

Monday Night Raw – January 18, 2021: I Need A Double Yoo-Hoo After This Show

Monday Night Raw

Date: January 18, 2021

Location: Tropicana Field, St. Petersburg, Florida

Commentators: Tom Phillips, Samoa Joe, Byron Saxton

We're less than two weeks away from the Royal Rumble and that means it is time to start adding in some new names to the lineups. There are several spots still available and that means we can fill in a few more of them over the next two weeks. And there's the whole Randy Orton getting hit with a fireball deal. Let's get to it.

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

We open with the Martin Luther King Jr. Day video.

From the shadows, Randy Orton talks about people who fight fire with fire usually wind up with ashes. We see a mask over his face as he says the voices in his head have never been louder. He talks about needing to redirect his pure hatred and we see Alexa Bliss throwing the fireball last week. The fire that melted the skin off his face will never go away. He is wearing his mask to protect himself but to shield everyone else from the horror.

The burns could have been much worse or could have disfigured him forever. Orton doesn't blame her though because he blames the Fiend. Orton blames the Fiend for this because he knows what the Fiend wants. The Fiend wants to stop Orton from achieving the inevitable. We see clips of Orton's two Royal Rumble wins as Orton talks about how he would be a threat to win the Rumble even if you chopped off all of his limbs.

He enjoys the pain and you can blame the Fiend when he burns everyone's Wrestlemania dreams to ashes. Orton lights and the blows out a match. That was certainly different, though would it have been too much to wait more than a week after he was burned to appear again? That's not enough to be gone for another show?

We look at Ric Flair intentionally costing Charlotte a match against Lacey Evans last week and then leaving with Evans.

Ric Flair and Lacey Evans arrived earlier today, with Lacey asking to hear a Horsemen story. Lacey doesn't like being interrupted to ask about what is going on between them because she is just learning from the best. They'll be watching Charlotte vs. Peyton Royce tonight.

Charlotte vs. Peyton Royce

Peyton (now with purple hair) jumps her from behind during the entrances and we take a break. Back with the match officially starting and Royce jumping her again. This time Charlotte knocks her to the floor for the big chops but one of them hits the post to let Peyton get a breather. Back in and Royce gets in a few shots until Charlotte chops her into the corner.

A neckbreaker out of the corner gets two but here's Ric Flair (Tom: "Oh not this again." Amen brother.) with Lacey Evans, in her own Nature Boy robe. Royce uses the distraction to hit a spinning kick to the face for two. Back from a break with Charlotte chopping her to the floor for a nine count. Charlotte goes for the leg and the Figure Eight makes Royce tap at 12:06.

Rating: D+. Longer than it needed to be here (and thank goodness Peyton jumped her before the bell, only to have everything settled down for the opening bell) and thank goodness they managed to find a way for Ric Flair to appear again. It had been a few months since he had some kind of an angle and that's just too long to be without him. Anyway, nothing to see here, other than WWE trying and

failing to make me feel sympathetic for Charlotte.

Riddle pops in to interrupt the Hurt Business. He compliments their clothes, including saying that MVP looks like Gordon Gecko (Riddle does not seem like a Wall Street guy). Lashley compliments the flip flops and then stomps on (or near) Riddle's foot.

Post break Riddle insists that he'll be good to go for his six man later.

We get a promo from earlier today with Mustafa Ali talking about Kofi Kingston having a broken jaw. Ali wants to break Kingston's spirit by breaking someone Kofi cares about the most in Xavier Woods. This is tied into Kofi taking Ali's spot in the Elimination Chamber back in 2019. That's a story I didn't think we would revisit.

Mace vs. Xavier Woods

The rest of Retribution is here and Woods hits Ali in the mouth before the bell. Back from a break and things get started with Mace taking Woods down. The choking is on until Mace sends him into the corner, with Woods looking rocked. Woods gets in a few shots to the face and dropkicks the knee out to put Mace down for a change. Ali gets knocked off the apron so he tells the team to do it now. Retribution surrounds the ring and Mace hits a side kick. A fireman's carry spun into a slam (with Mace dropping him on the landing) finishes Woods at 4:04.

Rating: C-. The ending didn't help things but the idea of building to Kofi vs. Ali is interesting, as they have actually waited two years for an interesting match. If nothing else, actually giving Retribution an interesting feud is a different way to go. I doubt it gets there, but a Wrestlemania match could certainly be interesting.

Post match Ali tells Woods that they're coming for Kingston.

Asuka is asked what to expect in Alexa's Playground. Asuka: "I don't know." After a look at Bliss burning Orton last week, Asuka says she doesn't want to see Alexa's dark side.

We get a special report, featuring HHH (Henry E. Panki) and Stephanie McMahon (Anita Reelman) as news reporters. Weatherman Sunny McCloud

(Roman Reigns) and Paul Heyman announce that Wrestlemania XXXVII will be in Tampa. Hailey Mary (Sasha Banks) is in Dallas, where Wrestlemania XXXVIII will be held in 2022. Then Hugh Kantseeme (John Cena) is in Los Angeles, where Wrestlemania XXXIX will be held in 2023. Then they're off the air and HHH and Stephanie take off their costumes to say they were both awesome. This is...uh...well it's different. We'll go with different.

Here is Alexa Bliss for Alexa's Playground. She wants to address the viper in the room. Things got a little heated with Randy Orton last week but she knows someone if he is interested in some sunblock. As for tonight though, her guest is Asuka, who looks scared of where to sit. Bliss says that isn't your seat, but she wasn't talking to Asuka. For now though, Bliss has some special news.

After asking the invisible person in the swing if she should tell them, she announces her entry into the Royal Rumble. That means she could go on to Wrestlemania to face Asuka, who says she is a big fan of Bliss. Asuka, sounding rather nervous, says yowie wowie. Bliss apologizes to whoever is next to her and Asuka starts dancing. Bliss shouts to stop it and talks to the swing. Asuka tries to calm Bliss down by saying he is still here, but Bliss says not to say his name. A scared Asuka leaves.

Goldberg vs. Drew McIntyre is set for the Royal Rumble. Tonight, JEFF JARRETT will break the match down.

Miz and John Morrison promise some shenanigans with Goldberg on the Dirt Sheet.

Shayna Baszler is ready to destroy Mandy Rose tonight, just like she'll do to everyone at the Royal Rumble. Then Nia Jax bickers with Shayna about carrying her. WHY ARE THESE TWO STILL FRIENDS???

Jeff Jarrett picks Goldberg to defeat Drew McIntyre at the Royal Rumble.

We look at last week's tag match with Shayna Baszler/Nia Jax beating Mandy Rose/Dana Brooke.

Mandy Rose vs. Shayna Baszler

It should be noted that Rose's entrance took place before Shayna's

interview, which was followed by a break. Nia Jax is on commentary as Shayna takes Mandy down for a neck crank. Mandy fights out and is taken right back down into the neck crank again. Shayna stomps on the arm but Mandy grabs a rollup for two. The clothesline comeback is on but Baszler kicks the bad arm again. Shayna pulls her down by the arm and finishes with the Kirifuda Clutch at 3:43.

Rating: D. This match made me think of Hulk Hogan vs. Earthquake at Summerslam 1990. After Hogan beat Earthquake, he promised to drag him all around the country and beat him over and over. That's a cool thing to say, but what difference does it make to beat the same person over and over again? Baszler and Jax have beaten Rose and Brooke time after time now and I'm not sure what WWE thinks they're getting out of doing it again.

Post match Jax and Baszler argue AGAIN, with Dana Brooke dropkicking Jax into Baszler.

Post break Jax and Baszler argue AGAIN, with Charly Caruso interrupting to point out that they're arguing. Jax says they never get along, but no one around here does. This is the perfect time for them to get their rematch for the Tag Team Titles because Charlotte and Asuka aren't even speaking.

We look at the opening match with Ric Flair and Lacey Evans ticking Charlotte off and Charlotte taking it out on Peyton Royce.

Charlotte is sick of people saying she is living off of her last name when you have Lacey Evans living off of her family's last name. She's sick off all the trash, because Evans can wear the robe but she can never take the crown.

We look at Adam Pearce signing the contract to face Roman Reigns at the Royal Rumble but then swapping in Kevin Owens in his place.

Ricochet is with Adam Pearce, who is giving him an opportunity tonight. AJ Styles and Omos come in with AJ saying he has never gotten a chance. Ricochet compares it to 50 First Dates because AJ can't remember anything. He starts to explain it but AJ says he knows the movie (AJ:

“It’s in my top ten.”). Ricochet says AJ is forgetting TLC but now it’s time to go to the ring.

Ricochet vs. AJ Styles

After Ricochet’s entrance, AJ is still in the back with Pearce and threatens him with Omos. That takes us to another break and now we’re ready to go. AJ’s headlock doesn’t get very far as Ricochet hits a Japanese armdrag into a jackknife rollup for two. Ricochet sends AJ outside, stops to glare at Omos, and then slides down for an anklescissors to drop AJ again.

Another dive is pulled out of the air by Omos, who then just drops Ricochet with a thud. We take a break and come back with Ricochet still in trouble until a spinning DDT drops AJ. Ricochet muscles him over with a German suplex but AJ is right back with a brainbuster for his own two.

The fireman’s carry backbreaker gets the same so AJ heads to the apron. The Phenomenal Forearm is countered into the Recoil for a slightly delayed two and they’re both down again. Back up and Ricochet tries a springboard but gets countered into the Styles Clash for the pin at 13:00.

Rating: B. This was the kind of match that the show needed as they had two talented guys going out there and doing their thing while getting some time. I’m not wild on Ricochet losing again but you can’t let false hope ruin the few good things about this show. It’s by far the best thing on the show tonight and the kind of thing that helped boost the rest of the pretty weak night up.

We look back at Alexa’s Playground.

And now, the Dirt Sheet, because we need another talk show. Miz and John Morrison talk about how great things could be for Goldberg if he wins the title one more time. That brings us to their guest tonight: Goldberg! Uh...make that Gillberg! As cliched as that might be, it’s nice to see Gillberg after his recent health issues. Anyway, Gillberg talks about everything he does in his entrance, but here’s....a mini Drew McIntyre to interrupt.

After putting in the mini sword (Joe: "That's the Clayless."), mini Drew (with his kilt a bit too low and having to adjust his hair) says he is here to address his Royal Rumble opponent face to face. Drew promises to kick Goldberg back to 1998 and then go home and eat some haggis. Morrison mocks Drew's accent and Drew breaks character, asking if we can do it again. Miz snaps on Morrison for getting an actor from New Jersey instead of New York, LA or Cleveland. Morrison: "CLEVELAND???"

Gillberg interrupts with his goofy face and gets a double shut up. They decide to wrap it up with Miz saying Drew and Goldberg will both lose at the Rumble because Miz is cashing in, because he's the Miz and he is.....next. Miz and Morrison bickering was funny but after everything else on this show, this was a really bad idea. Except for Gillberg, because Gillberg is awesome.

Hurt Business vs. Lucha House Party/Riddle

Cedric Alexander beats on Gran Metalik to start but Shelton Benjamin won't tag in while not looking happy. Lince Dorado comes in to take Alexander down and hammer away on his back but Shelton and Bobby Lashley still won't tag in. Shelton finally comes in and sends Dorado into the corner, followed by a double shoulder with Lashley's help.

Alexander tags himself back in but Shelton does the same, ordering Alexander to get out. The argument lets Dorado hit the Golden Rewind (MVP: "You see what happens??? You play stupid games, you win stupid prizes!") but Alexander breaks up the tag. Shelton shoves Alexander outside and MVP talks some sense to him as we take a break. Back with Alexander holding a chinlock on Dorado as we look at the pre-break bickering.

Alexander reaches for a tag to Shelton, pulls his hand back, and tags Lashley in instead. Lashley is willing to tag Benjamin, who snaps off a suplex. Dorado finally gets away and brings in Riddle to pick up the pace, despite his taped up foot. The good foot kicks Shelton upside the head and the Final Flash connects for two. Alexander comes back in and argues with Shelton, so Lashley spears Metalik and finishes with the Hurt Lock in a hurry at 12:36.

Rating: D+. Why? Why the heck does WWE insist on doing this nonsense? The Hurt Business has been one of the best things going for the last eight months and now they're teasing a split just after they win the Tag Team Titles? Why? What good does this do other than messing with something that is working? I know I'm no professional wrestling writer, but sometimes it's ok to just let something that works keep going rather than throwing in some kind of screwiness for the sake of messing things up.

Post match Riddle cheap shots Lashley, who has to keep Shelton and Alexander apart.

Elias tells Jaxson Ryker to not screw up again this week, because this isn't Thomas The Tank Engine. Tonight, Jeff Hardy needs to be beaten down until he accepts the universal truth.

Drew McIntyre joins us from his home and says he is still asymptomatic after being diagnosed with the Coronavirus. He has been watching Raw and it makes him think of the circus. You have the clowns like Miz and Morrison but then you have the lions. It's a little something for everyone and that includes Goldberg. Drew may be gone, but Goldberg better be ready for him at the Rumble because if he isn't, Drew will drop him in two minutes. Check his title record, because he doesn't miss. He'll be back next week.

See this right here? It's a promo. It doesn't sound scripted and it doesn't sound like 14 people who have never been in a ring wrote it. This sounds like Drew McIntyre being told "Talk about Goldberg for two minutes" and then doing just that. Why is this so complicated? It wasn't even anything great, but it felt natural and had a point, including the circus metaphor. McIntyre is a good talker, but I can't imagine he's the only person who can do this.

Jeff Hardy vs. Jaxson Ryker

Elias is here with Ryker, who hammers on Jeff to start. A dropkick puts Ryker down though and Jeff's legdrop between the legs and basement dropkick get two. Ryker is right back with a belly to back suplex and we hit the chinlock. That's broken up and Jeff hits a quick Twist of Fate. The Swanton is loaded up so Elias shoves him off for the DQ at 3:10.

Rating: D+. This is another feud that is still going and feels like no one remembers that it needs to end at some point. Haven't we seen them do all of this stuff already? I'm not sure if just swapping the roles makes that much difference, but at least Ryker and Elias are teasing a breakup after....six weeks or so?

Post match Ryker is mad at Elias, because he said not to help him. Elias: "I thought you meant 'don't' help me!" Ryker plants Hardy with a Boss Man Slam. To recap, this is the third team that has argued in two hours and forty minutes.

Asuka vs. Alexa Bliss

Non-title. Asuka starts fast and doesn't seem so scared this time around. An early Shining Wizard connects and Bliss is rocked, but the lights go out Fiend style. Bliss smiles a lot as we take a break. Back with Bliss seemingly transformed (and maybe with different lipstick) into the serious version and Asuka not being sure what to do.

Bliss blocks and dodges a bunch of strikes before shouldering Asuka down without much trouble. Back in and the Mandible Claw is loaded up but Asuka manages to block it. The rapid fire kicks rock Bliss but she grabs Sister Abigail and, with a blank stare, finishes Asuka at 11:36.

Rating: D+. And so we have another example of WWE doing their storytelling thing. I get the idea they're going for here and it does make Bliss out to be a monster, but Asuka being scared or whatever is not like her whatsoever. She can go with the silly and such, but having her be scared feels out of character. Also, can anyone give me a logical reason why she and Charlotte are Tag Team Champions at the moment other than Charlotte getting another title reign?

Post match the lights flash and Bliss' makeup changes because she's the happy version again. Fiend's LET ME IN ends the show.

Overall Rating: F. Last week officially started the 29th year of Raw and I don't remember the last time I was this angry while watching the show. This episode had more bad acting, bad ideas, bad segments and bad pretty much everything than I can

remember. Outside of AJ vs. Ricochet and McIntyre's promo (which wasn't great but it sounded like him saying his own words), there was nothing on here that either made me want to watch another thing this show does.

Where do you even start? First of all, we're getting another Ric Flair story. I know we just saw him involved with Randy Orton about six months ago, so it must be time to see him again. WWE just got done with their big Legends Raw a few weeks ago. Why is it that only Flair can get these roles? You mean to tell me that NONE of the other Legends would be able to be put into a spot like this? It seems that we get at least a Flair story a year and other than HHH loving the guy, I have no idea why that needs to be the case.

Then you have the double talk shows, which served the following purposes: to show that Alexa, who has been creepy for months, is creepy and to show that Miz and Morrison, who are known to be bragging idiots, are bragging idiots. It comes off as a blatant way to fill in three hours a week, all while you have how many people sitting on the sidelines for months on end?

Maybe we could put some of them into a team so they can argue. I mean we only did it with Nia Jax/Shayna Baszler, the Hurt Business and Elias/Jaxson Ryker this week so there's plenty of room for more. If nothing else it frees up creative from having to come up with something fresh, so maybe they can think of something else for Flair to do so he can have a bonus check.

Why are so many people having to do the same things over and over again, often on the same show? Every show but Raw has the ability to come up with a storyline for people (even 205 Live can pull off the bare basics). Here though? Same people doing the same stuff every week. If you need Flair around that often, ask him to tell you two angles he remembers from 1983 and redo them, then go talk to Flair again when they're done.

This show didn't make me want to see the Rumble and it didn't make me want to watch Raw next week. I know NXT isn't what it once was, but it's still miles better than this. Smackdown is one of the best shows on television every week and they make stuff like this look easy. I can't imagine that adding an extra hour in is that much of a game changer, so please find a way to fix this. It's a Raw problem instead of a WWE problem, so figure this stuff out already.

Results

Charlotte b. Peyton Royce – Figure Eight

Mace b. Xavier Woods – Spinning torture rack slam

Shayna Baszler b. Mandy Rose – Kirifuda Clutch

AJ Styles b. Ricochet – Styles Clash

Hurt Business b. Riddle/Lucha House Party – Hurt Lock to Metalik

Jeff Hardy b. Jaxson Ryker via DQ when Elias interfered

Alexa Bliss b. Asuka – Sister Abigail

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