

Monday Night Raw – January 23, 2023 (Raw XXX): They Know This Stuff

Monday Night Raw

Date: January 23, 2023

Location: Wells Fargo Center, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Commentators: Corey Graves, Kevin Patrick

It's Raw XXX as the company celebrates thirty years on the air. As usual with the big Raw milestone episodes, we'll be seeing a bunch of legends for special appearances. In addition, there are two title matches and a cage match so the card is stacked. If that isn't enough, it's the go home show for the Royal Rumble so let's get to it.

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

Here are Hulk Hogan and Jimmy Hart to get things going. Hogan talks about Raw debuting in 1993, pauses because the mic doesn't work, praises the Philadelphia Eagles and is all done.

We look at some of the cities the show has taken place in over the years before switching into the big highlight package. The hit a lot of the big names, including a bunch of AEW names, debuts, title changes, reveals and almost anything else you could want. WWE has absolutely not forgotten how to montage.

Here is the Bloodline with their long form entrance for the Trial Of Sami Zayn. After having Philadelphia acknowledge him, Reigns hands the mic to Paul Heyman so we pause for an ECW chant. Heyman: "ECW is dead and I wish the same for Sami Zayn." Heyman accuses Zayn of being in a conspiracy with Kevin Owens since day one (that was only last January).

Zayn has been trying to lure the Bloodline into a false sense

of security, just like the Philadelphia Eagles. Heyman brings up BROCK...Purdy, the quarterback of the San Francisco 49ers, who will beat the Eagles next week. We see some clips of Sami not exactly helping in fights, capped off by Zayn BUMPING INTO REIGNS while going on a rant. Heyman says that should be enough for Zayn to be GUILTY AS CHARGED (nice).

Zayn gets his chance to talk and he wasn't sure how he was going to feel when he came out here. He can't believe that he is on trial here, but his defense is that he has no defense. Reigns is disgusted at the disrespect and tells Solo Sikoa to take care of him. The Samoan Spike is loaded up but Jey Uso cuts Sikoa off.

Jey has his own footage, showing a montage of Sami helping the Bloodline over the last few months, including taking out Kevin Owens in WarGames. Jey talks about how Sami saw the good in him the entire time and that's what family does. Fans: "UCEY!" We get a fan poll of whether Sami should stay and the fans seem pretty unanimous.

Jimmy even agrees and Reigns gets to his feet. Reigns finds Zayn not guilty...for now. In the meantime, Sami can finish out tonight by making the Bloodline proud. After that, Reigns doesn't want to see or hear from Sami until the Royal Rumble, where Sami delivers his final test. There's your drama for Owens vs. Reigns on Saturday as this story takes a pretty big step forward.

Raw Tag Team Titles: Usos vs. Judgment Day

The Usos are defending and have Sami Zayn in the corner to counter Finn Balor/Rhea Ripley. Jimmy and Dominik start things off but Jimmy has to kick Priest to the floor. Priest Pounces Jimmy over the announcers' table and the champs are in trouble. Back in and Dominik chokes a bit, only to have Jimmy get over to Jey without much trouble. The running Umaga attack gets two on Dominik but Priest is back in with a superkick.

Priest hits the step up flip dive to take the Usos down again. Back in and the Usos fire off some superkicks to drop Priest and Dominik, but Balor offers a distraction. The referee catches Balor crotching Jey and gets ejected, leaving Priest to get superkicked down. Jimmy's Superfly Splash gets....two and everyone can breathe a bit. Jimmy takes Priest down on the floor and hold on as Jimmy has hurt his knee.

The referee throws up the X and Jimmy is taken out, with Adam Pearce saying if Jimmy is out, the match and titles are forfeited. Sami says not so fast, as Sami USO is ready to go, with Pearce saying let's go. We get back to the match with Sami diving on Dominik and Priest on the floor. Dominik grabs a quick rollup with his feet on the ropes for two but Sami suplexes him into the corner. Ripley breaks up the Helluva Kick though and it's South Of Heaven from Priest to give Dominik two.

The 619 is broken up by Jey's superkick but Jey can't bring himself to superkick Ripley. The distraction lets Dominik hit the 619 on Jey and the frog splash gets two as Sami makes a diving save of his own. Priest goes shoulder first into the post so Dominik dumps Sami, who is back in with a blind tag. The superkick into the 1D retains the titles at 14:06.

Rating: B+. I needed a breath after that one as those were some crazy hot near falls. They had me believing that Judgment Day could have taken the titles more than once and it was one close two count after another. This was one of the best Raw matches WWE in years and one of the better things WWE has done anywhere in a good while. Everything was laid out so well and the wrestlers executed it to near perfection.

In the back, Roman Reigns says he still doesn't want to see Sami until the Royal Rumble.

JBL and Baron Corbin ask the Godfather to put him in the poker game. Godfather will have to ask the host. Said host happens

to be Ron Simmons, who is happy with a payoff to get Corbin's name on the list. They go into the APA's office and it's pretty much a full on casino with all kinds of wrestlers and wrestling personalities included.

Here is LA Knight who says he is all man and doesn't want to wait for the Pitch Black match. He calls out any legend....and the gong sounds. And then it's the American Bad***, with song and motorcycle. Knight talks about how he's going to have everyone chanting his name....and then the lights go out. Bray Wyatt, with lantern, pops up to back Knight into Undertaker, who grabs him by the throat. Bray gets inside and Undertaker tosses Knight over for Sister Abigail. Fans: "HOLY S***!" Undertaker goes to leave but stops to whisper something to Bray before riding off.

We go back to the poker game, where Madusa (with Women's Title belt) seems to win but loses to Diamond Dallas Page.

Bayley vs. Becky Lynch

In a cage with pinfall, submission or escape. Hold on though as Becky has to beat up the rest of Damage Ctrl on the floor. All of Damage Ctrl gets inside to beat on Becky before the bell rings. Adam Pearce finally gets inside as Damage Ctrl sits on top of the cage. No match.

Here is D-Generation X, with Kurt Angle. Road Dogg does the catchphrase but asks why Angle is here. Kurt says he always wanted to be in the team and pulls off his own shirt to reveal a DX shirt. Hold on as Kurt will have to pass a test. HHH: "Are you ready?" Kurt: "Was that the test?" They load up the bigger catchphrase but Imperium of all people interrupts. Imperium doesn't like these degenerates and a fight is teased. HHH: "I'm retired." Shawn: "I'm too old." Dogg: "Who am I kidding?"

We get a DX huddle and HHH volunteers Kurt to fight. Kurt: "No I won't." Dogg: "We're in a pickle." Cue Seth Rollins and then

the Street Profits and we seem to have a six man. Dogg thinks we need to make it official and looks at HHH for an announcement. HHH: "Why does everybody look at me for something like this? This booking stuff isn't easy!" We need someone body out there to make sense of this. Cue Teddy Long for the only possible payoff, but we also need a guest referee. Kurt just happens to have a referee shirt on too (red white and blue stripes of course) and we're ready to go after some funny stuff.

Imperium vs. Seth Rollins/Street Profits

Kurt Angle is guest referee and Jerry Lawler is on commentary. Vinci's headlock on Rollins doesn't last long so it's off to Ford, who gets clotheslined down. Kaiser comes in and strikes it out with Dawkins for a double knockdown. That means the tags to Gunther and Rollins with Gunther taking over and knocking Rollins out of the air.

We take a break and come back with Rollins fighting out of a chinlock and backflipping out of a belly to back suplex. The hot tag brings in Ford and the Profits grab stereo ankle locks. That's too far for Gunther, who comes in and breaks them up. Gunther stares Angle down and pokes him in the chest, with Rollins coming in for the save. The Profits hit the flip dives to the floor, leaving Rollins to get dropkicked and powerbombed to give Gunther two. Rollins is back in with an Angle Slam and the Profits hit a Doomsday Blockbuster on Kaiser. A Pedigree sends Gunther outside and it's a frog splash into the Stomp to finish Vinci at 13:03.

Rating: C+. It was a good six man, with the most important part being Gunther not taking the fall. They had me worried that Rollins would pin him to set something up between them (which might be the case anyway even without the pin) as it wasn't the time for Gunther to get beaten. The Profits and Rollins winning works well and they had a good match on the way there, though DX and Angle were the stars of the whole

deal.

Back to the poker game where Ted DiBiase loses a fortune...but IRS wants JBL and Baron Corbin to pay their taxes and takes the money back. Well save for \$100. Ron Simmons, catchphrase.

Bobby Lashley promises to get the US Title back when MVP interrupts. MVP again offers the reunion but Lashley isn't in.

Here is Ric Flair for a chat. He hits the catchphrases and introduces Charlotte for the big family moment. Charlotte thanks the other women for making her such a decorated champion but this will always be her show. Cue Bianca Belair to interrupt, saying she goes here now and this is her show. Cue Sonya Deville to ask about her recognition for working so hard. Charlotte owes Deville but offers Belair the chance to deal with Deville. Deal.

Sonya Deville vs. Bianca Belair

Non-title. Belair flips over her to start but Deville gets in a shot to the face. Back up and Belair is sent into the corner, where she backflips over Deville and hits a backbreaker. A running boot knocks Deville outside but Belair gets sent into the barricade as we take a break. We come back with Deville dropping her again for two but Belair pops up and hits the KOD for the pin at 8:33 (it's as sudden as it sounds).

Rating: D. That was a weird ending and it wouldn't shock me if something was cut for time. In addition to that though, the match was quite the mess as it felt like a complete lack of chemistry. Deville feels in way over her head and it doesn't help that she seems to be there as a filler challenger to Charlotte until we get to the important stuff. Not a good match whatsoever, but at least it didn't take up too much time.

Post match Belair says that was just a preview for what she is

going to do to Alexa Bliss. Cue Bliss on screen, talking into a mirror about how violent she can be with no one helping her.

Video on Cody Rhodes' 2022 before he returns this weekend at the Royal Rumble.

John Cena is the cover star for WWE 2K23.

Here is Miz to ask where his special time on this show is. Cue Kevin Owens to Stun Miz and leave him laying, promising to take out Roman Reigns at the Rumble.

Royal Rumble rundown.

US Title: Bobby Lashley vs. Austin Theory

Lashley is challenging and this is No DQ. Lashley goes with the power to start and clotheslines him out to the floor. The posting rocks Theory and we take an early break. Back with Theory slipping out of the delayed suplex and catching Lashley with the rolling dropkick for a stagger.

Lashley is fine enough to send him to the apron for a running forearm and the table is sent inside. The Hurt Lock is broken up but Lashley sends him face first into a chair in the corner. Lashley loads up the table, only to get sprayed with a fire extinguisher. A whip into the steps keeps Lashley in trouble and we take a break.

Back with Lashley hitting a superplex, leaving both of them down. The spear through the table in the corner is broken up and Theory kicks him low. Lashley is fine enough to put Theory through another table...and Brock Lesnar is here. The F5 plants Lashley and another one to Theory puts him on top of Lashley to retain at 14:23.

Rating: C+. You almost have to expect that Lesnar is going to show up somewhere in there on these shows and going after Lashley again isn't a surprise. Given that Lashley mentioned a rematch with Lesnar was coming soon, they were kind of

telegraphing the whole thing. That should be a heck of a fight, though this one was only pretty good, with Theory retaining in the right result.

Overall Rating: B. This was kind of an all over the place show, but the biggest problem was the first hour, as nothing was touching that Bloodline segment and the Tag Team Title match. Other than that, you had a few random cameos from the legends and a bunch of classic stills, but the majority of the show was just an amped up Raw. I liked more than enough of it for the show to be a success, but it wasn't quite as much of a nostalgia trip as I was expecting.

Results

Usos b. Judgment Day – 1D to Dominik

Seth Rollins/Street Profits b. Imperium – Frog splash to Vinci

Bianca Belair b. Sonya Deville – KOD

Austin Theory b. Bobby Lashley – F5

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