

Monday Night Raw – July 31, 2023: It Could Be Five Hours

Monday Night Raw

Date: July 31, 2023

Location: Toyota Center, Houston, Texas

Commentators: Corey Graves, Kevin Patrick

It's the last Raw before Summerslam and that means tonight is going to be about finalizing a bunch of the stories that have already been set up. That could make for some interesting situations as there might even be something else added. If nothing else, the Summerslam battle royal needs some entrants. Let's get to it.

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

Here is Logan Paul to get things going. Paul insults the fans' intelligence but says he's here for Ricochet. Last week, Paul was victimized and ABUSED by Ricochet, who attacked him from behind. Summerslam is going to be the most viral WWE match in history but here is Ricochet to interrupt. Ricochet talks about how Paul is trying to fool these people but yes, their match will be viral. He doesn't like anything about Paul, who he sees as a horrible human being, but he can respect the athleticism.

Paul says Ricochet is the best athlete in WWE...and then Paul showed up. We see a clip of their mid-air collision at the Royal Rumble but they do have a fist bump. Paul has one more thing though: he hopes Ricochet isn't upset when ring announcer Samantha Irvin (Ricochet's fiance), says Paul is the winner. The fight is on and Ricochet goes rather fast, only to get punched out of the air. As usual, Paul has more "it" than almost anyone around and this was rather fun, even if Ricochet isn't a great brawler.

We look at Drew McIntyre beating Ludwig Kaiser last week.

Gunther isn't happy with Imperium. Tonight, Kaiser can make it up by beating up Matt Riddle, while he'll deal with McIntyre on Sunday. Gunther sneering at people is always great.

Matt Riddle vs. Ludwig Kaiser

The rest of Imperium is here too as Kaiser cranks on a headlock to start. A headscissors has Riddle in trouble until he fights up and misses a kick to the head. Back up and Riddle grabs a gutwrench suplex, only to be sent into the post. One heck of a dropkick puts Riddle on the floor but Riddle manages to score with the kick. The Floating Bro wipes out Kaiser again and we take a break.

Back with Riddle striking away, including the Pele. The exploder into a German suplex gets two but Kaiser is back up with a clothesline. Riddle hits a wind up knee but the Bro Derek is broken up. Giovanni Vinci's distraction doesn't work as it's a powerbomb into the Final Flash for a close two. A leg lariat rocks Kaiser again but he avoids the moonsault and kicks Riddle in the face. Kaiser hits a wind up DDT to finish Riddle clean at 11:02.

Rating: B. This turned into a heck of a match as Kaiser got to showcase himself in a way you don't often see. At the same time, this was the Riddle that works rather well, as he got to drop all the goofy stuff and showcase how talented of an athlete he really is. This was rather good stuff and Kaiser's best stuff on the main roster, if not anywhere so far.

We look back at the Alpha Academy vs. the Viking Raiders.

Logan Paul thought Ricochet was always going to be a step ahead of him but he just laid Ricochet out. Now Ricochet is going to look like...a full grown fetus?

Long video on Cody Rhodes vs. Brock Lesnar.

Maxxine Dupri vs. Valhalla

Their respective teams are here too. Dupri slugs away to start but gets sent neck first into the ropes to cut her off. The chinlock goes on but Dupri fights up and drops her again. A not so great Worm (with commentary acknowledging the hitch) connects as everyone brawls on the floor. Gable moonsaults onto the pile, leaving Dupri to slip out of a superplex. A cyclone suplex (electric chair bridging into a suplex) finishes Valhalla at 3:26.

Rating: D. Ok, yes it was bad, but it Dupri's second match and she has never been treated as anything serious. What else were you expecting from someone who celebrated a suplex a few weeks ago? This was goofy fun with the Worm being so bad that it was good for a laugh. Pretty awful match, but I have no idea why that should surprise anyone.

Shinsuke Nakamura and Tommaso Ciampa want to end things and seem to both be in the battle royal.

Here is the Judgment Day for a chat and the fans are rather happy to see Rhea Ripley. Damian Priest talks about the people they have taken out and promise to do the same to Sami Zayn and Seth Rollins tonight...if they show up. Finn Balor talks about how Seth Rollins tries to act insane, but singing and dancing like a clown isn't insanity. No, insanity is waking up every day for seven years and thinking about the career that Rollins took from him. He can't erase those scars, but he can leave Rollins with scars of his own.

Rhea Ripley talks about hurting Liv Morgan and promises to do the same thing to Raquel Rodriguez, who storms the ring and starts the brawl. Ripley is clotheslined outside and sent into various things but Dominik offers a distraction. A hard kick to Ripley's knee takes her down and referees break it up. Sweet goodness this team is awesome, with Ripley being on an entirely different level than anyone else in the women's

division right now.

We get a big video on Shayna Baszler vs. Ronda Rousey, with Rousey talking about seeing Baszler in Strike Force and picking her for her Ultimate Fighter team. Baszler was more experienced but Rousey became a big star much faster. We see clips of the Four Horsewomen, with Baszler talking about how that was just so Rousey could have people to beat up. Where was Rousey in Baszler's fight camps? More on this later, which is good as this was the most interesting thing I've seen about Baszler since she debuted in WWE.

The Alpha Academy is in the battle royal, but Imperium interrupts so Gunther can mock all three of them. Even Chad Gable, a former Olympian, is now a joke. Ludwig Kaiser says Gable couldn't last five minutes with Gunther, so the five minute challenge is on. Gable: "I'LL LAST FIVE HOURS IF I WANT TO!" Everyone else will even stay in the back.

Tommaso Ciampa vs. Shinsuke Nakamura

Bronson Reed is watching in the back as Nakamura starts fast with Good Vibrations. They head to the apron with Nakamura firing off kicks to the chest but Ciampa scores with the running knee to the face. Another running knee connects and we take a break. Back with Ciampa elbowing him to the apron so the Willow's Bell can get two. Nakamura manages a kick to the head into the running knee to the ribs in the corner for two. Ciampa knees him again but the Fairy Tale Ending is countered into a rollup with a handful of trunks to give Nakamura the pin at 8:47.

Rating: C+. The heel turn is probably the best thing that Nakamura can do at the moment as he's been treading water (again) for a long time. Granted it won't last more than a few months as he's so good at being a villain that the fans will turn him back, but at least this gives him something fresh. Ciampa could use something fresh as well, like not losing so

often, but I don't know how likely that is.

Raquel Rodriguez's knee is banged up but Adam Pearce says she can have her match with Rhea Ripley as soon as she is cleared.

Here is Brock Lesnar for the big showdown with Cody Rhodes. Lesnar lifts off his accomplishments and says that he is going to get paid to beat Cody Rhodes up this weekend at Summerslam. That night, Rhodes is going to get paid to get beaten up. He's already been here way too long tonight though, so get Rhodes out here right now.

Lesnar says Rhodes has five seconds so here he is, with a handshake and some off mic trash talk. Lesnar goes to leave but Rhodes takes him down with a dive. A shot with the steps leaves Rhodes laying and holding his arm again...so Lesnar goes back and lays him out one more time. Not the best final push towards the show, but it could have been worse.

Gunther vs. Chad Gable

Non-title with a five minute time limit. Gunther takes him down a few times and teases a half crab, with Gable quickly making the ropes. A test of strength keeps Gable (minus the shoulders) down until Gunther has to stomp him to break the bridge. Gunther twists his feet around Gable's neck as we're halfway through the clock.

Back up and Gable tries a German suplex but gets elbowed in the face. The powerbomb is countered into the ankle lock but Gunther reverses into the sleeper. Gable reverses that into a hurricanrana to the floor though and time expires at 5:00. Gunther DOES NOT ACCEPT THAT and wants more time on the clock so let's keep it going. Gable hits a dropkick on the floor and we take a break.

Back with Gable chopping away, until Gunther shows him how that's done in the corner. Gable snaps him down into a Fujiwara armbar until Gunther snaps off a German suplex for

two. Gunther goes up top but gets superplexed right back down, setting up a German suplex to give Gable his own two. Back up and Gunther kicks him in the head, setting up the huge clothesline for two more. The powerbomb FINALLY finishes Gable at 12:58.

Rating: B. This had a good story and the action to back it up as Gunther was out there working hard with Gable getting to showcase himself. It's almost like this Gable guy, a former Olympian, is rather talented. I'm not sure why he is stuck in tag teams all the time, but he is making them work almost every time. Just let him show what he can do on his own like this more often.

Post match Gunther gets on the announcers' table and says he isn't losing on Saturday at Summerslam. I love when people say WHEN the show is taking place. It's so simple of an idea and takes no effort so why not do it more often?

Cody Rhodes says he's ready to shatter the aura of Brock Lesnar at Summerslam.

Here is Becky Lynch for a chat. She has done everything she needs to in order to face Trish Stratus again so let's do it right now. Cue Trish Stratus and Zoey Stark, with Stratus saying she isn't going to have this match when Becky tells her to. She also isn't a cheater, unlike the Houston Astros. Actually hold on as here is Adam Pearce to say we're doing this right NOW!

Trish Stratus vs. Becky Lynch

Zoey Stark runs in for the DQ at 4 seconds.

Post match Becky fights back and sends Stark into the post. Trish gets in a chair shot though and the villains leave.

Post break, Adam Pearce makes Lynch vs. Stratus again in two weeks, but Stark is barred from ringside.

We get the other part of the Ronda Rousey vs. Shayna Baszler video. Baszler talks about how it was always about Rousey, whether it was as a sparring partner or as the Women's Tag Team Champions, when Rousey needed Baszler because Rousey had ticked everyone off. Rousey tells a story about how a kind king gave everything to everyone, but then an entitled stable boy killed him.

That's what Baszler tried to do to Rousey, with Baszler saying Rousey has never given anything back to her. Baszler, sounding a bit choked up, says she is done riding in the backseat. Rousey talks about how she fights wanting to win every time and losing for even a second hurts her. Baszler loves Rousey's daughter (her goddaughter) but she is going to hate Baszler for what she does to Rousey. Awesome stuff here and well done on getting me more interested.

The fight is officially under MMA rules.

Summerslam rundown.

Sami Zayn/Seth Rollins vs. Judgment Day

Zayn and Rollins start the fight on the floor, with Rollins chasing Finn Balor to the back. We take a break before the bell and come back joined in progress, with Dominik hammering away on Rollins in the corner. Priest come in to toss Zayn into the corner, where Zayn manages a few right hands of his own.

A middle rope elbow to the head lets the good guys start in on Priest's arm before it's quickly back to Dominik. Rollins misses a charge into the corner and gets kicked in the head, leaving Priest to knock Zayn outside. Rollins gets away and loads up a springboard but Balor is back to pull him down as we take a break. Back with Zayn coming in off a diving tag and getting to clean house. Dominik comes in and gets in a cheap shot but Zayn blasts him with a clothesline.

Rollins comes back in to pick up the pace, including the suicide dive to send Priest over the announcers' table. Back in and Rollins hits a superkick but Rollins breaks up the stomp. Zayn drops Dominik on the floor so Rhea Ripley comes over to yell at him. That's enough for Balor to dropkick Zayn into the barricade (there is no way the referee didn't notice that) and Rollins gets Razor's Edged. That's enough to load up the cash-in but Rollins superkicks the case into Priest's face. Zayn kicks Balor down and Rollins stomps Priest for the pin at 12:08.

Rating: B. Another good match in a series of them this week with pretty much all action throughout. You don't see that o Raw very often and it was a lot of tune this time around. While it's a shame that Kevin Owens is hurt, it is nice to have something fresh in there and Rollins ties into everything nicely. High energy match here and that made for a nice main event.

Overall Rating: B. Oddly enough for Raw, this was a show that worked because of what was going on in the ring. The action was (mostly) rather good tonight with the women's matches being the low, though rather short, points. Other than that, the Baszler vs. Rousey stuff was good and Summerslam is looking like a pretty nice show. I'm not expecting this kind of show to continue but for once, it was nice to be interested in the wrestling throughout.

Results

Ludwig Kaiser b. Matt Riddle – Wind up DDT

Maxxine Dupri b. Valhalla – Cyclone suplex

Shinsuke Nakamura b. Tommaso Ciampa – Rollup with trunks

Gunther b. Chad Gable – Powerbomb

Becky Lynch b. Trish Stratus via DQ when Zoey Star interfered

Sami Zayn/Seth Rollins b. Judgment Day – Stomp to Priest

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