

Monday Night Raw – March 25, 2024: When Wrestling Doesn't Matter

Monday Night Raw

Date: March 25, 2024

Location: Allstate Arena, Chicago, Illinois

Commentators: Michael Cole, Pat McAfee

We are less than two weeks away from Wrestlemania and that means things are mostly together for the show. In this case though we have a special attraction as Chicago's own CM Punk is here for a special appearance. Other than that, we might even get something else added to Wrestlemania. Let's get to it.

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

We open with a recap of Cody Rhodes going face to face with Roman Reigns but both of them had backup, leading to a standoff to end the show.

Here is Cody Rhodes to get things going. Rhodes talks about how we are in that weird place before Wrestlemania and that means all the talk is done. After a quick hello to Pat McAfee and Michael Cole, Rhodes talks about his meting with Reigns on Smackdown. The thing is, when Rhodes makes a promise, he tends to keep it. The other night a fan asked him to be the best man at his wedding so he's going to do it, and pay for the bachelor party. He's going to a five year old's birthday and he's sending the Wrestling Club to Wrestlemania (both nights).

Rhodes is here because the champ isn't and he is going to Wrestlemania because he won the Royal Rumble twice in a row. After last year, he knows he can't do it alone and asks the fans if they will ride with him. If Rhodes is going to point

at the sign, he wants everyone to do it with him...and here is the Rock (unadvertised) to interrupt.

The fans are rather impressed and we get a rather long staredown. The CM PUNK chants start up and Rock puts his hands behind his back. He leans in and whispers something to Rhodes before getting out of the ring and heading up the aisle. Cody seems very confused and we take a break. Rock didn't say a word that we could hear. That's an interesting way to go and there is a very good chance we'll get more on this later, either tonight or on Smackdown.

Post break Rock is asked what he said to Rhodes. Rock says go ask him.

Judgment Day is tired of Dominik Mysterio and JD McDonagh not carrying their weight but Damian Priest has a plan to get an advantage at Wrestlemania.

Ricochet vs. JD McDonagh

Dominik Mysterio is here with McDonagh. Ricochet wastes no time in kicking him outside, setting up the early dive as we take a break. Back with McDonagh sending him hard into the corner and grabbing a waistlock. The standing moonsault misses though and Ricochet hits an elbow for the double knockdown. Ricochet is back up with the springboard clothesline and a standing shooting star gets two. McDonagh manages a Spanish Fly for two of his own and he takes Ricochet up top, only to get super poisonranaed back down.

The Recoil connects but Dominik puts a foot on the rope. Ricochet's springboard 450 hits raised knees though and we take a break. Back with McDonagh getting two off a sitout powerbomb and tries the Devlin Slide, which is reversed into a Canadian Destroyer (McAfee LOSES IT over that). Dominik offers another distraction and gets ejected, leaving Ricochet to hit the shooting star press on a standing McDonagh (dang) for the pin at 14:20.

Rating: B-. The Ricochet reheating continues and that is not the worst thing. There is always a place for someone who can fly as well as he can and it was a great showcase. At the same time, Judgment Day is having some trouble and it is not likely going to go well for McDonagh and Mysterio. For now though, nice match, with Ricochet doing some insane stuff, including that finish.

Here is CM Punk and yeah the fans seem to remember him. Punk talks about how glad he is to be here and to answer some questions, yes he is going to be at Wrestlemania. No his elbow isn't great yet but his mouth works. He wishes Wrestlemania was here in Chicago ("Hint hint.") and wonders about some roles he could have at Wrestlemania. Punk talks to Pat McAfee and says he isn't a daily listener (Punk: "I listen to the Experience and the Drive Thru.") but Roman Reigns was a guest on McAfee's show.

Punk knows he'll see Reigns one day, along with Seth Rollins (who wears high heels and is now taller than Punk) and the Rock, who hasn't said a word to him since he's been back. Then there is Drew McIntyre, who Punk wants out here like a man. Cue McIntyre (Punk demands his song be turned off) and Punk wants him in the ring. McIntyre calls this divine intervention and brings up the "INJURE CM PUNK" line on his shirt.

Punk says he's never had to put another man's name on a shirt to sell it. That makes McIntyre take the shirt off, revealing the CM Punk grave shirt instead. McIntyre: "For someone who is all about straightedge and doesn't drink or do drugs, you spend a lot of time in rehab." McIntyre says he went into the Elimination Chamber and got hurt but thinking about Punk inspired him to win. Punk says come in here and say that to his good ear. He even lays down so McIntyre can get in but McIntyre sits down on the announcers' table (McIntyre: "Don't shoot up my kilt you perv.") and says he was the chosen one.

Punk wants to know who chose him, though McIntyre moves on and

offers him the spot as guest commentator when he wins the World Heavyweight Championship. Cue Seth Rollins to interrupt and he immediately has the staredown with Punk. Rollins says this is his show, but Punk says this is his city. We get a quick poll about Punk being on commentary at Wrestlemania but the fans want him to be a referee.

Rollins points at the bad arm and says that's Punk's counting arm. Punk drops to the mat and counts three with his good (left) arm, though he doesn't think he could be fair with these two "dips****." McIntyre: "PG brother." Rollins: "You want to know what I think Punk?" Punk: "Nope." Rollins finds that appropriate because he doesn't think anything of Punk, which is funny because he doesn't need Punk to have a moment at Wrestlemania.

The way things are going for Punk, this is the closest he's coming to being a World Champion again, so Rollins needs Punk to stay out of his way. Punk is in for commentary, because he's the only thing that could make these two interesting. He goes to leave but McIntyre says cut the music because Punk doesn't get the last word since he's not even in the match. McIntyre rants about Punk but gets kicked by Rollins, setting up the Stomp to wrap it up.

This was OUTSTANDING stuff as you had McIntyre and Punk throwing one bomb after another at each other and being really entertaining. Then Rollins came in and while it fit, it really illustrated how much of a third wheel he feels like in this story. While that's better than being the fourth wheel in the Cody vs. Rock/Reigns story, he is pretty much only here because Punk can't wrestle. Thankfully this was more serious Rollins, but he was in over his head with these two.

The best thing about this is it felt like the three of them were given minimal instructions on what to say and just filled in the gaps themselves. That often makes for the best segments, as you had people who know how to talk doing so very

well and making me want to see whatever they do next. Punk is about two months into rehab as well and his feuds with both are still hot, so they've already survived a lot of the gap of Punk being on the shelf. Heck of a segment here.

Shinsuke Nakamura is ready for Jey Uso.

Ivy Nile vs. Candice LeRae

Maxxine Dupri and Indi Hartwell are at ringside. Nile starts fast and hammers away but Candice is back up to send her outside. Hold on though as Candice is holding her knee, seemingly for Hartwell to cheat...but she doesn't. Instead Nile charges back in and gets rolled up (with feet on the ropes) to give Candice the pin at 1:54.

New Day and DIY argue over how dumb their names are. Awesome Truth comes in to say the match will be awesome, though R-Truth thinks this is New Day vs. DX. Oh and he thinks Pat McAfee is JBL.

New Day vs. DIY

Awesome Truth is on commentary. Kofi and Ciampa go to the mat to start but Gargano is in with a clothesline. R-Truth is happy to see Shawn Michaels in there (just go with it) as Gargano is taken into the corner for the Unicorn Stampede. Gargano is sent outside and we take a break. Back with Ciampa hitting running corner clotheslines, setting up some running kicks to Kofi in the corner. Gargano hits a suicide dive but cue Judgment Day for the DQ at 6:26. Not enough shown to rate but they were just warming up anyway.

Post match the beatdown is on with Truth going nuts on commentary, even as Miz gets in and is taken out. Judgment Day surrounds Truth (who insists we go to a break) and beats him down as well, leaving the champs to stand tall.

Cody Rhodes won't repeat what Rock said but will say it was a

promise Rock can't keep.

Gunther isn't worried about what Sami Zayn said last week because they were empty words. We are in Chicago tonight and the people here don't believe Sami can beat him. Sami can't beat Bronson Reed tonight either.

Andrade vs. Givanni Vinci

Vinci wastes no time in sending him into the ropes but Andrade chills in the ropes. Andrade knocks him outside for the moonsault, followed by the double moonsault for two back inside. A running boot staggers Vinci but he runs Andrade over as we take a break. We come back with Andrade grabbing some dragon screw legwhips and the running knees in the corner get two. Vinci hits a heck of a clothesline but Andrade elbows him in the head. A lifting double underhook swinging suplex (The Message) finishes for Andrade at 7:10.

Rating: C+. They didn't have much time to go anywhere here and the break didn't make it any better. As is always the case, there is little that can be done when a match barely breaks seven minutes and about half of that is spent in commercial. Andrade still needs something to do, but winning matches is always a good start.

Here is Rhea Ripley, with Dominik Mysterio, for a chat. She wants more attention and feels that Becky Lynch is fighting everyone else and not paying attention to her. Ripley could have gotten Lynch's attention by attacking her during a match but instead Ripley is being respectful. We're so close to Wrestlemania and Lynch should be paying more attention, so here is Lynch to interrupt.

Lynch talks about how she is here when Ripley is fresh rather than waiting for her to finish a twenty minute match. She couldn't do that, mainly because Ripley never wrestles on Raw anyway. Ripley doesn't need to wrestle before the biggest match of her career because all she has to do is post a video

online and these freaks will eat it up. Lynch says they have different interpretations of what it means to be a champion.

To Lynch, it's all about working hard to be the best and the long game is about skill, merit and survival. It's about being able to fight back when the chips are down and you're not the chosen one anymore. At Wrestlemania, she is going to give Ripley a new experience. Ripley gets that Lynch is a survivor who has been through everything, but Lynch is really a cockroach: hard to kill but not impossible.

Ripley wants Lynch to survive just enough though, so she can sit on her couch with her daughter and call Ripley Mami. Lynch calls that Ripley's one pass to mention her daughter and goes into a rather serious rant about how she regrets her father not getting to meet her daughter. It might be a joke to Ripley but it is not a joke to her. There is no going back and at Wrestlemania, neither of them will ever be the same again.

We get the staredown but Ripley backs off. Dominik gets between them so Lynch drops him, meaning the fight with Ripley is on. Ripley kicks her down and sends Lynch into the post and goes to check on Dominik. Lynch dives off the steps onto both of them until Dominik tries to break it up. That goes as well as can be expected until referees get in there to hold them apart.

This was the segment that the match needed as Ripley has been getting so over with the fans as of late that they needed something to even the odds a bit. Having Ripley out there with Dominik is always going to make the fans think less of her, but bringing up Lynch's daughter was the clincher. The key here was they are turning Lynch back into The Man, and that version of her is a threat to Ripley. While Ripley is the bigger deal right now, a fired up Lynch is one of the scariest things in WWE and that could make for a heck of a showdown.

Chad Gable comes up to Sami Zayn and tries to apologize for

last week but Sami doesn't need to hear it. No one believes he can beat Gunther so tonight he'll go beat Bronson Reed. Gable says don't worry about Gunther tonight because Reed will take him out. Sami needs to focus, which Sami says is right. He appreciates what Gable said and they shake hands.

Sami Zayn vs. Bronson Reed

Reed runs him over with a shoulder to start but Sami sends his charge out to the floor. The big flip dive takes Reed down again but a high crossbody is pulled out of the air back inside. Reed runs him over again and hits a heck of a chop in the corner to send Sami outside. The running shoulder off the apron hits Sami again and we take a break.

Back with Sami fighting out of a chinlock and managing to knock Reed down for a change. Cue Gunther for a distraction though, which makes Sami think he can Blue Thunder Bomb Reed. For some reason Sami tries a slam, earning that crushing from Reed. Sami manages a tornado DDT but stops to look at Gunther, meaning the Helluva Kick misses. The Tsunami finishes for Reed at 9:31.

Rating: C. This was more storytelling than wrestling and that is not a bad thing. What matters here is Gunther getting into Sami's head before their title match at Wrestlemania, where Sami will hopefully be able to remain focused and get everything together. I'm not sure if he's going to win the title, but they're telling a nice story on the way there.

Jey Uso is fired up (shocking I know) about facing Shinsuke Nakamura. The Bloodline pops in and Jimmy Uso says "no yeet".

Chad Gable comes up to Sami Zayn in the back, where Sami is ranting about how Gunther is in his head. Gable says Sami needs a different approach to Wrestlemania and if Sami wants to do that, they can talk.

We look back at the Rock/Cody Rhodes segment.

Seth Rollins comes up to Jey Uso, saying something doesn't feel right. He has Jey's back tonight.

Jey Uso vs. Shinsuke Nakamura

Jey knocks him to the floor to start but the suicide dive is cut off by a boot to the head. Back in and Jey is sent into the post, setting up some running knees to put Jey on the floor as we take a break. We come back with Jey slugging away and hitting an enziguri but getting caught with the sliding German suplex. Nakamura shrugs off a superkick and hits a running knee...and we have the Bloodline. Cody Rhodes and Jey Uso run in to cut them off but here is Drew McIntyre to jump Rollins. Everyone else brawls off and a superkick into the spear finishes for Uso at 7:34.

Rating: C+. The match itself was little more than a backdrop for everything taking place at ringside and in this case that's ok. Jey gets another win on the way to Wrestlemania while Nakamura...geez remember when he was main eventing a pay per view about six months ago? You would think there might be some more value for him than this, though I'm not sure what that would be.

We cut to the back where Rhodes is brawling with the Bloodline when the Rock comes in to jump him. Rock hits him with a trashcan to the head and empties a toolbox onto him before they go outside into the rain. Rock kicks him around and shouts at Rhodes to get up because Rock is the Final Boss. He shouts at the people to look at his hero and yells at Mama Rhodes before throwing Cody into the side of his own bus.

Rock talks to the camera and says it didn't have to be like this. All of this is happening because of Rhodes, who is busted open as Rock sends him into the bus door again. Rock pulls off a weight belt with MAMA RHODES written on it and rubs the blood onto it, saying Cody is going to learn about hard times at Wrestlemania. He tells Mama Rhodes to look at

her son one more time to end the show.

There's a reason the Rock is the kind of legend that he has become. You can take away the Hollywood stuff and the catchphrases and all those other things. Underneath it all, the Rock knows how to be a wrestler and a wrestling personality. This was an old school beatdown that is going to make Rhodes fight back and FINALLY slay the beast that is Roman Reigns before very possibly getting his hands on the Rock one on one later this year. It's a case of the night being the darkest before the dawn, with the dawn seeming likely for Philadelphia. Awesome segment here, with Rock turning serious when he needs to.

Overall Rating: A-. Yes, I'm aware that none of the matches came close to that high of a rating and I would hope that you get that the in-ring part of this show was the least important aspect. This show was ALL about making the big matches at Wrestlemania feel like must see events and that worked in spades. I want to see McIntyre vs. Rollins, Cody vs. the Bloodline and Ripley vs. Lynch a heck of a lot more than I did coming into this week. That was the point of this Raw and WWE turned the volume way up the whole night through. Excellent show this week as the wrestling was the stuff in between the important parts.

Results

Ricochet b. JD McDonagh – Shooting star press

Candice LeRae b. Ivy Nile – Rollup with feet on the ropes

New Day vs. DIY went to a no contest when Judgment Day interfered

Andrade b. Giovanni Vinci – The Message

Bronson Reed b. Sami Zayn – Tsunami

Jey Uso b. Shinsuke Nakamura – Spear

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