

Monday Night Raw – December 19, 2022: This Close

Monday Night Raw

Date: December 19, 2022

Location: Wells Fargo Arena, Des Moines, Iowa

Commentators: Kevin Patrick, Corey Graves

It's the last show before Christmas and possibly the last show of the year depending on what they do next week. There is still a lot of time before the Royal Rumble but we have another big match coming up on December 30. John Cena is on his way back to WWE and that should have some people talking. Let's get to it.

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

Paul Heyman and Roman Reigns are here, with Reigns saying he is around here to deal with Kevin Owens. Reigns has been dealing with Owens and now he has to take care of John Cena again. Now, he is going to torture Owens until Raw acknowledges the Bloodline.

We cut to the rest of the Bloodline beating down Mustafa Ali in an NWO style handheld video attack.

Opening sequence.

Street Profits vs. Judgment Day

Finn Balor/Damien Priest for the team here, with their friends and Akira Tozawa at ringside too. Ford goes nuts on Priest to start but gets sent into the corner. We go split screen to see the Bloodline beating up Andre Chase and Elias, the latter with a guitar shot. Back to full screen with Priest sending the Profits to the floor by himself and we take a break.

We come back with Dawkins coming in to clean house but Priest

grabs the South of Heaven chokeslam. Ford is right there with the frog splash before Priest can get back up but Balor is in to dropkick Ford into the corner. Everything breaks down and Tozawa throws a drink in Dominik Mysterio's (already injured) eyes, allowing Ford to roll Balor up for the pin at 8:56.

Rating: C+. They had the energy going here and it even tied in to what they did last week. At the same time, it was nice to have a different kind of presentation with the cut to the back. It's nice to have something feel like it is happening in real time and if it takes Elias getting beaten up to accomplish that, good for the Bloodline.

Post match Rhea Ripley punches Tozawa out and challenges him to a fight.

Akira Tozawa vs. Rhea Ripley

Everyone else is here too. Tozawa is really nervous about doing this and gets run over without much trouble. A big boot puts Tozawa in more trouble in the corner and Ripley muscles him over with a suplex for two. Ripley can't quite powerbomb him, allowing Tozawa to grab a hurricanrana out to the floor. The distraction lets Balor trip Tozawa down so the Profits hit the stereo flip dives. Back in and Ripley misses a charge into the corner but Tozawa misses the backsplash. Riptide finishes Tozawa at 4:30.

Rating: C. This was an example of a man vs. woman match that made sense and could be believed. Tozawa is a smaller guy and Ripley is a giant compared to most of the division. Ripley's offense looked fine here and I could buy what they were doing. Throw in Ripley winning the match after capitalizing on Tozawa's mistake and the whole thing worked out well enough.

We look back at Bobby Lashley snapping and getting fired by Adam Pearce as a result.

Adam Pearce won't talk about Lashley, who should be back soon.

MVP comes in, but hang on as someone else has been attacked.

Post break and it's Dolph Ziggler who has been attacked.

OC vs. Alpha Academy

Anderson shoulders Gable to start and grabs a hiptoss. A double shoulder takes Gable down again but he takes Anderson into the corner. That's fine with Anderson, who armdrags him right out. Otis comes in and has the power showdown with Gallows. The Academy is sent outside and we take a break. Back with Otis cleaning house but Gable misses a moonsault. Gallows' superkick sets up the Magic Killer for the pin at 8:59.

Rating: C. Another perfectly watchable match, even as the Academy is feeling less and less important every week. You can only get so much when they lose all the time and they don't exactly have much in the way of a story anyway. The OC gets some momentum back and we didn't have to hear SHUSH too often, so we'll call this a success.

Post break the Bloodline jumps the OC.

Back from a break and the Bloodline is still in the ring, with Adam Pearce telling them to wrap it up. Sami Zayn promises to do even worse to John Cena and Kevin Owens next week. As the Bloodline goes to leave, AJ Styles jumps them but gets pulled off by security.

We look at Alexa Bliss becoming #1 contender and then having to snap herself back to reality.

AJ Styles wants the Bloodline tonight and gets Sami Zayn.

We get a sitdown interview between Bianca Blair and Alexa Bliss. Blair gets right to the point by saying she doesn't trust Bliss, who says she is turning into a shell of a human being she doesn't even recognize. Blair asks about the Bray Wyatt connection, but Bliss says this isn't about him. Bliss

was winning titles before Belair got here and that's kind of a mic drop moment. Then Bliss hits Belair in the head with a vase.

Miz vs. Dexter Lumis

Ladder match with two bags of money hanging above the ring and Johnny Gargano at ringside. They go for the ladder to start, with Lumis getting the better of it and crushing Miz in the corner with the ladder. With Miz down in the corner, Lumis teases pushing the ladder down for a low blow. Instead he leaves it a big short and dropkicks it between Miz's legs, sending him outside. Miz is able to get up top and save the money and they go crashing down onto the ropes.

We take a break and come back with both of them on top of the ladder so Lumis can punch him down. Miz shoves the ladder over this time though and goes up, only to have Lumis pull him down as well. The Silencer is countered into a neckbreaker onto the apron and Lumis is down again, much to Gargano's annoyance. Miz crushes Lumis in the ladder and rolls a chair at Gargano.

With Gargano backed up, Miz buries Lumis and the ladder with chairs. A table is teased but Miz beats up Gargano instead of climbing. Lumis uses the distraction to fight up and Rock Bottom Miz onto the announcers' table covering. Lumis misses a dive off the ladder and through the announcers' table. Miz goes up but Lumis cuts him off again and tries to pull down the money...but Bronson Reed returns and cuts Lumis off. The Tsunami crushes Lumis and Reed helps Miz get the money back at 18:20.

Rating: D+. This was all about the surprise return and that doesn't matter much when the match is rather dull on the way there. This is a match that would have been better served as a regular one on one match at about half the length, as They had far too many instances of "climb, cutoff, climb cutoff, climb, cutoff". This feud is likely to continue, though having Reed

back could boost things up quite a bit.

Sami Zayn vs. AJ Styles

No one else is at ringside for a change. Styles starts fast and knocks Zayn to the floor for the slingshot forearm. Back in and a hot shot cuts Styles off, only to have him come back with some kicks of his own. Zayn is sent outside again and dropped for a second time, but he is fine enough to break up the Phenomenal Forearm as we take a break.

Back with Zayn grabbing a brainbuster for two but getting caught with the Phenomenal Blitz. The moonsault reverse DDT is cut off though and Zayn exploders him into the corner. The Helluva Kick is countered into the Calf Crusher though, with Zayn having to make it to the rope. Cue Solo Sikoa for a distraction though, with Styles going outside to beat him up. The referee is distracted as well though and Sikoa gets in a Samoan Spike. Zayn adds the Blue Thunder Bomb for the pin at 12:51.

Rating: B-. The Bloodline numbers game continues and that is the way this should have gone. You don't need Zayn losing so close to his huge match with Reigns at the end of the year and Styles is as bulletproof as you can get around here. If nothing else, this could open up more things by having Styles go after the Bloodline and Sikoa in particular, so they did what they should have done with a good match here.

Here is Seth Rollins (home state boy) for a chat. The fans are REALLY happy to see him and Rollins seems happy to be back. Rollins says Roman Reigns doesn't run Mondays and no one can stop him. Cue Austin Theory to say he can beat Rollins, even if the fans think Theory sucks. Theory thinks Rollins is fine after Bobby Lashley took his frustrations out on a referee, but Rollins praises him anyway.

Rollins talks about how great Theory is, but he'll never be on Rollins' level. Theory talks about wanting to rise up but

Rollins calls himself Everest. The fight is teased but here are the Usos, leaving Rollins and Theory to stand next to each other. Theory runs off (shocking) and the beatdown is on but Kevin Owens makes the save. Security breaks it up, but Owens suggests they keep this going. The match is on for later.

Becky Lynch wants to face the best version of Bayley, so let's do this one on one. Tonight it's going to be one on one or one on three but she's ready either way.

Bayley vs. Becky Lynch

The rest of Damage Ctrl is here too. A dancing Becky soaks in the fans' cheers to start and a frustrated Bayley gets armdragged down. Becky boots her to the floor and hits a flying forearm and we take a break. Back with Becky fighting out of a chinlock and winning a slugout to leave both of them down. The Bexploder drops Bayley and the middle rope legdrop gives Becky two.

A backslide gives Becky two but Bayley is back with a sliding lariat. The Bayley to Belly gives Bayley two but Becky is right back with Diamond Dust of all things for two of her own. Damage Ctrl breaks up the Manhandle Slam so Becky threatens them with a...TV monitor. Before that can go anywhere it's a double ejection, but the distraction lets Bayley get in a monitor shot. The Rose Plant finishes Becky at 14:42.

Rating: B. These two beat each other up for awhile until Bayley had to cheat to win. There is something to that ending as Becky had said she wanted to face Bayley at her best and on her own but didn't get to do that here. Good stuff from two very talented stars and it would not surprise me to see this come back again on a bigger stage, like say the Royal Rumble.

Seth Rollins and Kevin Owens are ready for the Usos, though Owens remembers Rollins trying to steal his Wrestlemania main event earlier this year. Rollins seems ready to go anyway.

Seth Rollins/Kevin Owens vs. Usos

Non-title and the brawl is on before the bell with Owens and Jimmy heading outside. We get the bell with Rollins hammering on Jey in the corner. The fans are pleased as Rollins elbows him in the face and hands it off to Owens for a clothesline. Jimmy manages a shot from the apron though and Jey knocks Rollins to the floor as we take a break.

Back with Rollins getting the hot tag to clean house, including the Sling Blade to Jey. Owens comes back in with a frog splash for two on Jey, but the Swanton only hits raised knees. Cue Solo Sikoa but the Good Brothers come in to take him out. Jey gets Stomped on the floor but Austin Theory pops up with a belt shot to Rollins. Jimmy superkicks Owens for two but Owens is back up with a superkick of his own. The Pop Up Powerbomb finishes Jimmy at 10:57.

Rating: B. While Lynch vs. Bayley was all about getting in a competitive match, this was more about tying all of the insanity together until the ending. The Usos losing is an event these days and even though this wasn't for the title, Owens and Rollins overcame a bunch of shenanigans to score the big upset. That is a rare loss for the Bloodline and it gives Rollins a nice hometown moment. Imagine that for a change.

Post match Sami Zayn and Kevin Owens have a staredown but nothing gets physical to end the show.

Overall Rating: B. Save for that ladder match, this was a heck of a show with a bunch of good matches throughout. What mattered here the most though was having so many things woven throughout the show. There were plot elements that came up multiple times over the course of the night and it felt like an event rather than just another show. It never made sense to have things be so cut and dry around here, so this was a very nice change of pace. Pretty awesome show and if you cut that ladder match down, it's a great one.

Results

Street Profits b. Judgment Day – Rollup to Balor

Rhea Ripley b. Akira Tozawa – Riptide

OC b. Alpha Academy – Magic Killer to Gable

Miz b. Dexter Lumis – Miz pulled down the money

Sami Zayn b. AJ Styles – Blue Thunder Bomb

Bayley b. Becky Lynch – Rose Plant

Seth Rollins/Kevin Owens b. Usos – Pop Up Powerbomb to Jimmy

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