for Cesaro, including a char containing their catchphrase. The gift: a Dean Ambrose action figure with a missing arm! Cesaro has a gift for Sheamus as well: a Seth Rollins action figure which Sheamus can break just like the real one tonight. There's more in the box too as Cesaro has gotten him a Jason Jordan figure too. Sheamus: "I don't want this." Cesaro says no one wants Jordan so it's perfect.

Cedric Alexander gets his Cruiserweight Title shot next week.

Enzo Amore/Drew Gulak/Ariya Daivari vs. Akira Tozawa/Mustafa Ali/Cedric Alexander

Miracle on 34th Street Fight but first Enzo (as Santa, with the other two as his elves) has to run his mouth about Cedric not getting a present on Christmas morning. Even though it's a street fight, Daivari and Cedric start things off with Alexander cleaning house in short order. Tozawa and Ali take out Daivari and Gulak with dives as we take a break.

Back with Enzo whipping Tozawa back first into a Christmas tree. Tozawa remembers that he's only fighting Enzo though, meaning the hot tag brings in Ali a few seconds later. The rolling X Factor gets two and there's the 054 for two with Gulak making the save. Enzo's candy cane kendo stick is taken away from him and begging off ensues. Gulak runs into Enzo by mistake, setting up a few stick shots to his back. The Lumbar Check ends Daivari at 7:49.

Rating: D+. So, again, why were they tagging in a STREET FIGHT? The match was about what you would expect here and the wrestling really wasn't all that good. That being said, they did a decent enough job of setting up the title match with Alexander looking strong. This really didn't do much for me though and felt rather forced, which isn't the best idea during a comedy match.

Post break Enzo isn't happy but runs into Nia, now with red and blue hair. It turns out they're underneath the mistletoe and are about to kiss but Alexa Bliss runs in and needs Nia. Enzo doesn't look happy.

Reigns is ready to hurt Joe for what he did to Ambrose last week.

Intercontinental Title: Roman Reigns vs. Samoa Joe

Reigns is defending and punches Joe in the face at the bell. Joe gets knocked into the ropes and it's the apron boot for good measure. Back in and Joe grabs a belly to back suplex for two but Reigns snaps off the corner clotheslines. A big boot drops Joe again but he's right back up with right hands to take us to a break.

We come back with Reigns getting two off a Samoan drop but getting

punched in the face some more. It's already off to the Koquina Clutch but Reigns is just too close to the ropes for the break. Joe takes him outside and the suicide elbow drives Reigns into the barricade. Reigns comes up holding his elbow so we hit the armbar in a logical move. The hold is broken and Reigns unloads in the corner before shoving the referee for the DQ at 12:45.

Rating: C+. This feels like a way to set up a rematch at some point in the future, likely at the Royal Rumble. Joe vs. Reigns is a good feud and it's made even better when you have two people who can beat the heck out of each other. Working on the arm made sense and tying it back to Ambrose's injury is a nice idea. Good brawl here, but it's clear that they're setting up for something in the future.

Post match Reigns beats on Joe even more, including a steps shot to the arm. Joe avoids a heck of a chair shot and looks a bit shaken up while bailing.

Rollins tells Jordan to bring it tonight and Jordan is ready.

The Miztourage is in the ring to sing about their Secret Santa match. I think you know where this is going.

Braun Strowman vs. Miztourage

The goons are thrown around with ease and the running powerslam ends Dallas at 58 seconds.

Powerslam to Axel, powerslam to Dallas, powerslam to Axel.

Here's Alexa Bliss for a chat. She's here tonight to give us the Gift of a Goddess because this has been her year. Bliss has dominated his year like a Jedi from Star Wars (unlike one from the DMV). That brings us to the announcement of the Women's Royal Rumble, which Bliss takes credit for taking place. Cue Asuka to say she's entering the Rumble because no one is ready for her. Bliss gets kicked down.

Brock Lesnar is back next week.

Tag Team Titles: The Bar vs. Seth Rollins/Jason Jordan

Cesaro and Sheamus are defending. Jordan wrestles Sheamus to the mat to start but the champs take him down with a double hiptoss. Rollins comes in off the hot tag and hits a suicide dive as we take a break. Back with Rollins in trouble as the champs take turns beating him down.

We hit the chinlock for a good while until Rollins fights up with some forearms to Cesaro's head. That's not enough for the hot tag though as it's Sheamus cutting him off. A middle rope legdrop gives Sheamus two and we're back in chinlock. Sheamus gets frustrated at Rollins fighting up again so Seth is sent outside for a clothesline from Cesaro. Jordan actually makes a save, earning himself a hard trip into the barricade.

Seth gets in a few shots but there's no one to tag. Instead it's the Irish Curse for two on Seth, followed by a hard knee to the face for the same. Jordan charges in for a save and the hot tag brings him back in. Everything breaks down and a pair of something like the Demolition Decapitators get two on Jason.

Cesaro unloads with right hands and a Brogue Kick takes Rollins down. The Cloverleaf sends Jordan scurrying over to the ropes and the champs are frustrated. Super White Noise is broken up though and Rollins takes Cesaro out to the floor. Back in, Jordan's wheelbarrow neckbreaker is good for the pin and the title at 15:24.

Rating: C+. Well that was unexpected. I get the idea that it's the first Christmas episode in twenty five years but that's still not exactly something I would have guessed. It's interesting to see where it's going though and Jordan FINALLY has a win, albeit as a tag wrestler again (it's almost like he shouldn't have been moved out of his team in the first place). This is one of those things where I'm going to need more information, but at least it worked at the moment.

Overall Rating: C+. This show was a weird hybrid between a stand alone show that felt like something special and a show that actually advanced the stories. Then again, we have to get ready for the Rumble and they really don't have time to burn off a show, even if it's something like this. Hopefully people actually watched the show, but they're going to be in a stretch to get much of an audience. Not a bad show though and better

than I was expecting.

Results

John Cena b. Elias – Attitude Adjustment

Hideo Itami b. Brian Kendrick – GTS

Absolution b. Bayley/Mickie James/Sasha Banks – Rampaige to Bayley

Kane b. Heath Slater – Chokeslam

Finn Balor b. Curt Hawkins – Coup de Grace

Akira Tozawa/Cedric Alexander/Mustafa Ali b. Enzo Amore/Drew Gulak/Ariya Daivari – Lumbar Check to Daivari

Samoa Joe b. Roman Reigns via DQ when Reigns shoved the referee

Braun Strowman b. Miztourage – Running powerslam to Dallas

Seth Rollins/Jason Jordan b. The Bar – Wheelbarrow neckbreaker to Cesaro

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