

Monday Night Raw – April 12, 2021: Awful

Monday Night Raw

Date: April 12, 2021

Location: Yuengling Center, Tampa, Florida

Commentators: Adnan Virk, Corey Graves, Byron Saxton

It's the unofficial season premiere of Raw after the fairly awesome two night Wrestlemania. We're in the new Thunderdome this week and that shouldn't make much of a difference compared to the other ones. In theory this should be the big show with all kinds of things going on, but you never can tell these days. Let's get to it.

Here are Wrestlemania [Night One](#) and [Night Two](#) if you need a recap

Bobby Lashley arrived earlier and Riddle immediately challenged him. Lashley doesn't think so because Riddle lost to Sheamus last night. Riddle talks about wearing a tin foil hats because of aliens but Lashley turns him down again. That earns Lashley some quotes about how anyone can have a shot, so Lashley shoves him down and calls him a loser. The match seems to be on.

Bobby Lashley vs. Riddle

Non-title and MVP is here with Lashley. Riddle scooters to the ring so Lashley jumps him before the bell and the beatdown is on outside. Lashley posts him and rams him into various things before taking it inside. For some reason Riddle says let's go and gets sent into the corner for the shoulder to the ribs. The delayed vertical suplex drops Riddle again and Lashley tosses the scooter to make things...well as serious as they can be when they are involving a scooter. Riddle gets in a few shots but gets knocked down again as we take a break.

Back with Lashley working on a neck crank and hitting the Downward Spiral to drop Riddle again. Lashley throws him around again and starts on the arm. Riddle manages to get in a kick to the head and some kicks rock Lashley, followed by the jumping knee. The Floating Bro misses though and the Hurt Lock finishes Riddle at 10:30.

Rating: C. Total squash for the most part here and that's how it should have gone. Lashley gets to dominate and now we should be on the way to finding out his next challenger. I'm not sure what this is going to mean for Riddle, but it is likely not the best sign with back to back losses. Granted if it means less of his promos backstage, it might be an improvement for everyone.

We look at Rhea Ripley winning the Women's Title at Wrestlemania.

Ripley says it is time to continue her confidence and welcomes us to the Brutality World Order. And there goes her chances at being the next big thing, as WWE has managed to turn her into a catchphrase machine right out of the box.

Cedric Alexander/Shelton Benjamin vs. Viking Raiders

This is Ivar's return after seven months off due to neck surgery. Ivar throws Alexander into the corner and hammers away with the forearms. Erik slams Ivar onto Alexander and it's off to Benjamin in a hurry. Cedric takes Erik's knee out and Shelton gets two off a knee to the face. Shelton suplexes Erik for the same and Alexander pounds away with forearms. There's a suplex to give Shelton two but Erik knocks him away and hands it off to Ivar to clean house. Some shoulders set up the cartwheel and double clothesline as everything breaks down. The Viking Experience finishes Alexander at 5:37.

Rating: C-. Just a return match for Ivar and that's great to see. He had a rather serious injury and it is awesome to have him back. Throw in the fact that the tag team division has

been desperate for some fresh blood and this should be a nice upgrade. The team looked fine here and you wouldn't have realized Ivar had been gone for seven months.

Asuka promises to get the title back.

Here is the returning Charlotte (with Virk seeming rather impressed) for a chat. She isn't happy with not being on Wrestlemania because she is a franchise player and she wasn't on the show due to reasons that are not her fault. It wasn't her fault that Asuka needed a partner or that her dad acted like a fool at Raw Legends or that Asuka didn't answer her challenge. Asuka accepted Rhea Ripley's challenge though and now she is the new Women's Champion.

Charlotte knows that everyone was thrilled that she wasn't on Wrestlemania because it meant that everyone else had a chance. Now Asuka has another chance at the title but remember that karma is a b**** and Charlotte is that b****. This is the new Charlotte and she isn't apologizing for being that good anymore. She has given everything to this business and what has she gotten in return? Enjoy your title match that she should be in, and there's the mic drop.

Women's Title: Asuka vs. Rhea Ripley

Asuka is challenging and jumps Ripley to start but gets shoved away. The threat of a cross armbreaker sends Ripley into the ropes for the break. Ripley sends her outside and we take an early break. Back with Ripley sending her hard into the corner but Asuka comes back with a middle rope dropkick. Some strikes to the face, including a running basement kick to the face, get two on Ripley.

A few shots put Asuka down again and the Prism Trap goes on. With that broken up in a hurry, Ripley pulls her into an electric chair. That's broken up as well and we hit the Fujiwara armbreaker, with Asuka switching into the Asuka Lock. Ripley gets her into another electric chair and drops her face

first for another break. They head to the apron with Asuka ramming her into the turnbuckle...and here is Charlotte to jump both of them for the double DQ at 11:50.

Rating: C. They telegraphed the ending with the Charlotte promo and I'm not sure how many people were buying the chance of a second title change in two days. Ripley needed to look more dominant, but something looked a bit off with Asuka. She seemed a lot more sloppy than usual and hopefully that isn't because something is wrong.

Post match the beatdown is on and Charlotte is rather pleased.

Miz and John Morrison are annoyed at last night but Maryse is here to make Miz smile again.

Nia Jax and Shayna Baszler laugh at Mandy Rose falling at Wrestlemania. Rose and Dana Brooke come up and take Jax down as Baszler just isn't there.

It's time for Alexa's Playground, with Alexa Bliss talking about how there was once a scared little girl who needs to be saved. Then the darkness came along and saved her, but one day she realized she didn't need to be saved anymore.

The girl realized she didn't need the darkness anymore and did what she could do to get rid of the darkness on her own. Now the girl is going to have her own fun. We also meet Lily, a rather disturbing Alexa Bliss doll...who comes to live and bites at the camera. The doll was creepy and then it went into exactly what you would have expected.

It's time for MizTV with Maryse and John Morrison. They plug their media skills and plug Miz and Mrs., which is back tonight. Morrison thinks he should be added to the cast, but Miz reminds him that he is in tonight's episode. After a plug for Maryse's new moisturizer, we move on to Bad Bunny and Wrestlemania, with Miz bragging about making Bunny a bigger star. Cue Damian Priest to say he doesn't want to hear it. The

challenge is thrown out for a handicap match right now, even though Miz and Morrison are in suits.

Damian Priest vs. John Morrison/The Miz

Miz and Morrison are in street clothes and manage to take Morrison down for a slingshot into a forearm. A slingshot elbow gets two on Priest and we hit the chinlock. Back up and Priest kicks Morrison into the corner, setting up the running elbows in the corner. The Broken Elbow plants Morrison and the series of strikes drop Miz. The chokeslam connects but Morrison breaks up the cover, earning himself a clothesline.

Priest dives onto the two of them on the floor and a top rope spinwheel kick drops Morrison for two. Hit the Lights takes out Morrison but Maryse saves Miz from taking the same thing. Then Priest pulls off Miz's pants, revealing...pretty much trunks, and another Maryse distraction lets Miz grab a rollup with feet on the ropes for the pin at 5:35.

Rating: D. We just spent two and a half months watching WWE try to give Priest a rub from Bad Bunny and the first thing they do once he is gone is have him lose to Miz and Morrison, in street clothes, thanks to a cameo from Maryse? Hooray for promoting the reality show, but was there no one else who could have been in Priest's place? Of course there is, but we can't have creative being creative and spending ten seconds coming up with a reason for someone to interrupt so just have Priest lose here instead.

Nia Jax says Mandy Rose and Dana Brooke orchestrated a cowardly attack on her backstage to distract from Mandy's Wrestlemania mishap. That's such a horribly scripted line that no one would ever possibly say in real life that I'm going to sigh and move on.

Nia Jax/Shayna Baszler vs. Dana Brooke/Mandy Rose

Non-title. Nia goes after Brooke to start and sends her into

the ropes to begin the beating. We hit the neck crank for a bit as Brooke isn't exactly able to do much here (her mind might still be blown by that backstage promo). Brooke finally gets away and hands it off to Rose, who takes over on Baszler in a hurry. Rose manages to send her outside and Jax is tossed as well. Jax starts coming back in but slips on the apron...so Dana and Mandy bail for the countout at 5:35, saying it's not worth it.

Rating: F. Oh sweet goodness why? We really need to turn Mandy slipping on a wet ramp into an angle where Nia Jax falls down on the apron? This was the latest example of WWE having something inconsequential happening and turning it into a thing, probably because Vince McMahon found it funny. Mandy and Dana aren't good but there is a place for them. This was a great way to kill off anything they had going for them.

Dana and Mandy's music plays because none of this matters.

Here is MVP to talk about how Drew McIntyre went out like a gladiator. There is nothing wrong with being second best but he lost to Bobby Lashley on Saturday. No one can handle the pressure of the Hurt Lock, including McIntyre. So who can handle it? Cue Drew McIntyre, who MVP says should be feeling humble. McIntyre says Wrestlemania came down to the Claymore, the Hurt Lock, and whoever made the first mistake. He made that first mistake and yes the Hurt Lock is going to end anyone.

McIntyre gets in the ring to suggest he wants another title shot but MVP says everything has to be earned. Cue Braun Strowman, with MVP starting to get a bit nervous. Strowman says McIntyre needs to go tot he back of the line but here's Randy Orton (MVP: "WHAT IS GOING ON HERE???") to say say that the Fiend is gone so it's time for him to go after the title again. Adam Pearce, triple threat, tonight.

Post break, McIntyre runs into Strowman in the back and says

it's a Claymore tonight. Strowman thinks McIntyre is insulting his intelligence and promises to win.

We recap Charlotte's promo and interference earlier tonight.

Here are Jaxson Ryker and Elias to dedicate a song to Shane McMahon. Elias starts playing but we hear a trombone instead. After Elias manages to be dumb enough to not understand what is going on (there are so many possible reasons for a trombone to be heard around here), cue New Day to say that Elias and Ryker have shamed the tag team division. It is time to restore honor right now.

New Day vs. Jaxson Ryker/Elias

New Day clears the ring in a hurry and hit stereo dives to the floor as we take an early break. Back with Woods in trouble and Elias grabbing a chinlock as we go split screen for an ad for the movie Nobody. Back to full screen with Ryker coming in to throw Woods around but an enziguri knocks Ryker silly. The hot tag brings in Kofi to pick up the pace with a dropkick and one footed stomp to the standing Elias. Everything breaks down and the Daybreak finishes Elias at 9:35.

Rating: C-. New Day gets back on track and it isn't like Elias and Ryker have any value in the first place. New Day is going to be around for as long as they want to be as they are as over as you can get in the tag division and still put on pretty good matches. This was one of the better things on the show, mainly because it was just ok, which is a huge improvement tonight.

Randy Orton is ready to get back in the title hunt because the Fiend and Alexa Bliss are behind him.

It's time for the Firefly Fun House where everyone seems rather happy to be here. This includes Bray Wyatt, who is so glad to be back. Abby the Witch isn't happy, which Bray says means witches be lyin. Ramblin Rabbit is glad that she, likely

meaning Alexa Bliss, is gone. Bray throws him away and says they still have each other. This could be a new start for all of them and a new season for all of them. Maybe even a brand new him, because he could be reborn. Everything will be fine because HE will return and the Fun House will be strong. Bray nearly broke into song on that last part, complete with a rather up tempo beat behind him.

Randy Orton vs. Drew McIntyre vs. Braun Strowman

The winner gets a shot at Bobby Lashley at Wrestlemania: Backlash. Strowman goes after McIntyre to start but Orton helps make the save with a double suplex. Everyone is knocked to the floor but the Strowman Express is cut off by the steps to the face. Orton drops McIntyre onto the announcers' table and we take a break.

Back with Orton knocking McIntyre down and stomping at the ankle. They head outside with Orton sending him face first into the announcers' table over and over. Strowman is back up to run them both over but Orton gets in a shot of his own to slow Strowman down. Back in and the RKO hits Strowman but Orton takes forever to get the pin, allowing McIntyre to Claymore Orton in the face for the pin at 11:12.

Rating: C. Completely run of the mill triple threat with almost nothing that I'm going to remember in about five minutes. McIntyre winning isn't a surprise as Lashley vs. Strowman or Orton is not exactly an interesting match. Maybe they can improve on their Wrestlemania match, but this wasn't much of an improvement over anything.

Post match here is MVP on the stage and McIntyre waits for Lashley. Instead, T-Bar and Mace run in from behind to lay McIntyre out with a double chokeslam. They stand on the floor with MVP watching on, though they don't acknowledge each other.

Overall Rating: F. And that's being as nice as I can. This was

HORRIBLE with one dumb idea after another and a grand total of maybe two and a half surprises (I'm not sure if Charlotte really counts). Ivar being back is very nice to see and I'm intrigued by the T-Bar/Mace deal, but other than that, you would have no idea that this was a special show because WWE has managed to suck the fun out of this as well.

Between "HAHA MANDY SLIPPED", Priest losing to promote a reality show, Charlotte being back in the title picture less than twenty four hours after Ripley won the title and Alexa Bliss' doll trying to eat us, this was one of the most depressing shows I can remember. It's like they put all of the effort into Wrestlemania and then just decided that they had had enough of this work and trying stuff and started doing their old nonsense again. But at least now we can get a Wrestlemania rematch out of it so we don't have to come up with anything new.

WWE is fresh off of their first show in thirteen months with fans and they did pretty well over the weekend. That gives them their first momentum in forever and THIS is what they give us? One of the most boring, cookie cutter by the book shows in months? WWE thought so much of this night that they put out a three hour DVD on the thing, but now this is what we're given instead?

A women's match headlines Wrestlemania and what do we get here: Charlotte back in the title picture and HAHA MANDY ROSE FELL DOWN! You have a women's tag team division so dead that Tamina and Natalya get two Wrestlemania matches but you need to give one of the few regular teams you have a joke match that puts MORE attention on Nia Jax? We don't get a Ripley squash or Mandy and Dana becoming #1 contenders, but rather the focus being on Charlotte and someone slipping on a wet ramp.

So that's their follow up to Wrestlemania. We get a show that seems to care more about promoting Miz and Mrs. than the guy

who just got a rub from the biggest celebrity willing to do something with WWE and a flashback to last week when Drew McIntyre was chasing Bobby Lashley. No NXT debuts, no major returns and no Bray Wyatt with a response of “maybe this is a good thing” to losing at Wrestlemania. Well done WWE, as you have now managed to cut the legs off another one of the best things that you have available.

Results

Bobby Lashley b. Riddle – Hurt Lock

Viking Raiders b. Cedric Alexander/Shelton Benjamin – Viking Experience to Alexander

Rhea Ripley vs. Asuka went to a double DQ when Charlotte interfered

Miz/John Morrison b. Damian Priest – Rollup with feet on the ropes

New Day b. Jaxson Ryker/Elias – Daybreak to Elias

Drew McIntyre b. Randy Orton and Braun Strowman – Claymore to Orton

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