

Monday Night Raw – April 23, 2018: Not A GooThe Greatest Royal Rumble Is Friday!d Show



IMG Credit: WWE

Monday Night Raw

Date: April 23, 2018

Location: Scottrade Center, St. Louis, Missouri

Commentators: Michael Cole, Corey Graves, Booker T.

It's both a new night for the roster as well as a go home show because April has to be the most packed month of all time. In this case we have the first night under the new roster after last week's Superstar Shakeup, where your mileage may vary on how good of a thing that is. At the same time it's the go home show for the Greatest Royal Rumble. Let's get to it.

[Here are last week's results if you need a recap.](#)

In memory of Bruno Sammartino.

The roster is on the stage in Bruno shirts for the ten bell salute.

We get the Bruno tribute video with a who's who of people talking about how important he was and what he meant to so many generations. He was before most modern fans' time and I don't think we can really appreciate how big of a star he was. Sammartino was the World Champion and that's

how he'll be remembered. Outstanding stuff here, as usual with these tributes, and they treated him like the legend they should have.

Here are Brock Lesnar and Paul Heyman to open things up. After a break, Heyman introduces himself for the man who is STILL the reigning, defending, undisputed Universal Champion, Brock Lesnar. Heyman knows fans think he's here to gloat, just like they were when they broke the Streak or when they took John Cena to Suplex (repeated 14 times) City.

When it comes to Lesnar, this is real, and no one in the locker room or the crowd has a chance. Heyman delivers spoilers because Lesnar doesn't gloat. However, Heyman can gloat all night long. He talks about the un-PG elbows to Reigns' head and the multiple F5's, but none of this matters to Lesnar. This Friday, Lesnar, who is dying to be in a UFC cage, will be flying across the world to be locked in a cage with Roman Reigns.

A small ROMAN chant breaks out before Heyman talks about Brock's new contract. Lesnar wanted a fight inside a cage and now the odds are stacked against Reigns even more than before. Reigns will be coming back home in multiple boxes as another victim, but here's Reigns to interrupt. Reigns says he's coming home with the title and that's it. I'm still not sure what to expect over there, but they're booking themselves in a necessary title change at this rate.

We get some tweets of people paying respect to Bruno.

Bobby Roode vs. Elias

Roode cuts Elias off after only a mention of his name, which should make him a full on heel. Elias gets knocked around early but avoids the Blockbuster with Roode banging up his knee on the landing. An armbar gives the knee a chance to rest and the threat of a Glorious DDT sends Elias bailing to the floor.

Back from a break with Roode firing off some chops until Elias sends him into the post. We hit the neck crank and here's an inset ad for Undertaker vs. Rusev at the Greatest Royal Rumble. Egads man you talk about it all night and do a regular commercial and NOW THIS? Good grief the Saturday morning Memphis shows had fewer show advertisements. We hit

the chinlock for a bit until Roode fights up with some clotheslines and a sunset flip for two. The Blockbuster drops Elias but he bails to the floor. Roode throws him back in but Elias rams his shoulder first into the ropes and gets the pin at 11:48.

Rating: D+. I still have no idea why Roode isn't a heel. Outside of his entrance being popular, everything about him screams heel but this is what we're getting at the time. It's certainly surprising to see Roode lose, but if it leads to a heel turn then I'm all good. I do like Elias getting a win though as he's still being well protected (Braun feud excluded).

Bray and Matt laugh a lot and say run.

Bray Wyatt/Matt Hardy vs. Ascension

Corey explains Bray's transformation and Cole is just lost. Viktor locks up with Matt to start and cartwheels away, which Matt declares WONDERFUL with a round of applause. It's off to Bray who can't Rock Bottom Viktor but can clothesline Konnor. Matt gets taken down and a fist drop gets two as the announcers explain the Tag Team Title situation. Graves to Cole: "You're ok with a ten year old winning the Tag Team Championships but the Hardy Compound is weird?" It's back to Bray for the running crossbody and a corner splash, followed by the Side Effect for two on Viktor. The elevated Twist of Fate puts Viktor away at 3:45.

Rating: D. This is the kind of match that Bray and Matt needed as they go into the title match. There's no reason to have them lose in Saudi Arabia so a win here is a good idea. Let them build up at least a little momentum before they go on to face a good team, even if this was only a step above a squash.

More Tweets on Bruno.

Here are Sami Zayn and Kevin Owens for the Sami and Kevin Show. They hype up the Greatest Royal Rumble and say it's great because one of them will win it. They're here tonight because of Stephanie McMahon was smarter than their first guest, which means Sami and Kevin singing YOU SUCK.

Cue Angle to say that they shouldn't quit their day jobs. Owens understands Angle's bitterness as Stephanie has his manhood in a jar in Connecticut. They recap the conspiracy on Smackdown and say that Stephanie must hate Angle for what she's done to him. Angle agrees, because if not for him then Stephanie would still have full use of her arm. Owens talks about Angle needing this job because he has five kids. Actually it's six because Sami forgot Jason Jordan "just like Angle did for years."

Angle warns them about the beating they'll be receiving on Friday when they're in the ring with him, Daniel Bryan, Shane McMahon, Chris Jericho and everyone else they've treated badly over the years. As for tonight, they can have a tag match with Bobby Lashley and Braun Strowman. Can we please not do the Stephanie vs. Angle story again? It wasn't great the first time.

The Miztourage offer their services to Seth Rollins but get shot down.

Greatest Royal Rumble rundown.

Titus Worldwide vs. Dolph Ziggler/Drew McIntyre

Titus runs Ziggler over to start and a standing moonsault gives Crews two. A blind tag lets McIntyre kick him in the face though and Drew hits a reverse Alabama Slam to rock Apollo. The Claymore into the Zig Zag is good for the pin at 2:10.

Post match Ziggler brags about having a dangerous man watching his back. Drew says Ziggler is right because he's dangerous to a soft locker room. People are just back there collecting checks and it makes him sick. This is how a superstar looks and speaks because he's the wake up call and reality check that this place needs. Again: let Drew be a star on his own without Ziggler around. It doesn't benefit anyone but Dolph, who will manage to let everyone down.

Chad Gable comes in to see Angle and asks about Jason Jordan. Angle says he'll be back soon but Gable is here as a singles competitor. Jinder Mahal comes in and complains about not receiving a celebrating last week. He demands to be sent back to Smackdown and threatens to call Stephanie.

Gable tells him to have some respect but Jinder thinks he's Nicholas. It's about to get physical so Angle makes a match right now.

Jinder Mahal vs. Chad Gable

Jinder jumps him before the bell and the referee starts the match anyway. Mahal hammers away but gets sent outside, where a hard clothesline drops Chad to send us to a break. Back with Gable in a chinlock until Mahal sends him chest first into the buckle. Gable fights up and starts in on the leg with a dragon screw legwhip, only to get caught with a hot shot. A running knee to the face rocks Gable again and the Khallas is loaded up. Gable walks the ropes though and flips back into a rollup for the pin at 8:50.

Rating: D+. That's a good idea for a win, even if Mahal is getting a title shot on Friday. Gable has more personality than Mahal could ever hope to and with an Olympic wrestling background to go with it, there's a lot of potential there. Mahal was trying here but my goodness the levels of boring are just too much to overcome.

The Riott Squad says last week was a message to the entire women's division. They're here to take over and Logan says a scared animal is easy prey. Riott promises to take over in the ten woman tag tonight. This was pretty rough.

More Bruno tweets.

We look at the Lesnar/Heyman/Reigns segment.

Samoa Joe has no problem with Reigns winning the title but he's worried he won't have anyone to put to sleep at Backlash.

We run down the rest of the Rumble card.

The Miztourage, in new shirts, offers their services to Finn Balor but their TOO SWEET offer is declined.

Sami Zayn/Kevin Owens vs. Braun Strowman/Bobby Lashley

Sami and Owens try to bail but Strowman throws them back in without too

much trouble. Lashley forearms Owens down in the corner but it's off to Sami for some right hands to take over. A suplex gives Sami two and the double teaming begins. Owens is sent outside and Lashley gets two off a crossbody but Owens pulls him to the floor. We hit a backplash and it's off to a break.

Back with Lashley fighting out of Sami's chinlock and dropping him with a clothesline. That's enough for the hot tag to Strowman, who runs around the ring and shoulders Owens down. Sami gets taken down as well so Strowman goes outside to run Owens over again, just as he gets up. Strowman does it a third time, this time with a dropkick as the fans are going insane for this stuff. That's enough for Sami as he bails up the ramp, only to be thrown back inside by Lashley. There's the delayed suplex to Sami (one arm version), followed by the running powerslam from Strowman for the pin at 12:03.

Rating: C. This might not have been a great match but it was entertaining. Strowman running Owens over three times in a row was making me laugh and Sami being tossed around like a toy was great. Strowman and Lashley could make for a very entertaining monster team and I could go with seeing more of them in the future.

Owens hasn't moved since taking that dropkick in a funny visual.

Video on Baron Corbin.

Baron Corbin vs. No Way Jose

The Conga line is back. Actually hang on a second as Corbin isn't coming to the ring with all of those people at ringside because he's not going to get jumped. Corbin is here for serious competition but Jose isn't on his level. Therefore, no way Jose. Corbin leaves so Jose starts the Conga line again, only to get jumped by Corbin on the stage, including the chokebreaker.

Alexa Bliss gives a public service announcement about bullying over Nia Jax. Apparently Nia ate the rest of a burrito bowl that Bliss was trying to give to a homeless woman but Alexa did nothing. She can make things right at Backlash when she gets the title back. This has been your Moment

of Bliss.

Finn Balor/Seth Rollins vs. Miztourage

Axel runs Balor over to start and does a little dance before it's off to Dallas for some knees. The chinlock goes on in a hurry but Balor is right back with a Pele for a breather. The hot tag brings in Rollins to clean house, including a suicide dive to take them both out. There's the Sling Blade to Axel and it's a Stomp into the Coup de Grace for the pin at 4:56.

Rating: D+. That felt so much shorter. I'm not sure what they'll do with the Intercontinental Title as I can't quite imagine Rollins making it through both title defenses without dropping it somewhere. If nothing else, Miz can tie the record for the most title reigns and move even closer to the record for most days. Either way, it would be nice to get on to something different from the Wrestlemania feuds.

Natalya fires her team up for the ten woman tag. Nia says that insulting her can be bad for your health. Bayley and Sasha stare at each other without saying anything.

More Bruno tweets.

Alexa Bliss/Mickie James/Riott Squad vs. Nia Jax/Natalya/Sasha Banks/Ember Moon/Bayley

Logan takes Banks to the mat to start and it's off to Sasha vs. Morgan. Banks pulls her into the corner and hands it off to Ember as Booker talks about training Moon. A springboard spinning crossbody gets two and one heck of a suicide dive takes Morgan out as we take a break. Back with Logan chinlocking Banks but Mickie tags herself in, much to Logan's annoyance.

That means another chinlock so let's hit that inset promo for Reigns vs. Lesnar (I mean, it's not like these people are going to the show or anything so giving their time to someone else is totally cool). Back again with Banks fighting up and bringing Natalya in to clean house. The Sharpshooter goes on but Logan makes the save with a chop block. She tags

Bayley in but Mickie kicks the injured Natalya to the floor.

Her knee is bad enough that the trainers come out and Sasha checks on her as well. Bayley fights Riott off and the hot tag brings in Nia to wreck some people. Nia DIVES off the apron to take everyone out, leaving Mickie to baseball slide Natalya again. Trash talk ensues and here's Ronda Rousey to defend her friend. Mickie baseball slides Ronda as well and the armbar makes Mickie tap for the DQ at 14:15 before I can finish typing this. Remember: Mickie James, a six time Women's Champion and future Hall of Famer, was tapped out in seconds by the armbar. Stephanie McMahon blocked it three times.

Rating: D. Nia's dive was good and the ending was fairly telegraphed (and fine) since Rousey getting into the regular division is a good idea. The rest of the match wasn't much to see, especially with the inset promo about thirty seconds after the return from a commercial. I really hope that's just a thing for this show and Wrestlemania, because we hear enough ads during the show, let alone during the matches.

Rousey helps Natalya to the back to end the show.

Overall Rating: D+. I wasn't feeling this one as they really pushed the Rumble too hard. I don't know if they even pushed Wrestlemania this much in the go home show and that's a little hard to take. If nothing else, get rid of the ads during the matches. Other than that though, this was a lot of setting things up going forward, which has me worried about Backlash. I believe we have three matches set at the moment and three TV shows left before we get there. But hey, at least we get the REALLY big house show before we get a worn out roster on Monday and Tuesday. Not a very good show this week.

Results

Elias b. Bobby Roode – Rollup

Matt Hardy/Bray Wyatt b. Ascension – Elevated Twist of ate to Viktor

Dolph Ziggler/Drew McIntyre b. Titus Worldwide – Claymore/Zig Zag combination to Crews

Chad Gable b. Jinder Mahal – Rollup

Braun Strowman/Bobby Lashley b. Sami Zayn/Kevin Owens – Running powerslam to Zayn

Finn Balor/Seth Rollins b. Miztourage – Coup de Grace to Dallas

Alexa Bliss/Mickie James/Riott Squad b. Nia Jax/Natalya/Ember Moon/Bayley/Sasha Banks via DQ when Ronda Rousey interfered

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