

Monday Night Raw – May 8, 2023: All New With The Old People

Monday Night Raw

Date: May 8, 2023

Location: Vystar Veterans Memorial Coliseum, Jacksonville, Florida

Commentators: Corey Graves, Kevin Patrick

It's tournament time as we are getting at least two matches in the tournament to crown a new World Heavyweight Champion. In addition, we have the new Raw roster after the Draft so everything needs to settle in. On top of that, it's also the first show after Backlash so we could be in for a very busy night. Let's get to it.

[Here is Backlash if you need a recap.](#)

We open with a look at the people involved in the tournament, all of whom could be the first World Champion.

Here is Cody Rhodes for a chat. He is happy to be back in Jacksonville, where he helped make a lot of memories during the pandemic. In addition, after Backlash, Cody knows what Brock Lesnar is made of. How you ask? It was all over his hands, but he won anyway. With Lesnar in the rear view mirror, it's time for the tournament, which will not end until Rhodes is announced as the new champion. We see the brackets, and now, LET THE TOURNAMENT BEGIN!

World Heavyweight Championship Tournament First Round: Damian Priest vs. Seth Rollins vs. Shinsuke Nakamura

Before the match, we get a look at Bad Bunny beating Damian Priest at Backlash. As a result, Priest is ready to win the

match because either he or Finn Balor is going to be the next champion. Priest starts fast and knocks both of them into a corner. Some running shoulders connect but Nakamura is back with a kick to the head. Rollins knocks Priest outside and a quick double teaming puts him down again as we take a break.

Back with Priest and Rollins slugging it out until Nakamura comes back in. Rollins knocks both of them outside and the suicide dives are on. They get back in and Priest misses a charge in the corner, allowing Nakamura to hit his running knee in the corner. Priest punches Nakamura down though and hits a lifting Downward Spiral for two on Rollins. Nakamura kicks both of them down but can't followup and we get a breather.

Some kicks drop Priest and Rollins knocks Nakamura down as well. Priest is back up to crotch Rollins on top but seems to be favoring his knee a bit. Rollins is fine enough to Stomp Priest for two, with Nakamura making the save. Priest clotheslines Nakamura down and sends Rollins outside, only to get pulled into a kneebar from Nakamura. Rollins breaks that up and Pedigrees Nakamura to advance at 13:14.

Rating: B. It was a match that has been done better before, but what matters is that it felt like a match that mattered. There was an atmosphere to this one and it made the match that much more interesting. I'm not sure how much sense it makes for Nakamura to get pinned on his debut, but at least they got the most logical winner.

Imperium warns everyone that Gunther will arrive next week before running into Sami Zayn/Kevin Owens. They aren't interested, but Imperium doesn't like the disrespect. Sami says they can come back in five minutes but gets a finger in his face. Imperium says they can take the titles but Owens wants to know what is up with these people having henchmen and the challenge is on for tonight.

Otis vs. Mustafa Ali

Maxxine Dupri and Chad Gable are here with Otis, who shoulders Ali down without much effort. Ali fights back up but gets crushed in the corner again. Otis loads up the Caterpillar but Gable and Dupri argue over whether or not he should. Instead Otis misses a charge into the post, allowing Ali to hit the 450 for the pin at 2:16. We seem to get one step closer to Otis having to decide and that could make for an interesting moment.

The Miz promises to win the tournament and the title.

World Heavyweight Championship Tournament First Round: The Miz vs. Finn Balor vs. Cody Rhodes

They start fast with Balor clotheslining Rhodes, allowing Miz to get two off a rollup. Cody sends both of them outside for the big suicide dive and we take a break. Back with Rhodes dropkicking both of them down, setting up a double Cody Cutter (almost Cody Stunner). There's the Disaster Kick for two on Balor but Miz is back in to take them both down.

The Skull Crushing Finale doesn't work on Cody, who clotheslines Miz to the floor. Balor takes Cody down but misses the Coup de Grace, allowing Miz to hit the Finale for two. Rhodes breaks that up and hits the series of Cross Rhodes on Miz...but here is Brock Lesnar to pull Cody out. The F5 drops Rhodes, leaving Balor to hit the Coup de Grace on Miz to advance at 9:34.

Rating: B-. This wasn't quite as good as the opener, but Balor vs. Rollins should make for a fine showdown. Miz was there to take the fall and Lesnar was there to take out Cody, which makes sense for him after Backlash. This was more about getting Rollins an opponent than anything else, but it worked well for what they could do.

Post match Lesnar grabs the mic and says look at this face

(complete with stitches on the forehead) before asking what Cody wants to talk about. Lesnar wants to talk about ME ME ME because he wants a fight with Cody at Night of Champions. Lesnar leaves as Cody is tended to. That's about par for the course from Lesnar, who is somehow one of the more logical people in WWE.

Rhea Ripley vs. Dana Brooke

Non-title. Ripley knocks her down to start and shrugs off a quick comeback attempt. The Riptide into the Prism Trap finishes Brooke at 1:39.

Post match Ripley hits another Riptide into the Prism Trap and...Natalya makes the save. I have no idea who thinks Ripley having to face Natalya is a good thing, but that's what we seem to be getting now, because Natalya must be around no matter what.

Video on the NXT stars coming up to the main roster via the Draft.

Zoey Stark doesn't seem impressed by Nikki Cross' general existence, setting up a match for later.

We look at last week's European tour.

Kevin Owens/Sami Zayn vs. Imperium

Non-title. Sami works on Kaiser's arm to start but it's off to Vinci. A clothesline takes him down but Vinci hits one of his own to take over. We take a break and come back with Zayn kicking Vinci away, allowing the tag to Owens to clean house. The Swanton gets two with Vinci making a save, setting up a clothesline/legsweep combination for two on Owens. A double clotheslines allows...almost a double tag as Vinci knocks Sami off the apron just in time. The Imperial Bomb is blocked and Owens Stuns Kaiser to the floor. A superkick to Vinci sets up the Helluva Kick for the pin at 9:50.

Rating: B-. Another loss for newcomers, albeit to bigger stars. You don't want Owens and Zayn losing, but it might not have been the brightest idea to have them facing Imperium in their first week on the new roster. Owens and Zayn need challengers and Imperium isn't likely to be part of that list at the moment. Why burn someone off that fast?

Sonya Deville and Chelsea Green have a petition to get a Women's Tag Team Title shot but Indi Hartwell, Dexter Lumis, Candice LeRae and Johnny Gargano (all previously part of The Way in NXT) aren't convinced.

We look at the Bloodline defeating Kevin Owens/Sami Zayn/Matt Riddle at Backlash.

Zoey Stark vs. Nikki Cross

Stark starts fast with a hard clothesline and a springboard flip dive makes it worse. A chinlock doesn't last long for Stark but she superkicks Cross back down. The Z360 (a flip into a knee to the face) finishes Cross at 2:20.

Rhea Ripley, with Dominik Mysterio, is asked about feeling pressure but Xavier Woods and Akira Tozawa interrupt. Dominik vs. Woods is made for later, with Rhea accepting on "Dom Dom's" behalf.

Here is Trish Stratus (with a Becky Lynch missing person shirt on) to say she is concerned about how Lynch is missing. Everyone should be saying "Thank You Trish" for trying to find her, but at the end of it all, she is going to be found in some corner of Iowa, crying again. No one is going to steal Trish's spotlight but here is Becky.....'s music for a fake out. Trish talks about her daughter wanting a doll that she was going to call Becky Lynch, because she was pretty and...now the real Becky comes out to wreck Trish in a hurry.

Cody Rhodes is getting checked on in the trainer's room with Sami Zayn/Kevin Owens staying with him.

Dominik Mysterio vs. Xavier Woods

Rhea Ripley is here too. Woods grabs a headlock to slow Mysterio down to start, followed by a dropkick to make it better. Dominik sends him into the corner and blows a kiss to Ripley, only to have Woods break up the 619. Woods' running knees to the back set up a high crossbody but Dominik sends him over the top and down onto the steps as we take a break.

Back with Woods fighting back and hitting the Honor Roll to drop Mysterio. A springboard tornado DDT plants Mysterio again but Woods gets elbowed in the face. Woods manages to drape him over the top for a middle rope dropkick to the back. The Limit Breaker misses though and Dominik grabs a rollup (with tights) for the pin at 10:36.

Rating: C. Not much to see here as it was a thrown together way to get Dominik a win. That's not a bad thing either, as he has to have something other than his feud with Rey to do around here. You also have to give him some wins over some credible opponents, such as here or the one over Johnny Gargano a few weeks ago. It might not have been the most exciting, but it can pay some dividends.

Jinder Mahal and Indus Shera are all menacing and evil.

Miz yells at Shinsuke Nakamura for not having his back. Nakamura sets up a match between them for next week, promising that it will be awesome.

Chelsea Green and Sonya Deville continue looking for signatures but run into Liv Morgan and Raquel Rodriguez. They two of them would be happy to sign, which has the villains rather happy. Apparently the petition is for a match with Damage Ctrl. Ok then.

Cody Rhodes is all upset but now Brock Lesnar has attacked him from behind twice for no reason. Is it because he's all upset about not being the star anymore? That's why Brock is

attacking him, so let's fight.

World Heavyweight Championship Tournament Semifinals: Finn Balor vs. Seth Rollins

Rollins grabs a hammerlock to start as commentary talks about their Summerslam 2016 Universal Title match. Balor fights back and takes him to the floor, where a powerbomb against the barricade (how Rollins hurt Balor in 2016) drops Rollins and we take a break. Back with Rollins getting in a shot of his own but the frog splash (while favoring the arm) only hits raised knees.

Balor goes to the Fujiwara armbar but Rollins slips out and hits a superkick for two. They head back to the floor and ram each other into the apron, with Rollins getting the better of things. Back in and an exchange of kicks to the head gives us a double knockdown but Balor rolls through for the double stomp to take over. The Coup de Grace is broken up with a superplex but the Falcon Arrow is countered into 1916 for two more. Rollins pulls him down and hits a one armed Pedigree for two, followed by the Stomp for the pin at 13:45.

Rating: B. These two having a good match isn't shocking in the slightest as they're both that talented. Rollins continues to feel like the logical choice to win the whole thing, if nothing else because of the resume that he already has. It would give the title some instant credibility, if nothing else because he is the one guy that Reigns hasn't beaten during the title run. For now though, at least he had a heck of a match here with Balor, who can make almost anyone look good.

Overall Rating: B. This was a rather strange show as it was focused around the tournament, which was quite good, but everything else felt like they were hitting the reset button. Some new stars were introduced and a lot of them lost, while some of them were thrown into matches which were made earlier in the day. It felt like the setup for this show was "it's

tournament night” and the rest of the details were just kind of thrown together. The action carried this show well, but I’m not exactly thrilled with where everything else might be going in the next few weeks.

Results

Seth Rollins b. Shinsuke Nakamura and Damian Priest – Pedigree to Nakamura

Mustafa Ali b. Otis – 450

Finn Balor b. The Miz and Cody Rhodes – Coup de Grace to Miz

Rhea Ripley b. Dana Brooke – Prism Trap

Kevin Owens/Sami Zayn b. Imperium – Helluva Kick to Vinci

Zoey Stark b. Nikki Cross – Z360

Dominik Mysterio b. Xavier Woods – Rollup with tights

Seth Rollins b. Finn Balor – Stomp

WWE, 2023, Monday Night Raw, Otis, Chad Gable, Maxxine Dupri, Kevin Owens, Sami Zayn, Imperium, Cody Rhodes, Damian Priest, Seth Rollins, Shinsuke Nakamura, Mustafa Ali, The Miz, Finn Balor, Rhea Ripley, Dana Brooke, Natalya, Zoey Stark, Nikki Cross, Chelsea Green Sonya Deville, Xia Li, Johnny Gargano, Candice LeRae, Indi Hartwell, Dexter Lumis, Trish Stratus, Dominik Mysterio, Xavier Woods, Akira Tozawa, Indus Sher, Jinder Mahal, Liv Morgan, Raquel Rodriguez,

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