

Monday Night Raw – August 28, 2023: Back To Normal(ish)

Monday Night Raw

Date: August 28, 2023

Location: FedEx Forum, Memphis, Tennessee

Commentators: Michael Cole, Wade Barrett

It's the go home Raw for Payback and the card is mostly set. There are still a few things that need to be either set up or at least finalized a bit more and hopefully that makes for an entertaining show. Odds are we'll also be seeing something in the way of tributes to Bray Wyatt and Terry Funk. Let's get to it.

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

In Memory Of Terry Funk and Bray Wyatt.

Sami Zayn vs. Damian Priest

This is a preview of the newly announced Tag Team Title match at Payback, where Sami and Kevin Owens will defend against Priest and Finn Balor. Priest's headlock doesn't last long as Zayn sends him out to the floor and hits a springboard moonsault. Back in and Priest blasts him with a clothesline, followed by the Broken Arrow for two.

Zayn is sent outside for a Downward Spiral onto the announcers' table and we take a break. We come back with Zayn hitting a sunset bomb for two and the Blue Thunder Bomb gets the same. Zayn exploders him into the corner but here is JD McDonagh for a distraction so Priest can hit South Of Heaven for the pin at 11:30.

Rating: C+. This is the standard way to build towards a Tag Team Title match in WWE and I would bet on an Owens vs. Balor

match later in the night. The McDonagh factor makes it more interesting but we might be waiting to see that one go anywhere. For now though, we got a decent enough match as Priest gets the win while Zayn is protected in a loss.

Post match Priest shoves McDonagh down and leaves, with Kevin Owens coming in to beat McDonagh up again.

Drew McIntyre has a new photo of himself in bright green trunks, which Akira Tozawa finds a bit disturbing. Matt Riddle comes in to suggest they get matching kilts and watch New Day vs. the Viking Raiders tonight.

Video on Raquel Rodriguez wanting to get revenge on Rhea Ripley.

Here is the Miz dressed as LA Knight and we have an impression. Miz mocks the way Knight speaks and switches between YEAH and WHAT. He knows it takes more than a catchphrase to get your support and whips out a bag of LA Knight shirts. If you want a free shirt, give him a H*** YEAH. Miz takes off the gear and talks about how pathetic the fans are. They'll cheer for anything and the party is over when he beats LA Knight for good. You can cheer for catchphrases and losers and in five days, they'll be chanting M-I-Z, YEAH! Miz was fired up here and it worked as usual.

We look back at Shinsuke Nakamura talking about Seth Rollins' back injury.

New Day vs. Viking Raiders

Drew McIntyre and Matt Riddle (taking notes) are at ringside. Woods headlocks Erik to start but it's off to Ivar to take over without much time. That's broken up and Kofi comes back in to strike away. The kick in the corner sets up a high crossbody for two on Ivar, who needs a breather. The big no hands dive takes Ivar out again and we take a break.

Back with Kofi having to dropkick his way out of trouble. Commentary references Barbarian of all people as they talk about Valhalla wearing antlers at ringside and Kofi gets dropped with a forearm for two. Ivar forearms Kofi down and Erik adds a boot as the beating continues. Ivar's chinlock doesn't last long and he misses a sitdown splash.

Kofi gets over to Woods so the pace can be picked up but Erik grabs a full nelson onto a raised knee. Everything breaks down and Kingston is driven into Riddle and McIntyre. The latter throws a chair inside and another hits Woods HARD in the face (he seemed to be aiming for Erik). Ivar dives onto McIntyre and Ragnarok finishes Kofi at 17:08.

Rating: C+. This got a lot of time (likely too much) and was more about Riddle and McIntyre interfering than anything else. McIntyre throwing the chair at Woods' head was a nasty looking crash and should set up a triple threat match. Good stuff here, but it went longer than it needed to.

Post match Kofi, McIntyre and Riddle check on Woods.

Finn Balor and Damian Priest argue about JD McDonagh again and Rhea Ripley has to calm things down again. She already has to deal with Raquel Rodriguez and if the team doesn't walk out of Payback with Gold, there are going to be some changes.

We get the full Bray Wyatt tribute from Smackdown.

Drew McIntyre and Matt Riddle ask Kofi Kingston about Xavier Woods, with Kofi saying he'll be ok. He knows it was an accident because that's not what Drew is about. Next week, Drew and Riddle are dealing with the Viking Raiders.

Here is Imperium for a chat. Gunther, standing on the announcers' table as usual, talks about how Chad Gable defeated him last week...by countout. In reality, Gable won nothing, because Gunther is still the champion. The only thing Gable has achieved is making him mad, and now Gable has his

focus. If Gable is the last thing left between him and the longest title reign in history, so be it. Cue the Alpha Academy, with Gable saying Gunther is making some good points. Next week, Gable is taking the title away.

Chad Gable vs. Ludwig Kaiser

Gable wrestles him down to start and sends things outside for a flip dive off the apron. We take a break and come back with Gable bridging up from a wristlock and taking him down with a drop toehold. Kaiser shoulders him down as well though, only to have Gable come back with a roll into the ankle lock.

That doesn't work either as Kaiser blasts him with a clothesline. The armbars over the ropes slows Kaiser down again but he knocks Gable outside with a heck of a slap. We take another break and come back again with Kaiser dropkicking him out to the floor. Back in and Gable goes after the leg but can't get a German suplex.

Instead Kaiser kicks him in the face for two but gets caught with a neckbreaker. Gable misses the moonsault, only to come back with something like a Gory Stretch into a Dominator for two. A Cactus crossbody puts Kaiser on the floor and Gable moonsaults down onto Kaiser and Giovanni Vinci at the same time. Back in and the ankle lock is broken up so Gable grabs Chaos Theory...but Vinci comes in for the DQ at 18:08.

Rating: C+. Wait what? They had the #1 contender go 18 minutes with the champ's chief goon and then he can't even get a pin? Not only should Gable have won this clean after taking out an interfering Vinci, but he should have done it in about ten minutes less. I don't get this one and it didn't do Gable any favors at all.

Post match the brawl is on with Gunther coming back in. Gunther's powerbomb is countered into an ankle lock but Gable is beaten down anyway.

Here is Seth Rollins to call out Shinsuke Nakamura. After taking his time to soak in some singing, Rollins throws in a YOWIE WOWIE before saying who he is. It has been a long week so he'll get to the point and calls out Nakamura right now. There's no Nakamura, so Rollins is off to drink.

Cue Nakamura on the screen in a video, as he practices with various weapons as well as grappling. The voiceover (with captions) talks about how he is going to stop Rollins. This doesn't impress Rollins, who wants the OLD Nakamura back. A year ago, Rollins would have given him the shirt off his back but not anymore. On Saturday, Rollins will lay him out, so Nakamura will know that he is never getting anything else from him. Cue Nakamura to jump him from behind and whisper something else to Rollins.

Sami Zayn is sick of Judgment Day always using the numbers game to win. We'll do it one more time, but it's going to be in a Steel City Street Fight.

Bronson Reed vs. Tommaso Ciampa

Reed jumps him downing the entrance but gets kneed down as we take a break before the bell. We come back joined in progress with Reed crossbodying him down to cut off an early comeback. Ciampa avoids a charge and manages an Air Raid Crash but Reed is back with a powerbomb. Reed knocks him off the apron and hits a flying shoulder from said apron for the big crash. Back in and Willow's Bell into a running knee to the face gives Ciampa two. Ciampa gets back up and grabs a crucifix bomb for the pin (despite barely being able to get the shoulders down) for the pin at 4:38.

Rating: C. Not much to this one and the ending didn't help things. It feels like these two and a few others have been trading wins for weeks now and no one has really come out looking better. What matters here is Ciampa gets a win for a change, but it doesn't make much of a difference if there is

no follow up.

Becky Lynch is ready for Trish Stratus in a cage and for Zoey Stark in a falls count anywhere match. It's not the easy way and that's fine with her.

Here are Dominik Mysterio and Rhea Ripley for a chat (and NXT Women's Champion Tiffany Stratton is in the crowd). Ripley doesn't think much of Raquel Rodriguez, even if she has a resume of her own. Like being tall! Either way, Ripley is keeping the title at Payback. Cue Rodriguez for the brawl with a fall away slam sending Ripley flying. The Riptide is blocked and Ripley gets clotheslined to the floor.

Trish Stratus and Zoey Stark are ready for Becky Lynch.

Payback rundown.

We get the Terry Funk video tribute from Smackdown.

Zoey Stark vs. Becky Lynch

Falls count anywhere and Trish Stratus is here with Zoey. They both grab kendo sticks to start with Becky beating her down. They head outside where a Trish distraction lets Stark get in a cheap shot. A springboard missile dropkick connects so Trish throws in some chairs...one of which hits Stark in the head (meaning commentary is all over Trish).

There is a pile of chairs in the ring but Lynch pulls her off the top. The Z360 is countered into the Manhandle Slam for two, with Trish making the save. Becky gives chase but has to pull a kendo stick away from Trish. The beating sends Trish up the ramp, only to have Zoey get in a chair shot to the ribs as we take a break.

Back with Becky throwing Zoey over the barricade and back to ringside for a suplex into the barricade. They get back inside where Stark chairs her down again as Michael Cole is standing up on commentary for some reason. A slingshot springboard

corkscrew dive hits the chair on Lynch so Stark goes up again. Becky catches her with a superplex onto the chairs and we head outside.

This time the Manhandle Slam onto the announcers' table is loaded up but Stark escapes and kicks her in the face. Trish is back with a bulldog through a well placed table for a rather delayed two. A double bulldog is broken up and Stark accidentally takes Trish out. The Manhandle Slam off a crate and through a table finishes Stark at 16:11.

Rating: B. They were going for the big fight feel here with Becky overcoming the odds, but that only worked so well as it felt like a handicap match instead of a showdown with Stark. At the same time, this didn't really make me want to see a Lynch vs. Trish cage match, as Trish was mostly vanquished here. This whole feud has been a bit of a mess and I don't see the blowoff on Saturday going great either.

Lynch holds up a BRAY armband to end the show.

Overall Rating: C+. This was an up and down show with the main event being the best match on the card. At the same time, there wasn't much added to Payback, save for a Tag Team Title match which was hardly a surprise. Instead they had a wrestling heavy show this week and that is a nice thing to see every so often. They needed a steady show like this after all of the rough news last week, so this was about as good of a choice as they had available. It worked well enough, but save for the main event, there isn't much you need to see here.

Results

Damian Priest b. Sami Zayn – South Of Heaven

Viking Raiders b. New Day – Ragnarok to Kingston

Chad Gable b. Ludwig Kaiser via DQ when Giovanni Vinci interfered

Tommaso Ciampa b. Bronson Reed – Crucifix bomb

Becky Lynch b. Zoey Stark – Manhandle Slam through a table

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