

Monday Night Raw – January 31, 2022: And They're Off

Monday Night Raw

Date: January 31, 2022

Location: Heritage Bank Center, Cincinnati, Ohio

Commentators: Byron Saxton, Jimmy Smith, Corey Graves

The Royal Rumble has come and gone and that means we are officially on the Road To WrestleMania. As a result, it is time to start hammering in the pieces for the next elimination based match, as Elimination Chamber is in less than two weeks. Bobby Lashley is the new WWE Champion and that means he is going to need a challenger. Let's get to it.

[Here is the Royal Rumble if you need a recap.](#)

We open with a recap of Brock Lesnar losing the WWE Title to Bobby Lashley with the help of Roman Reigns and Paul Heyman. Worry not though as Lesnar won the Royal Rumble later in the night, because being screwed out of a title leaves you with absolutely no other options to get another title shot. The graphic even saying "1 hour and 22 minutes later" doesn't help things.

Here is Adam Pearce in the ring to hype up the big things we will be seeing tonight. There is a road block on the Road To Wrestlemania though, which is called the Elimination Chamber. Bobby Lashley will be defending his WWE Title inside the Elimination Chamber...and here are MVP and Lashley to interrupt. MVP rants about Lashley being in the Chamber and Lashley says he is here to celebrate beating Lesnar. Lashley is a better wrestler, a better mixed martial artist and a better champion. Who's the conqueror now? Who's the beast now? Who's the champion now?

Cue Brock Lesnar, in wrestling gear, to interrupt. He talks

about how Lashley didn't really beat him, but Lesnar isn't mad at him. Instead, he is mad at Roman Reigns and Paul Heyman, but what matters is that he won the Royal Rumble. That isn't a joke, because Lesnar is going to face Reigns at Wrestlemania. Lashley is involved too though, because it is going to be title for title.

Lesnar challenges Lashley for his rematch right now and Lashley is already taking the tie off. MVP says not so fast though, because Lesnar has to earn it. Lesnar calls Lashley a chickens*** and Lashley is a lot more serious. MVP begs him not to and Lashley bails, but Pearce puts Lesnar inside the Elimination Chamber for the title instead.

Nikki Ash vs. Rhea Ripley

Nikki goes right at her to start but gets caught in a delayed vertical suplex, with Rhea walking her around for a bonus. Nikki is sent outside but manages to tie her up in the ring skirt and fires off forearms as we take a break. Back with Nikki working on an armbar and hitting a tornado DDT for two. Ripley fights up with some clotheslines and nails a basement dropkick. Nikki is back with a failed fisherman's neckbreaker attempt, setting up Riptide to give Ripley the pin at 8:04.

Rating: C-. That is all you needed it to be, as Ripley got the clean win. Now granted that probably means we will be seeing another three matches minimum, likely with Rhea winning over and over. That's about all Ripley can do though, as it isn't like she could be back in the title picture or anything insane like that.

We recap last week's spelling bee, with Chad Gable losing, followed by a singles match, with Chad Gable losing.

Now it is time for Gable vs. Riddle in a scooter race, with Riddle dubbing his scooter Gustavo. After some complaining about last week's spelling and an introduction of R-Truth as the official starter, they're off, with the first to complete

fifty laps around the arena and cross the finish line at ringside wins. More on this later.

We're back to more of Alexa Bliss' therapy, with Bliss insisting that she has had Lily since she was a kid. We get a montage of Bliss with Lily, with the therapist asking what would happen if she could see Lily again. The therapist brings out a replica (while making clear it isn't the real thing) and she is very happy.

We look at Edge and Beth Phoenix beating Miz and Maryse at the Royal Rumble.

Miz vs. Dominik Mysterio

Rey Mysterio is here with Dominik. Miz gets serious by messing up Dominik's hair but has to duck an early 619 attempt. That means a trip to the floor, where he shoves Rey down. Back in and Miz kicks Dominik in the face before falling down and claiming Rey tripped him. That's enough to get Rey ejected and the Skull Crushing Finale finishes Dominik at 2:10.

Tamina jumps 24/7 Champion Dana Brooke but gets interrupted by the scooter race (now on lap 18/50).

The scooter race continues until Riddle runs into Omos. Riddle: "Omos, I've never noticed it before but you have beautiful eyes." And he rides off.

It's time for the Kevin Owens Show, with Owens talking about how excited he is for the Road to Wrestlemania. He is going to be in the Elimination Chamber after he beats Austin Theory, but for now, it is time for the man who should be Universal Champion: Seth Rollins! Cue a limping Rollins, who even agrees to sit down this week.

After a Cincinnati Bengals WHO DEY chant, we get a highlight package on Rollins beating Roman Reigns via DQ when Reigns kept choking him. Back in the arena, Owens says that was

ridiculous but Rollins says he has a permanent piece of real estate in Reigns' head. Whenever he goes back there, he will come back with the Universal Title. That's Smackdown business though and we are on Monday Night Raw.

There are some spots available in the Elimination Chamber, but one of them is being taken up by...Seth Rollins! Owens' isn't happy that Rollins got in without having to qualify, but thinks Rollins could convince Adam Pearce and Sonya Deville to let them in. All he has to do is threaten to not wrestle unless Owens is in! Rollins: "Uhhhh....." Cue Austin Theory to interrupt and it's qualifying match time.

Elimination Chamber Qualifying Match: Kevin Owens vs. Austin Theory

Feeling out process to start with Owens using the power to take over. That earns him a rolling dropkick and some shots to the face in the corner before they head outside. Owens crushes him with the Cannonball against the barricade and Theory needs a breather. Theory manages to send him into the steps and we take a break.

Back with Owens hitting a DDT and heading up top but missing the Swanton. The ATL is countered so Theory hits a neckbreaker for two. Owens runs him over again and now the Swanton connects to give Owens two of his own. The spinning superplex gives Owens two more but Theory knocks him outside. Owens gets back in, but Theory kicks the ropes for a low blow. Back in and the ATL gives Theory the pin at 11:17.

Rating: B-. Theory continues to shine every chance he gets and getting a win over someone like Owens is only going to make his star brighter. There is a lot to him and I'm wondering just how far he can go. If nothing else, it is nice to see him getting a spot in a title match. Granted he won't win, but that's a good step.

Otis gives Chad Gable a drink for energy but it's steak sauce.

Gable: "SODIUM!" Otis drinks it as Gable panics away.

Angelo Dawkins vs. Dolph Ziggler

Hometown boy Dawkins (with Montez Ford) does the Icky Shuffle on the way to the ring to really make himself beloved. Ziggler takes him down to start and hammers away in the corner, setting up his own, albeit mocking, Icky Shuffle. Dawkins is back with a clothesline and the spinning splash in the corner. Ziggler's superkick is blocked though and Dawkins hits the spinning butterfly suplex for the pin at 4:27.

Rating: C-. See how easy it is to give a hometown boy a win? They had a short match, the fans were happy with Dawkins winning, and Ziggler isn't going to be hurt by a loss. This was all it needed to be and the fans got to smile. I don't believe WWE is going to drop their trend of hurting hometown stars, but at least it was fine for one night.

Gable and Riddle are almost to the final lap.

WWE 2K22 ad.

Veer Mahaan is coming to Raw.

It's time for the finals of the race. R-Truth is in the arena and picks the Bengals winning but Riddle knocks Gable down, leaving him with a banged up knee....but Otis runs Riddle over before he crosses the finish line. Gable gets up and wins without much trouble. Riddle protests, but Gable lists off all of his own accomplishments, none of which required cheating (Gable: "THANK YOU!"). Riddle can have his match, but against Otis. Hold on though as Adam Pearce has an announcement: this is now an Elimination Chamber qualifying match!

Elimination Chamber Qualifying Match: Otis vs. Riddle

Otis takes him into the corner for a hard shot to the head to start, setting up the splash for a close two. The neck crank is on but Riddle fights up, only to get Judas Effected to the

floor. Back in and Otis sends him flying off a shoulder and seems to do the old Razor Ramon pose for some reason.

Riddle fights out of another neck crank and forearms away, only to get knocked down by another clothesline. Otis puts on another neck crank so Riddle fights up even faster, this time for some running strikes in the corner. A ripcord knee puts Otis down on his knee and another puts him down. The Floating Bro hits Otis' knee (as it missed badly) so it's a Floating Bro to the standing Otis for the pin at 7:24.

Rating: C. Odd choice of a pose aside, this told a good story but in a boring way. Otis going for three neck cranks in a single match isn't exactly exciting and that Floating Bro looked pretty bad. At least they got the ending right though, as Riddle or Randy Orton almost had to be in the Elimination Chamber. Again, Riddle won't win, but it's nice to see him get a chance.

Carmella vs. Bianca Belair

Carmella has to put her mask on before Belair can wrestle her down. The hair whip is loaded up so Carmella screams and slaps Belair in the face. Saxton: "That was stupid." The chase is on until Carmella sends her into the corner and forearms away. Some elbows put Belair down again and we hit the chinlock. Belair fights up and gets knocked right back down into another chinlock. That's broken up as well so it's a forearm to set up the KOD to give Belair the pin at 5:32.

Rating: C-. Carmella was more aggressive here but it wasn't much of a match. The mask gimmick continues to not add much and doesn't seem to get over. The good thing is that Belair gets reheated a bit, though I have no idea where she is going with the title pictures pretty much set for the time being.

We look back at Alexa Bliss seeing the replacement Lily doll again.

Back in the office, Alexa Bliss is so happy to see Lily, who the therapist said he got from WWE Shop. Bliss holds the doll and smiles a lot. That's it.

Chad Gable isn't happy with Otis' loss but has a good idea: the final part of the academic challenge will be a Quiz Bowl. Just like the Bengals losing their big game, RKBro will lose too.

We look at Ronda Rousey returning at the Royal Rumble.

Elimination Chamber Qualifying Match: Rey Mysterio vs. AJ Styles

They go with the grappling to start and neither can get anywhere. Styles hits a shoulder but Rey is back up with a running hurricanrana. That's enough to send Styles outside but Rey's sliding splash hits raised knees. Another hurricanrana takes Styles down again on the floor though and we take a break.

Back with Rey AJ countering a springboard moonsault but getting caught with a spinning DDT. A springboard spinning crossbody gives Rey two but AJ's fireman's carry backbreaker gets the same. The calf Crusher is broken up and Rey kicks him in the head for another near fall. Rey goes up but has to counter the super Styles Clash. The frog splash misses for Rey though and AJ scores with a Pele. That's not enough for a cover though as Rey heads up for the top rope seated senton, only to have AJ roll through into the Styles Clash for the pin at 11:34.

Rating: B. I'm as shocked as you are that two of the best ever were able to have a good match when they were given the chance. Styles winning makes more sense and adds to the star power of the match, but it's not like Rey is some slouch. This was a rather good main event and I could go for seeing a longer version on a bigger stage.

Here is Ronda Rousey for the big finale. She can't decide if she should pick to face Charlotte or Rebecca at Wrestlemania. Rousey has unfinished business with both, but Rebecca is on her undercard. Then everyone will know the baddest big time b**** is her. Cue Becky Lynch, saying that she wants an answer too and that the women's division has never been hotter. Lynch wants a decision so Rousey grabs the arm...and says the decision will come on Friday.

Rousey goes to leave so here is Lita to interrupt. Becky isn't sure about this but talks about being a fan when she was a kid. She makes the mistake of asking why Lita is here though and the challenge for Elimination Chamber is thrown out. Becky says no, but Lita manages to goad her into it to end the show. Remember the multiple instances that seemed to point to Lita vs. Charlotte? WWE doesn't seem to either.

Overall Rating: C+. The wrestling was hit or miss and some of the promos didn't work so well, but what mattered here was the effort. It felt like the people were trying and that made all the difference. Things like Miz vs. Dominik and Belair vs. Carmella weren't great, but the scooter deal was inoffensive enough and they set up a lot of the Elimination Chamber. Either way, much better than the Rumble, if you consider that to be an accomplishment at this point.

Results

Rhea Ripley b. Nikki Ash – Riptide

Miz b. Dominik Mysterio – Skull Crushing Finale

Austin Theory b. Kevin Owens – ATL

Angelo Dawkins b. Dolph Ziggler – Double underhook spinning slam

Riddle b. Otis – Floating Bro

Bianca Belair b. Carmella – KOD

AJ Styles b. Rey Mysterio – Styles Clash

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