

Day One 2022: They Had To Do Something

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Date: January 1, 2022

Location: State Farm Arena, Atlanta, Georgia

Commentators: Michael Cole, Pat McAfee, Jimmy Smith, Corey Graves, Byron Saxton

It's the first show of the year and as interesting as that is, everything has changed at the very last minute. Universal Champion Roman Reigns has announced that he has tested positive for Coronavirus, meaning that he is out of his title defense against Brock Lesnar. Worry not though, as Lesnar is now in a five way for the WWE Title. Let's get to it.

Kickoff Show: Ridge Holland/Sheamus vs. Cesaro/Ricochet

Sheamus has called Holland the replacement for Cesaro in the Bar, while Ricochet eliminated Sheamus from a recent gauntlet match. Cesaro starts with Sheamus, who bails into the corner and brings Holland in. That's fine with Cesaro, who hits a tilt-a-whirl backbreaker, followed by assisting Ricochet for a flipping stomp to Holland. That looked BAD as Ricochet's boot hit him right in the face.

Sheamus comes back in for the Irish Curse to take over on Ricochet as a bloody Holland is taken to the back. The reverse chinlock goes on as we're told Holland has a broken nose and will not be back in the match. Ricochet kicks him away and brings Cesaro back in to hammer on Sheamus for a change.

Sheamus is sent outside for a whip into the barricade. Back in and the Swing sets up the Sharpshooter but Sheamus makes the rope. Ricochet comes in for a save and knocks Sheamus outside, where he gets caught with White Noise on the floor. Cesaro catches the returning Sheamus with an uppercut for two but the

Brogue Kick gives Sheamus the pin at 9:47.

Rating: C. In case you didn't understand that Cesaro and Ricochet are essentially done in WWE, they just lost a handicap match on the Kickoff Show. I know that they were probably losing anyway even without the injury, but you can't throw in a curve to save a bit of them here? Like have Sheamus cheat or something? It's hard to imagine the two of them recovering if this is how they're seen by WWE, and that doesn't seem likely to change.

The opening video talks about how this is a new year and a new opportunity, with a member of Migos (musicians who are appearing tonight) talking about how important this is. We also get the usual clips of the major matches. There is no mention of Reigns, but we do get a quick mention of Lesnar being added to the WWE Title match. In this situation, that is all that can be done.

Commentary recaps the Reigns/Lesnar situation. Of note: they keep referring to this as the first "premium live event" of 2022, because this company has to make EVERYTHING sound corporate and more impressive than it really is.

Smackdown Tag Team Titles: Usos vs. New Day

The Usos are defending and are coming off a loss to New Day thanks to the referee missing a tag. Woods shouts out to his hometown and grabs Jimmy's arm to take him to the mat to start. Kofi comes in so Woods can hit a backsplash, setting up Kingston's splash for two. Back up and Jimmy kicks him to the floor, where Jey adds a clothesline to take over. Choking and a cheap shot have Kofi in more trouble and there's the running Umaga attack in the corner.

Jimmy knocks Woods off the apron as McAfee talks about how hard it is to remember 2020 because 2021 was just like counting. A superkick to the ribs has Kofi down again but he manages a shot to the face, allowing the hot tag to Woods. The

Honor Roll sets up a Cradle Shock for two on Jimmy and everything breaks down. A pop up Samoan drop (the "Alley-0os" (like in Uso) according to McAfee) gets two on Woods but he gets the better of a slugout with Jey.

It's back to Kofi for a jumping clothesline and the Boom Drop but Trouble in Paradise is broken up. Jey comes back in with the Superfly Splash for two so it's time to go after Kofi's previously injured knee. The rope is grabbed and everything breaks down again, with Kofi grabbing the SOS for two. Daybreak gives Woods the same but he gets sent into the corner. A bunch of superkicks drop Kingston and the double Superfly Splash...gets two as Woods makes a diving save. With the kicks not working, the Usos bust out a 3D of all things to finish Kofi at 17:09.

Rating: B. This is the latest proof that WWE is capable of having a great match when the wrestlers are allowed to go out there and do their thing without some kind of wacky idea. These guys could have a classic in their sleep and they did it again here, as it was all kinds of great action and a rather surprising finish. Yes it was something we've seen before, but it was still awesome.

Video on Big E., who loves being positive but can turn on the seriousness when he needs to.

Big E. is ready for everyone, even if no one had this on their New Year's Bingo cards tonight.

Migos are big fans and can't wait to see the show.

Drew McIntyre vs. Madcap Moss

Happy Corbin is here with Moss so they call Atalanta fat and McIntyre's prom date ugly. Moss, in suspenders, stomps away in the corner to start but McIntyre reverses into some chops. A suplex gets two on Moss and they head outside, where Corbin offers a distraction. That's enough for Moss to post McIntyre

to take over and it's a running shoulder for two back inside.

McIntyre fights out of a chinlock and sends him hard into the corner, setting up the overhead belly to belly suplexes. The Futureshock is broken up so McIntyre settles for something like a Sky High for two instead. Moss can't quite get a neckbreaker so McIntyre takes him into the corner. The top rope superplex is broken up and McIntyre is tied in the Tree of Woe. That's fine with him as he does the situp into the big toss off the top. The Claymore finishes Moss at 9:40.

Rating: D+. This is certainly a match that happened and for some reason it happened on a major show like this one. I have no idea why they didn't put this on television if it just had to happen but at least they didn't do anything screwy like having Moss win (or even come close). McIntyre needs to move on, though there is a good chance that he has to beat Corbin soon too.

Kevin Owens calls this a tragedy or a travesty, whichever you prefer, because this was a three way match to start and now it's five people fighting for one title. Worry not though, because he's going to go talk to Seth Rollins.

Video on Seth Rollins, looking at how he got here and all of his successes.

Raw Tag Team Titles: Street Profits vs. RKBro

RKBro is defending and come to the ring with Migos. Dawkins and Riddle start things off with Riddle getting taken down in a hurry. That's not the best start so it's off to Orton for a headlock. With that not getting them very far, it's off to Ford, who gets dropkicked down. Riddle comes back in for the assisted Floating Bro for the early near fall. Back up and Riddle gets caught in the wrong corner so the double teaming can begin.

Dawkins gets two off a suplex but Riddle kicks him away

without much effort. It's back to Orton to take over, including a double hanging DDT to the Profits. The RK0 is countered into a rollup to give Ford two and Orton is sent shoulder first into the post. That's enough to send the champs outside, where Ford hits a HUGE running flip dive over the corner. Back in and Ford heads up top, only to miss...something. Instead Riddle comes back in to set up a pop up RK0 to retain the titles at 10:17.

Rating: C+. We have had two Tag Team Title matches tonight. One of them ended with a 3D and the other ended with a pop up RK0. Are you starting to see why this company can be seen as repetitive at times? The match wasn't anything memorable and is just another win for the champs, but it was completely acceptable for a PPV title defense.

Post match everyone celebrates together, including Migos. Ignore Ford still being down and having to crawl to the apron.

Drew McIntyre doesn't have much to say about his win, but Happy Corbin and Madcap Moss jump him, with Corbin crushing his neck with a chair.

Video on Bianca Belair, who came a long way to get a scholarship to the University of Tennessee.

Brock Lesnar is asked about the WWE Title match and goes into a Paul Heyman impression, saying he is a free agent...thanks to Heyman. Tonight he is winning the WWE Title, and that is a spoiler.

We recap Edge vs. Miz. Edge returned a few weeks ago but the returning Miz (with Maryse) returned for a big talk off, with both of them praising and insulting the other's careers. Miz got the better of things more than once, but Edge gave them a Broodbath (erg) to ruin the renewal of their wedding vows. Now it's a showdown.

Miz vs. Edge

Maryse is here with Miz, while Edge gets the Brood/Alter Bridge double entrance. Feeling out process to start and Miz bails into the corner from the threat of an Edgecution. Miz knocks him outside though and sends Edge into the barricade to take over, setting up the top rope ax handle to the head back inside. It's time to go after Edge's leg before a reverse DDT gives Miz two.

Miz kicks him to the apron but gets planted face first on the floor for his efforts. They're right back on the floor, with Miz trying the Skull Crushing Finale on the announcers' table. That's reversed into Edge's faceplant onto said table and it's a high crossbody for two back inside. Miz goes back to the leg but the Figure Four attempt earns him a kick into the corner. Edge is sent shoulder first into the post though and it's right back to the leg. Now the Figure Four can go on but Edge turns it over, leaving Miz to struggle for a long time.

With that broken up, Edge goes to the Crossface, only to have Maryse get Miz's boot into the rope. Back up and stereo big boots put both of them down and they get a breather. Miz takes him into the corner for the kicks to the chest and the running clothesline before going up top. Edge is right there with a super hiptoss of all things but the spear hits the corner. Maryse gets in a cheap shot of some kick and the Skull Crushing Finale gets two. Cue Beth Phoenix (who stands there glaring at Maryse until her music hits) to chase Maryse off, leaving Edge to spear Miz for the pin at 19:59.

Rating: B-. This took some time to get going but the fans were into it by the end. I'm a little surprised by the ending, but you can see the mixed tag coming, probably at the Rumble. That should make for a good match, though I'm not sure how much we need another month of these two fighting. The match was good stuff, with the leg work being a fine way to go and Maryse getting involved set up the finish, though it never hit that next gear.

MVP and Bobby Lashley aren't worried about Brock Lesnar being added to the title match.

We recap Becky Lynch vs. Liv Morgan for the Raw Women's Title. Lynch had to cheat to beat Morgan in their first title match but Morgan wanted/got a rematch. Before accepting though, Lynch injured Morgan's arm so she isn't coming in at 100% here.

Raw Women's Title: Becky Lynch vs. Liv Morgan

Lynch is defending and has goats on the shoulders of her jacket. Liv starts fast and knocks Becky outside for some rams into the announcers' table. Back in and the Manhandle Slam is broken up, allowing Liv to roll her up for two. The Rings of Saturn send Becky straight to the ropes but she is able to catapult Liv throat first into the bottom rope. After a random shot of a fan in the crowd, Lynch hammers away on the mat as we keep cutting to the fans.

Morgan fights back and kicks her into the corner before hammering away with right hands of her own. There's the enziguri to rock Lynch again and a middle rope dropkick gets two. Becky gets a cross armbreaker out of nowhere but Liv slips out and takes her down again. Liv goes up but gets knocked down, only to come back with a running springboard sunset bomb for two. A belly to back faceplant gives Lynch two but she misses a middle rope legdrop.

Liv is right back with a missile dropkick (to the stomach) and Becky bails to the floor. That means a big suicide dive but Lynch takes her around for some rams into the announcers' table. Back up and Liv sends Becky into the steps before stomping on the arm like Lynch did to her. That's broken up and Lynch hits her in the face but Lynch is right back with something like Oblivion off the top. The Rings of Saturn goes on again but Lynch reverses into a cradle for two. Another Oblivion is countered into the Manhandle Slam and the pin at

17:14, with Lynch reaching for the ropes to cheat but not quite getting there.

Rating: B-. These two were working hard out there and it wound up being a good match as a result. Morgan is not polished in the ring yet and still seems to be in over her head a lot, but she is getting better at making the most out of what she can do. This was about as close as she could get without winning, though aside from Rhea Ripley, I'm not sure who else on Raw is available for a fresh feud with Lynch at the moment. Maybe they run this back one more time, but that might be going too far with the feud.

Seth Rollins isn't worried about the other four people in the WWE Title match because they're not Seth Freaking Rollins. He's going to stomp heads and win.

Johnny Knoxville, of Jackass fame, is in the Royal Rumble. Really.

We recap the WWE Title match. It was original a triple threat but then Bobby Lashley was added. Then Brock Lesnar was added to make it even wackier.

WWE Title: Bobby Lashley vs. Brock Lesnar vs. Kevin Owens vs. Seth Rollins vs. Big E.

Big E. is defending and it's one fall to a finish. It's a big brawl to start and Lesnar fires off suplexes on Owens and Rollins. Big E. hits some running clotheslines to put Brock on the floor. Lashley sends Big E. into the post and hits the spear to drive Lesnar through the barricade. Lashley gets back in, where Owens and Rollins superkick him down.

Rollins knees Lesnar off the apron and Owens adds the bullfrog splash from the apron for a bonus. Some steps to the ribs put Lashley and Lesnar down before it's time to set up the announcers' table. Lashley fights both of them off but Big E. Rock Bottoms him through the table in the big crash.

Owens and Rollins are back up with a double DDT to drive Lesnar into the steps but Big E. takes Rollins down. The pop up sitout powerbomb gives Owens two on Big E. and Rollins adds a frog splash for two. Lesnar is back in with F5's all around but Lashley is back in to spear Lesnar down for two more. The Hurt Lock has Lesnar in trouble until Big E. makes the save. There's the Big Ending to Lashley but Lesnar escapes and hits an F5 on Big E. for the pin and the title at 8:23.

Rating: B. This was straight out of the Summerslam 2017 playbook, albeit with less time. They hit the gas to start and then never stopped, which is how a match like this should have gone. Lesnar winning the title is a surprise, though it seems like we are heading for a showdown between him and Lashley, which should be incredible. Big E.'s title reign was in trouble from the start and ended even worse, but dang I feel sorry for him to have to lose it like this. It was a heck of a match, but the idea of a long Lesnar reign makes my head hurt.

Overall Rating: B. It was a rather solid show, with only McIntyre vs. Moss bringing it down (and that is more to do with the match existing than the match itself). While there is nothing that blew the roof off, there were a bunch of good matches that felt like they belonged on a pay per view. The ending changes more than a few things and should set up the WWE Title match at the Royal Rumble, so it did have some important moments. Good show here and we could see some interesting things as we start the Road To Wrestlemania.

Results

Usos b. New Day – 3D to Kingston

Drew McIntyre b. Madcap Moss – Claymore

RKBro b. Street Profits – Assisted RK0 to Ford

Edge b. Miz – Spear

Becky Lynch b. Liv Morgan – Manhandle slam

Brock Lesnar b. Big E., Kevin Owens, Seth Rollins and Bobby Lashley – F5 to Big E.

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