

Monday Night Raw – May 31, 2021: Half And A Better Half

Monday Night Raw

Date: May 31, 2021

Location: Yuengling Center, Tampa, Florida

Commentators: Jimmy Smith, Corey Graves, Byron Saxton

It's Memorial Day, meaning we might be in for a huge show or it might be one that has absolutely nothing because no one is going to be watching. The main event is Drew McIntyre vs. Kofi Kingston to crown a new #1 contender to Bobby Lashley, though that was the case last week as well. Let's get to it.

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

We get the annual Memorial Day video.

Jimmy Smith is introduced as the newest member of the broadcast team and we run down the card.

It's time for MizTV, featuring the return of the un-dead Miz. After the usual intro, Miz talks about how he was hurt in THAT match...but he isn't sure why John Morrison has garlic around his neck. Morrison says he isn't going to take any chances with Miz, so he also has his Drip Stick, which is a hand held liquid spraying cannon. Miz: "I love you." Anyway, Miz knows that it is time to start giving back to superstars, like his first guest this week: Charlotte. After asking about the garlic, Charlotte says that Rhea Ripley has had her time and it's time to get rid of her.

Cue Ripley, who tells Charlotte to go to h***. Morrison asks her favorite garlic bread recipe to ensure that she is not a vampire but Ripley gets to the point, promising to retain the title against Charlotte. Miz brings up Ripley not being able to beat Nikki Cross in two minutes last week.

Cue Nikki Cross, with Ripley saying she would have won if she had four minutes, but Charlotte says she could do it in one. Cross slaps her and the challenge is accepted. Ripley sounding like a kid with excuses for why she didn't win and Morrison's supernatural stuff got annoying in a hurry here and it was all to set up a one minute match after the break? No wonder this show has timing issues.

Charlotte vs. Nikki Cross

Two minute time limit, despite Charlotte saying she could do it in one. Charlotte is sent outside to start and Nikki switches places with her to burn off some time. The chase is on, with Cross hiding behind Rhea Ripley on the floor. Back in and Charlotte hits a knee to the ribs with thirty seconds left. Cross hits a tornado DDT and time expires at 2:00.

Riddle and Damian Priest are ready to go back on the road so Riddle asks him for some Spanish lessons. Randy Orton pops up (Has he always had that mustache?) and, after complaining about the RK0 last week (Riddle: "I just kind of hit it out of nowhere."), says if they're going to do this tag team, they might as well do it right. Riddle can come be at ringside for Orton vs. Xavier Woods. Riddle gets way too excited so Orton shushes him, prompting Riddle to lock his mouth shut and hand Orton the invisible key. Orton throws it away and leaves, meaning Riddle goes to look for the key. The invisible one.

Randy Orton vs. Xavier Woods

Riddle is here with Orton, who gets chopped into the corner to start. Orton drops him onto the turnbuckle though and they head outside, with Orton slamming Woods face first onto the announcers' table. A belly to back drop onto the table makes it worse and Riddle is writing notes on his hand because he can't talk.

We take a break and come back with Orton holding a chinlock but Woods fights up with an enziguri. A discus forearm gives

Woods two and he hammers away in the corner. That's countered into a powerbomb of all things for two but the hanging DDT is broken up. Instead, Woods hits a Codebreaker on the arm and grabs a Fujiwara armbar. Riddle is VERY relieved when Orton makes the rope and now the hanging DDT can connect. Woods grabs a backslide for two but Orton comes back with the Bro Derek for the pin at 8:49.

Rating: C. Orton was trying a few different things here and the ending was a cool thing to see. Riddle and Orton continue to be the most entertaining thing on this show, assuming you can ignore the invisible key level of stuff. Woods has been doing rather well on his own as of late, though I'm not sure where this is leading for him.

Post match Riddle poses in front of Orton, who can't bring himself to do his own pose.

We recap Shayna Baszler vs. Reginald, the latter of whom keeps costing her matches. This is the dumbest thing going in wrestling today.

MVP brings a new group of women to have some fun with Bobby Lashley (in an orange suit).

Reginald tells Nia Jax he has this, despite her being worried.

Shayna Baszler vs. Reginald

Reginald has to flip away from Baszler to start and even manages a slam to put her down. That's too far for Baszler, who starts in on the leg to put him in trouble. Baszler stomps on the leg and cranks on it a bit, setting up the ankle lock. That's broken up and Reginald hits a spinning crossbody, setting up a one legged moonsault. Reginald has to land on his feet when Baszler moves, so the Kirifuda Clutch goes on. Then fire comes out of the corner and Reginald rolls her up for the pin at 4:16 (ignore Baszler's shoulder being off the mat).

Rating: F. So that just happened. The two time and longest reigning NXT Women's Champion just lost to Reginald, a comedy character who has a job because he used to be in a circus, because an evil doll made fire come out of the post. This is the latest example of me thinking that WWE is actively trying to troll its fans.

Reginald escapes to the back and gets hugged by Nia Jax.

Drew McIntyre isn't happy with not beating Kofi Kingston last week. He needs to change his way of thinking, to the point where he has put having children on hold to become WWE Champion again. Maybe one day he can have a Little Drew to teach about Scottish folklore, but for now, he is ready. Tonight, he's ready for Kofi, like he was ready to beat Brock Lesnar, unlike Kofi.

Mace/T-Bar vs. Lucha House Party

During the entrances, Mace and T-Bar promise to make House Party extinct. T-Bar sends Lince Dorado into the corner to start but a quick choke lets Gran Metalik come in with a splash off of Dorado's shoulders. Mace comes in for a spinwheel kick to the face and a kind of rough looking suplex drops Metalik again. Everything breaks down and Mace plants Dorado on the floor. T-Bar kicks Metalik out of the corner and a double chokeslam is good for the pin at 2:48. To say Mace and T-Bar did not look smooth here would be a huge understatement, as they seemed ready for a major injury on almost every move.

Alexa Bliss invites Reginald to her Playground.

Here is Sheamus for a chat. He talks about how many people have come up short against him, but that is as close to being champion as they are going to get. We see a clip from last week with Sheamus attacking Humberto Carrillo but Ricochet came in for the save. Sheamus calls that SCUMBAGGERY, which is why he hasn't defended the title since Wrestlemania. He'll

fight both of them back to back though, and then they can go back to catering where they belong.

Sheamus vs. Ricochet

Non-title. Ricochet starts fast by sending him outside but a dive is countered into a toss into the barricade. Back in and a top rope clothesline turns Ricochet inside out...and here is Humberto Carrillo for a distraction so Ricochet can get the rollup pin at 1:17.

Sheamus vs. Humberto Carrillo

Non-title and joined in progress with Sheamus stomping away at Carrillo in the corner. Sheamus runs him over with an ax handle to the head and pulls Carrillo off the ropes for a crash back down. Carrillo fights back but walks into the Irish Curse to cut that right off. We hit the reverse chinlock to keep Carrillo in trouble but he's back up with a few chops.

A shot to the nose busts Sheamus open a bit so he clotheslines Carrillo hard to the floor. Sheamus kicks Ricochet in the face for a bonus but the distraction lets Carrillo hit a suicide dive to send Sheamus into the announcers' table. Back in and Carrillo's high crossbody is countered into a swinging release Rock Bottom. Ricochet offers a distraction though and Carrillo gets a rollup for the pin at 4:58.

Rating: C-. One of the first lines from commentary told you everything you need to know about this story: "The impossible has happened. Ricochet has pinned Sheamus." These matches aren't about elevating Carrillo and Ricochet, but rather making Sheamus look like he slipped on a banana peel (so we could have our third rollup via distraction of the night). I'm rather glad to see Ricochet and Carrillo getting a chance, but this isn't doing them any long term good.

Eva Marie talks about taking time away from WWE to learn some more about herself. Now she is back because she knows what it

takes to get here. She wants to help others now, and the Evaluation is coming.

Corey Graves is nearly moved to tears by Eva Marie. Graves: "No, you're crying."

Mandy Rose/Dana Brooke vs. Lana/Naomi

Natalya and Tamina are on commentary. Lana takes Dana down to start so Naomi can come in for a legdrop. A bulldog drops Dana again but it's off to Mandy, who gets caught in a fireman's carry Stunner. Everything breaks down and Naomi hits a slingshot corkscrew dive onto Dana. Lana rolls Mandy up for two but gets caught in the corner with a shoulder to the ribs. A fireman's carry/Samoan drop combination finishes Lana at 3:52.

Rating: F. This was bad and I'm not sure how else to describe it. They weren't hitting their moves, they weren't timing things well and the selling was awful. Featuring these same teams in matches every week or two isn't making them better, but rather reminding us of just how bad they really are. Keep in mind that this is all in the name of giving Natalya and Tamina some competition, because the women's tag team division just has to exist.

Bad Bunny was on a show with LeBron James and discussed his love of wrestling.

Shelton Benjamin vs. Cedric Alexander

Shelton start fast but Cedric pokes him in the eye. The Neuralizer gives Cedric the pin at 28 seconds.

Elias tries to fire Jaxson Ryker up. Elias: "Have you ever been in battle?" Ryker: "Have you ever been in battle? Because I served in Iraq." End of segment.

Kofi Kingston doesn't appreciate Drew McIntyre suggesting that having a family could hold back your career. He respects

everything Drew has done over his career but he can't respect that kind of a cheap shot. Tonight, he's going to beat Drew and then show him how to do what he hasn't been able to do in three months (Kofi: "Though it feels like three years."): beat Bobby Lashley.

Tag Team Titles: AJ Styles/Omos vs. Jaxson Ryker/Elias

Ryker/Elias are challenging with Elias jumping AJ to start. A snap suplex sets up a knee drop to AJ's head but Ryker tags himself in. AJ manages to send him outside and we take a break. Back with Ryker grabbing a chinlock but getting caught with a Pele for the breather. Ryker goes over for the tag...but Elias drops to the floor. Omos comes in and gets to clean house as Ryker is wrecked. The Phenomenal Forearm finishes for Styles at 9:52.

Rating: D+. And there goes another team, as it seems we might be getting a Ryker face push. Why that would be conceived as a good idea is beyond me, but does it matter at this point? Maybe this is just something for Memorial Day, but the idea of breaking up another team in the already barely alive division seems like a really bad choice.

Nia Jax tells Reginald to be careful with Alexa Bliss. She'll have the champagne on ice though.

Post break Elias is running from Ryker, who he has lost it. Ryker is a veteran and an incredible athlete but he is unpredictable. The idea of traveling the roads with him makes Elias sick and he's done.

It's time for Alexa's Playground with Reginald as the guest. Shayna Baszler pops up to beat Reginald down, but Alexa Bliss says Lily doesn't like her. Baszler says this is becoming a problem and she needs to have a "chat" with Bliss. They can see each other next week. Baszler tells Lily that she is just a stupid doll.

The Viking Raiders give Mansoor some advice. Mustafa Ali comes up to say don't trust anyone around here. Mansoor asks why he should trust Ali, who says Mansoor is getting it.

Bobby Lashley and MVP are having a good time with the women but get interrupted for some questions. MVP talks about how he doesn't really care who wins tonight, because neither is taking the title. They can't be at ringside anyway, so they're going to have some fun.

Kofi Kingston vs. Drew McIntyre

The winner gets the title shot against Lashley (who, along with MVP, are barred from ringside) at HIAC. Kingston has a Green Ranger look here, because he can make something like that work. They start fast with Kofi grabbing some rollups for two each, earning himself a chop into the corner. Back up and Kofi manages to knock him outside, setting up a springboard trust fall as we take a break.

We come back with Kofi hammering away in the corner but getting knocked down again. A suplex gives McIntyre two but Kofi grabs a guillotine, which is countered into a suplex which is countered into a small package to give Kingston two. Some running forearms in the corner rock McIntyre but he snaps off a belly to belly suplex.

There's a second suplex but Kofi counters a right hand into the SOS for two. Drew heads outside so Kofi goes onto the top of the post for the trust fall. That's pulled out of the air though (because you can do that) and Drew sends him over the barricade as we take a break. Back again with Drew getting two off a tilt-a-whirl backbreaker and cranking on both arms at once. With that broken up, a frustrated Drew takes him to the top but gets reversed into a powerbomb.

Kofi's middle rope dropkick connects but Drew gets creative with a swinging Futureshock for two. A spinebuster gives McIntyre two more and a superkick gives Kofi the same. Kofi

goes up top but Drew hits the choke throw superplex. The Claymore is cut off by Trouble In Paradise for a very close two as Drew grabs the rope. Kofi sends him to the floor and hits the standing double stomp from the apron. Back in and Kingston goes up again but gets Claymored out of the air for the pin at 22:40.

Rating: B+. I really, really liked this one as you had McIntyre wanting to get back to the title match but Kofi was staying on him every step. You could feel Kofi's efforts to get back to the main event because it has been a pretty long time. This worked very well as a result and they had a heck of a match with a clean finish to send McIntyre to the pay per view. That needs to be his last title shot, but at least he got there in a very good way.

We get a post match handshake and here are Bobby Lashley and MVP for the staredown to end the show.

Overall Rating: D+. If I could, I would split this into two different ratings, with the main event being its own section. That match felt like it was from a totally different company, as it was entertaining, well put together and didn't have nonsense included. That's what sets it apart from the rest of the show, which was mostly junk.

The biggest problem on Raw is everything but the wrestling. Between the bad creative, horrible storytelling, badly scripted promos and everything moving at such a slow pace, there is only so much anyone can get out of it. There are times where it feels like they are actively trying to make a bad show and that can get really old in a hurry. Some of the parts of this show felt like a joke that got way out of hand but WWE keeps running with it anyway. That has been the case for years now and it has taken a pretty serious toll.

But then there is the main event, which was about as good of a match as you're going to get on Raw these days. It had none of

the nonsense that dragged the rest of the show down and that was so nice to see. McIntyre and Kingston proved that the talent is there and if you cut off so much of the nonsense and bad ideas, Raw could be a totally watchable show. The rest of the night was mostly bad (though not entirely), but the main event bailed a lot of this show out. Again.

Results

Nikki Cross b. Charlotte when the time limit expired
Randy Orton b. Xavier Woods – Bro Derek
Reginald b. Shayna Baszler – Rollup
Mace/T-Bar b. Lucha House Party – Double chokeslam to Metalik
Ricochet b. Sheamus – Rollup
Humberto Carrillo b. Sheamus – Rollup
Mandy Rose/Dana Brooke b. Lana/Naomi – Fireman's carry/Samoan drop combination to Lana
Cedric Alexander b. Shelton Benjamin – Neuralizer
AJ Styles/Omos b. Elias/Jaxson Ryker – Phenomenal Forearm to Ryker
Drew McIntyre b. Kofi Kingston – Claymore

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