

Monday Night Raw – February 18, 2019: The Invasion...But Good



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Monday Night Raw

Date: February 18, 2019

Location: Cajundome, Lafayette, Louisiana

Commentators: Michael Cole, Corey Graves, Renee Young

We're done with Elimination Chamber but since March is a work month, we have less than three weeks before Fastlane. I have no idea what they're supposed to do to headline Fastlane if Becky Lynch is currently suspended and Seth Rollins is being held out of the ring, but there's a good chance they could drop the suspension so she can face Charlotte. They've done faster turnarounds before. Let's get to it.

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

In Memory Of Pedro Morales.

Here's HHH top open things up. HHH says it's that time of year and we're on the Road to Wrestlemania. The last twenty four hours should be proof of how important this time is with stuff like Sasha Banks and Bayley becoming the first ever WWE Women's Tag Team Champions. Or Finn Balor winning the Intercontinental Title. Or Kofi Kingston getting that close

to winning the WWE Championship. The fans like that more than anything else, with a KOFI chant getting a little time.

That brings HHH to Becky, who showed us that nothing is stopping her from getting to Charlotte or Ronda Rousey. Now professionally, he has to say that if she does that again, she'll be suspended. On a personal level though, that was pretty cool. Speaking of cool, it was announced on ESPN this morning that D-Generation X is going into the Hall of Fame this year.

HHH also oversees the third global touring brand with NXT, so here are some people making their debut tonight on Raw. That would be Ricochet, Aleister Black, North American Champion Johnny Gargano and NXT Champion Tommaso Ciampa. They're in a tag match tonight, though it's not clear if this is a permanent callup or just a one off appearance. We're not done yet though as there are a bunch of tables sitting on the stage for a very good reason.

Braun Strowman vs. Baron Corbin

Tables match and Strowman has bad ribs coming in. Strowman knocks him around to start but a shot to the ribs cuts him down. Corbin drives him into the barricade but Strowman whips him into it even harder to take over. It's already time for a table, though Strowman's ribs slow him down. Some kicks to the ribs keep Strowman in trouble but Corbin can't suplex him on the ramp.

Strowman can certainly do it to him though and Corbin is screaming a lot. They head up to the stage where some tables are set up, though Strowman prefers the announcers' table. Corbin knocks him off the stage though and we take a break. Back with Corbin knocking Strowman out of the ring and swinging a kendo stick at the bad ribs. Strowman knocks him out of the air with some steps though and the running powerslam puts Corbin through a table in the corner for the win at 14:35.

Rating: D. Well that's very nice for Strowman as he gets to beat up the least interesting and intimidating heel in recent memory to get back a win that he didn't need to give up in the first place. This feud has been going for months now and I'm still waiting for it to get interesting in

the first place. I'm not sure what the endgame is supposed to be, but it seems like something we should have reached a long time ago.

As Strowman is leaving, Paul Heyman comes out and tells him to go to the back. Strowman grabs him by the neck before letting him go. Oh please tell me we're not getting ready for another Strowman vs. Lesnar match. After a break, Heyman introduces us to a video on Lesnar's path to the top of the company. This includes a mini biography of Lesnar's career, both in WWE and the UFC. It wraps up with Lesnar breaking the Streak and we'll be back to this later. Back in the arena, Heyman takes a quick audience poll on how much of a chance Rollins has.

This brings out Finn Balor for some reason and after a break, Heyman is gone (it was pretty clear he wasn't done). Balor talks about not having a title for a long time and how he grew up watching some of the great Intercontinental Champions. This brings out a subdued Lio Rush, who says Bobby Lashley deserves to be champion. Cue Lashley from behind to lay Balor out. Rush joins Lashley in the ring for the double team as their issues seem to have already been forgotten. Rush hits the Final Hour but here's Ricochet for the save. Time for a tag match.

Bobby Lashley/Lio Rush vs. Ricochet/Finn Balor

Ricochet and Rush start things off as the commentary make it sound like this is a lot more than a one off appearance. Ricochet flips around to start and snaps off the perfect dropkick to send Rush into the corner. Lashley comes in and gets kicked to the floor, leaving Ricochet to handspring into his signature pose, leaving Lashley and Rush a bit flummoxed. Balor comes in to face Lashley, who takes him into the corner for a knee to the ribs.

The chinlock goes on, followed by a quick Downward Spiral for two. It's back to Rush, who quickly gets taken down with a basement dropkick. The Sling Blade drops Rush again and a shotgun dropkick looks to set up the Coup de Grace. Lashley offers a distraction though, allowing Rush to chop block the knee. That's not a commercial for a change as Lashley brings him back inside for a chinlock.

Lashley slams him down and now we take the break. Back with Lashley

holding the chinlock (I think my head would explode if it was action when we came back, but that might make you think you need to stick around so you don't miss anything and that's not how WWE rolls.) and driving him hard into the corner. Rush comes in and slaps Balor in the face, earning himself an Eye of the Hurricane.

Balor does the worst "sit there six inches from the hot tag instead of moving slightly forward" that I can remember, followed by the hot tag going through a few seconds later. Egads come up with a better structure. Ricochet comes back in and hits the big flip dive to the floor to take out Rush, followed by a moonsault off the barricade over Lashley, who gets dropkicked down by Balor. Back in and the 630 finishes Rush at 18:03.

Rating: C. This is a match that went about twice as long as it needed to with the heat segment on Balor going on far too long. Ricochet's stuff at the end was exactly what it should have been, but this felt like an attempt at combining two stories and making things drag on too long. Let Ricochet clean house to start, do a short heat segment on Balor, and then do the same finish and this is way better.

Balor gives Ricochet the ring in a nice moment.

HHH is talking to Natalya when Drew McIntyre comes in. Drew wants Seth Rollins tonight because he wants to go to Wrestlemania. Dean Ambrose comes in to say he'll fight Drew tonight and slaps him in the face. HHH: "You still want Seth or do you want me to change that over?" Drew will take Dean.

Here's the Lucha House Party and let's stop to look at Becky Lynch getting suspended last week, the attack at a house show on Saturday, and her attacking Charlotte and Ronda Rousey last night. I have no idea why they're doing these entrances before going somewhere else but it's rather annoying.

Lucha House Party vs. Zack Ryder/Curt Hawkins

Hawkins and Ryder take over on Metalik to start but it's off to Dorado for chops and dropkicks. Ryder neckbreakers his way out of a double

suplex attempt and it's back to Hawkins as the announcers talk about the New York Mets roster. A Michinoku Driver gets two on Metalik and Ryder clotheslines him outside. Hawkins goes after Metalik and Dorado snaps off a hurricanrana for the pin at 3:38.

Rating: D. This would be another moment where the story doesn't exactly advance and nothing changes. Hawkins almost has to win something at some point, though I'm not sure where he goes from there. The losses don't mean anything anymore and this story has been going on for years now.

Heavy Machinery comes out to the stage for a chat. They're all about steaks and weights and want to fight anyone around here. Lacey Evans comes out, walks down the ramp, and comes up to stand behind the two of them. They walk down the ramp, do the Bushwhackers walk, and then come back up. Lacey seems pleased.

Gargano and Ciampa are in the back when Bobby Roode and Chad Gable come in. They both want the shot at the Revival, who come in to say they have some history with both teams. Ciampa says they're here to make an impact but Revival doesn't need their respect.

Revival vs. Johnny Gargano/Tommaso Ciampa

Non-title. Wilder grabs a wristlock on Gargano to start but Johnny takes him down into a front facelock. Ciampa comes in and the old DIY magic is rolling in a hurry. Dawson chops Gargano in the corner but gets sent outside, leaving Gargano to hit the suicide dive. A whip into the steps sends us to a break with DIY in control. Back with Gargano in trouble until the tornado DDT/jumping kick to the chest is enough to put Revival down.

Ciampa comes back in for some rolling German suplexes on Dawson, plus a running knee to the head for two. Wilder gets back up though and it's a middle rope elbow to Ciampa with Dawson hitting his own German suplex for two more. The Shatter Machine is broken up (I think Gargano missed what was supposed to be a trip) and Gargano hits the slingshot DDT for two on Wilder.

Gargano's rolling kick to the head sends Dawson outside and a small

package to Wilder gets two more. The slingshot spear is blocked and a Steiner Bulldog is good for another near fall as Ciampa dives in for the save. Wilder and Gargano are sent outside and Gargano starts firing off the kicks. The slingshot spear hits Dawson and it's Meet in the Middle for the pin 11:21.

Rating: B. One. Week. It lasted ONE WEEK. They couldn't go a single week without jobbing the Revival out. You could do this against Roode/Gable if you're setting up a title match at Fastlane (remember: no guaranteed title rematches) but instead, the solution is to have them lose clean here. It was a good match and DIY (because they're back with their NXT feud being mostly ignored) winning their big debut is the right idea, but this made my head hurt all over again.

Balor welcomes Ricochet to Raw and walks away, leaving Ricochet to talk about how he can't believe he got here. This is better than anything ever imagined and you haven't seen the last of him.

Kevin Owens is seeing a movie with his son and doesn't know where the change went from the popcorn and soda. Anyway, he remembers why he started fighting in the first place and can't wait to do it again. You have one of the best talkers in the company and you make him a typical dad. How uh, inspiring.

Here are Bayley and Sasha Banks for their first time as champions. They've been together for years now and it's finally paid off after everything they've done. They were born to do this and they'll be holding these titles for a long time. Anyone from the past present or future or from Raw, Smackdown and NXT can come after the titles. As they're ready to go, here are Nia Jax and Tamina for the interruption you could see coming the second Bayley and Banks won the titles. Nia talks about how Banks always loses in her first defense and it sounds like we have a title match in the future. A quick brawl breaks out and the Samoans leave.

D-Generation X Hall of Fame video. That's very cool, though an In Memorial video on one of the biggest stars you've ever had would be appreciated.

Dean Ambrose vs. Drew McIntyre

An early headbutt drops Dean and some chops have him in even more trouble. Dean takes it to the floor for a suicide dive but walks into the Claymore back inside. A second one finishes Dean at 1:56. Basically a squash.

We get more of the Lesnar video, starting with the destruction of John Cena at Summerslam 2014. With that out of the way, we jump forward and out of order to look at everyone else Lesnar has destroyed over the years. Rollins was beaten down over and over but kept getting up so Lesnar is going to put him down at Wrestlemania. That's neither a prediction nor a spoiler. It's the end of the story of a man named Seth Rollins.

Rollins says Lesnar has to accept his fate: it's all over at Wrestlemania. As for Seth's fate, he can leave on his feet or on a stretcher, but he's leaving as champion. Ambrose comes in to ask where Seth was out there. Seth: "Have you completely lost your mind?" Dean stares at him, shrugs and says "eh", and walks away.

Here's Elias for a song but he'd rather talk about how fed up he is with his treatment around here. He is the most talented and charismatic star to be around here in a long time. He's also the most hygienic person this town has ever seen. As for tonight, he knows everyone is excited for the NXT stars debuting. The song begins but gets cut off by another one.

Aleister Black vs. Elias

Thankfully we have the candles and riser for Black's entrance. Before the match, Black offers Elias help in finding silence in deep sleep. Tonight, he will fade to black. Elias tries to whip him in but Black just stops, setting up the moonsault into the sit as we take a break. Back with Black in trouble as Elias pulls him neck first into the top rope. Black fights out of a chinlock and hits a sliding knee, followed by the standing Lionsault for two. Elias gets in a shot to the face but Black has had it and Black Mass is good for the pin at 7:59.

Rating: C-. This was an exercise in waiting for Black Mass and they did

the right thing by not having us spend too much time before we got to the big finish. Black is a versatile performer but the strikes are what's going to carry him, meaning Black Mass is what matters most. Good shot too, as he kicked Elias' head off.

Raw Women's Title: Ronda Rousey vs. Ruby Riott

Rousey is defending and starts fast with the judo throws. Some right hands in the corner have Riott in more trouble but she comes back with something like an STO. A test of strength is countered into a near triangle to send Riott outside and us to a break. Back with Rousey caught in an armbar but suplexing her way to freedom. Riott gets her to offer chase back inside so it's a heck of a spear for two. The chinlock goes on and we hit the WE WANT BECKY chants.

Back up and Rousey seems to whiff on a right hand but Riott goes down anyway. A big running right hand in the corner has Riott in trouble but she hits a Downward Spiral into the turnbuckle. Riott falls off the middle rope (intentionally) into a backsplash for two more and the Riott Kick connects for a close two, with very little reaction from the crowd (fair enough).

Ronda gets in a gutwrench slam and heads up top, only to have the Riott Squad offer a distraction. Another Riott Kick gives Ruby two more so she heads up, only to jump into the armbar (with a great scared face from Riott). The Squad pulls her to the floor for the break so Rousey dives off the top (slipping off the top and seemingly crashing instead of landing) to take them out. After checking on Logan, it's the armbar to make Riott tap at 10:32.

Rating: C. This is the match they should have had last night, though it's not like it was exactly pay per view worthy. I don't think anyone was buying even the slightest chance of a title match either last night or tonight, but at least we got some good action and even a nice near fall or two. Riott got some heat back, which she really needed after last night. Good enough here, though nothing worth seeing.

Post match Rousey beats up the Squad to end the show.

Overall Rating: C-. I have no idea what to go with here, as the wrestling was mostly bad and forgettable, though there was a point to the show and it never once felt like it was running long. That's a lot better than what they usually do around here and I'll take it over what we've been getting. There wasn't exactly much fallout from last night to deal with other than Bayley and Sasha, but at least what we got was acceptable enough.

At the same time though, you have to wonder why we got nothing about Fastlane tonight. With six TV shows between the pay per views, burning one of them off might not be the best idea in the world. It's a better show than last week, especially due to the fresh talent. I have little faith in the main roster to not waste them, but for a one off show, it was very nice to see. The main thing is keeping the show from being boring, because until that's changed, not much else matters. They did that tonight, though it's not going to work that way every week.

Results

Braun Strowman b. Baron Corbin – Running powerslam through a table

Lucha House Party b. Zack Ryder/Curt Hawkins – Hurricanrana to Hawkins

Ricochet/Finn Balor b. Bobby Lashley/Lio Rush – 630 to Rush

Johnny Gargano/Tommaso Ciampa b. Revival – Meet in the Middle to Dawson

Drew McIntyre b. Dean Ambrose – Claymore

Aleister Black b. Elias – Black Mass

Ronda Rousey b. Ruby Riott – Armbar

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