

Monday Night Raw – January 22, 2024: Ready For Rumble

Monday Night Raw

Date: January 22, 2024

Location: Smoothie King Center, New Orleans, Louisiana

Commentators: Wade Barrett, Michael Cole

This is the go home Raw before the Royal Rumble and while that is big enough, we also have to deal with Seth Rollins and the World Heavyweight Championship. Rollins has suffered a torn MCL and meniscus and that means something is going to have to be done. We're not sure what that is going to include but Rollins is opening the show this week. Let's get to it.

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

Here is Rollins (in an amazing lime green suit) with a big knee brace. Rollins talks about how happy he is to be here and recaps the week, including the knee injury. Last week he messed up his knee on a moonsault and had an MRI, which revealed the extent of the injuries. If he has surgery, he's looking at being out 3-4 months, but we're taking it one day at a time.

Cue Imperium to interrupt, with Rollins saying if Gunther is going to do it, then do it. Gunther says they have been avoiding each other but he respects Rollins for fighting to bring honor to a championship. Just like him. It's kind of pulling the rug out from under him because he is sad at the idea of Rollins missing Wrestlemania. Rollins says Gunther and Imperium should have let him finish: he doesn't care what the doctors say (the fans like that a lot) or how hard he has to rehab and push his knee. He's going to keep his promise and take the title into Wrestlemania, where he will do everything he can to keep the title.

Gunther likes that and says he would do the same thing if he was in Rollins' position. Rollins reminds Gunther of himself, so on Sunday (the show is Saturday but close enough), Gunther is going to win the Royal Rumble and choose Rollins. However, Gunther is going to target his knee and his back and everything that isn't 100%. Rollins appreciates the honesty but Gunther needs to remember who he's coming after. Gunther says Rollins better remember who is coming after him. They shake hands to wrap it up...or in theory at least as here is New Day to jump Imperium for their scheduled match.

So there's your big answer and it makes sense if Rollins wants to do it. At the same time, WWE is going to need a contingency plan in case Rollins can't go and they need to have a cutoff point so something can be announced in time for Wrestlemania. For now though it is exciting as Rollins is a major star and I don't want him to miss Wrestlemania, but we have a long time to go before we get there and quite a bit could change.

New Day vs. Imperium

Joined in progress with Woods getting beaten down in the corner. Kaiser comes in to stomp away as well and Woods is sent outside. A belly to back drop onto the apron has Woods in even more trouble and we take a break. Back with Kofi getting the hot tag and cleaning house, at least until Vinci baseball slides him down. They brawl to the floor with New Day being more aggressive than usual. It's a double countout at 8:48.

Rating: B-. This was a rather aggressive match and some kind of No DQ/street fight rematch wouldn't surprise me. It's almost weird seeing New Day being this aggressive but what we got worked well. At the same time, it's nice to see Imperium having something to do as they have been up and down since coming up to the main roster.

Post match the brawl stays on, with Kaiser and Woods brawling at ringside and the other two going into the crowd. They get

back together with Kaiser grabbing a chair but Woods makes a save. Woods picks Kaiser up and teases putting him into the tech area but Vinci makes the save. Kofi has to save Woods from going through the tech area and all our go crashing through a table. This was a hot segment and the fans were eating it up.

Video on Drew McIntyre vs. Damian Priest.

Rhea Ripley and Priest argue a big, with Priest accusing her of having a big head for being on the cover of WWE2k24. Priest leaves and Ripley tells them to take care of everything else. She wants to see Finn Balor's vicious side, which he'll show her.

Maxxine Dupri is ready for the Royal Rumble, ad her match tonight. The Creeds come in to give her a pep talk.

Ivy Nile vs. Valhalla

There are now some factoids next to the name graphics on the entrances. Valhalla hammers away to start as Nikki Cross is walking back and forth at the entrance (though no one acknowledges her). Nile is knocked outside and dropped again, followed by some ripping at the face back inside. Valhalla sends her to the apron and slowly brought up top, where she hits a top rope bulldog to finish Valhalla at 2:48. This wasn't very good while it lasted, as both of them looked rather unsure of what they were doing.

Jey Uso interrupts New Day to ask about their issues with Imperium. They talk about how serious they can be and they'll prove it. New Day wants the big boss, so Kofi wants an Intercontinental Title shot next week. As they were talking, Damage CTRL could be seen walking around in the background.

Here is Nia Jax for a chat. Jax talks about how she squashed Becky Lynch and Rhea Ripley, which is why it's no surprise that Ripley wants to face Lynch. She promises to kill both of

their dreams this weekend, but here is Lynch to interrupt. Lynch: "Shut up Nia you dope." Lynch knows that the only thing people in the locker room can agree on is that they don't like Jax. She's probably hurt half of them, so of course she has a target on her back. Lynch is ready to see Jax lose, but here is Bayley to interrupt. She's going to win the Rumble and point to the Wrestlemania sign, but the brawl is on instead, with Jax cleaning house.

Rumble By The Numbers:

30 entrants

1,310 entrants

34 winners

2.6% have won

20 have gone on to win the title at Wrestlemania

1 woman to enter at #1 and win

20 eliminations for Ripley all time, a record

1:01:08, Ripley's record time in the Rumble

1:11:40, Gunther's record time in the Rumble

60% of the winners have come from the last ten entrants

#30 has produced the most winners (5)

3 who have won consecutive Royal Rumbles

3 wins for Steve Austin, a record

3rd time Tampa will host the Royal Rumble (1995/2021)

8 eliminations for Shayna Baszler, the most in a single women's match

More numbers later.

Becky Lynch is in the back and runs into Rhea Ripley, who wasn't impressed by what she just saw.

Dominik Mysterio vs. The Miz

JD McDonagh and Finn Balor are here with Mysterio. Earlier today, R-Truth told Miz not to tag in tonight (Miz: "It's a singles match.") and to watch out for the Mysterio guys. R-Truth: "Tom and Nick." Miz: "IT'S ONE GUY!" Dominik starts

fast and knocks Miz to the floor, where the whole team gets to pose for a bit. Back in and Dominik keeps up the beating as this is one sided so far. Miz gets sent outside again and we take an early break.

Back with both of them down and Miz firing off some clotheslines. The Reality Check gets two and Miz dropkicks McDonagh through the ropes. A hurricanrana to the floor takes McDonagh down again and a springboard high crossbody gets two on Mystério back inside. The YES Kicks, including the big one to the head, looks to set up the Skull Crushing Finale but Dominik breaks it up. A Balor enziguri sets up the 619 into the frog splash for the pin at 9:18.

Rating: C+. It only kind of works but there is something fun about watching Miz going more aggressive, especially with the high flying. It was nice to see Dominik get a singles win, even with some help, even though he doesn't have much going on at the moment. For now though, Judgment Day is mainly about whatever R-Truth is doing and that might need to change.

Post match the beatdown is on but DIY makes the save...to almost eerie silence. McDonagh gets out before the Meet In The Middle.

Damian Priest is ready for Drew McIntyre tonight. R-Truth comes in to offer Priest his cut of the merch money but Priest says not now. For now, he's ready for McIntyre, who couldn't handle things when people came back. Tonight, McIntyre is getting his punishment.

Bronson Reed wants to face Jey Uso next week.

Ivar vs. Chad Gable

Ivar starts fast with a Tour of the Islands but Gable strikes away and manages a knockdown. The top rope headbutt connects but Ivar suplexes him to the apron, setting up a splash as we take a break. Back with Gable managing a top rope superplex

but Ivar grabs a tiger driver for two of his own. Gable victory rolls him into the ankle lock, with Ivar powering out.

Another ankle lock is broken up so Ivar hits a sitout spinebuster for two. The Doomsault misses though and Gable grabs a bridging German suplex for two more. Ivar catches him up top but Gable flips over him and hits a German suplex out of the corner. Cue Valhalla for a distraction though, allowing Ivar to knock Gable down. The Doomsault is good for the pin on Gable at 10:59.

Rating: B. As has been the case for a very long while, power vs. speed is one of those things that is going to work almost every single time. That was the case again here, as Gable was doing everything he could and dealt with a monster like Ivar as well as possible. Ivar has been getting a few wins here and there and it is nice to have a new monster on the show. Rather solid match here with a trade of big spots, which is how you make an entertaining match with people like these two.

Here is Cody Rhodes for a chat but CM Punk (scheduled to be face to face with Cody) interrupts before he can say anything. Punk talks about how they took different paths to get here and wants to let it sink in a minute. Rhodes asks what Punk wants to talk about, so Punk picks Cody's dad. Punk tells a story about Cody debuting in OVW and Dusty Rhodes asked Punk to keep an eye on him.

It wasn't hard as Cody didn't get into a lot of the vices their fellow wrestlers did but here is Cody as a main eventer. It's a proud moment for Punk, but on Saturday, it's going to feel like he's breaking a promise. In the Royal Rumble, Punk isn't looking out for Cody, but rather looking for him. Punk promises to go on to main event Wrestlemania, which Cody accepts.

Cody talks about how he's tried to come here and be a light in the darkness. It's true that he was a nepotism hire in OVW and

Punk treated him like a peer when he didn't have to. They became friends but that is bittersweet because there are no friends in the Royal Rumble. Punk asks what happens on Sunday morning when the Rumble over. Cody grew up in this business and knows what it is about. Punk talks about how he wasn't born into wrestling and brings up Dusty's famous catchphrases...which describe him more than Cody. Punk: "I'm more of the American Dream than you are."

Cody gets more serious and brings up the Pipe Bomb, which Punk said and inspired a generation (including Cody) but then he left for a long time. Cody did everything Punk talked about doing, which makes him more Punk than Punk. That makes Punk take off the jacket and talk about how he's the bigger star coming to take everything Cody wants. Cody quotes his dad quoting John Wayne: "Courage is being scared and saddling up anyways."

The only direction Cody can go is forward into the Royal Rumble, and that includes going through Punk. Cody goes to leave and bumps him, with Punk spinning him around to go face to face but nothing gets physical. This had its moments and there were some very good lines, but this didn't feel natural, at least partially because they were advertised in advance about being out there together.

We look at Hulk Hogan winning his first World Title forty years ago (tomorrow), before transitioning into a look at the Royal Rumble. Hogan teases being in the match himself.

Candice LeRae/Indi Hartwell vs. Shayna Baszler/Zoey Stark

Baszler takes over on LeRae to start before it's off to Hartwell, who kicks Stark in the face. The villains are in trouble as we take an early break. Back with LeRae getting to clean house, meaning Stark has to make a save. Hartwell is knocked down and the Z360 finishes LeRae at 6:32. Not enough shown to rate but it was pretty short and to the point.

Post match Kayden Carter and Katana Chance come in for the staredown, only to have the Kabuki Warriors (getting a Women's Tag Team Title shot on Friday) to jump the champs.

Drew McIntyre talks about how important it was to be on top during the pandemic and Damian Priest isn't there yet.

Damage CTRL runs into Natalya and Tegan Nox and arguing ensues. Adam Pearce comes in to say save it for the Rumble, with Bayley saying they'll be around more often when the Kabuki Warriors win the Tag Team Titles. With the women gone, Jinder Mahal and Indus Sher come in. Mahal wants to know what Pearce has planned so Pearce says meet him in his office.

Rumble By The Numbers Part 2:

9 two time winners

13 eliminations in one men's Rumble by Brock Lesnar

Natalya is one of four women to compete in all women's Rumbles

45 eliminations by Kane over 18 Rumbles, both records

3,653 days since CM Punk has been in a Royal Rumble

34,000,000 social media engagements for the Logan Paul vs. Ricochet clip from last year

9 people have won their first World Title off a Royal Rumble win

60% of winners from the last five years have won the World Title at Wrestlemania

Royal Rumble rundown.

Here's what's coming on next week's show.

Drew McIntyre vs. Damian Priest

Priest hammers him into the corner to start but McIntyre is back with a running clothesline. They're already out to the floor, with Priest getting caught diving off the steps. An overhead belly to belly drops Priest again but he's right back with the Broken Arrow onto the announcers' table.

We take a break and come back with Priest working on the back until stereo big boots leave them both down. A neckbreaker puts Priest down again but he avoids the Claymore. McIntyre grabs a spinebuster for two but Priest is right back up with a shot to the head. Another Broken Arrow gives Priest two and he knocks McIntyre outside.

A dive takes him down but here is R-Truth to offer Priest his money again. Priest shoves him away but the distraction lets McIntyre hit Future Shock. Truth tries to put the money in the Money in the Bank briefcase but has to ask Priest the password. McIntyre punches Truth down, with the distraction letting Priest hit South Of Heaven. Priest yells at Truth and throws him out, allowing McIntyre to hit the Claymore for the pin at 13:02.

Rating: B-. This was a good hoss match for the most part but then it wound up turning into something of a mess by the end. The R-Truth stuff is hilarious but it didn't really fit here, which is where having comedy can become an issue. McIntyre getting a win is a good thing and Priest lost via shenanigans, but it was still kind of a jarring twist.

Overall Rating: B. The show was almost all about the Royal Rumble and that's all it needed to be. That means the majority was rather good, as it made me wonder who was going to win the Royal Rumble, which seems to have several options. It set up some things for the future as well while also giving us the big Cody vs. Punk showdown. Now if we had a good reason for Priest to not cash in on the injured Rollins, it would be that much better.

Results

New Day vs. Imperium went to a double countout

Ivy Nile b. Valhalla – Top rope bulldog

Dominik Mysterio b. The Miz – Frog splash

Ivar b. Chad Gable – Doomsault

Shayna Baszler/Zoey Stark b. Candice LeRae/Indi Hartwell –

Z360 to Stark

Drew McIntyre b. Damian Priest – Claymore

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