

Monday Night Raw – July 10, 2023: Working With What They Don't Have

Monday Night Raw

Date: July 10, 2023

Location: KeyBank Center, Buffalo, New York

Commentators: Kevin Patrick, Corey Graves

We are less than a month away from Summerslam and Judgment Day is having some major issues. Finn Balor and Damian Priest can't seem to get along and the introduction of the Money In The Bank briefcase isn't helping. Other than that, we have more issues between Cody Rhodes and Brock Lesnar so let's get to it.

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

We open with a look at the Judgment Day's issues.

Here is a ticked off Finn Balor, who blames Damian Priest with costing him the World Title. Cue Rhea Ripley and Dominik Mysterio, with the former telling Balor to calm down. Balor says he is calm and walks out, leaving Ripley to say the team still runs Raw. If anyone disagrees, come out here and prove it. Cue Seth Rollins, with a plate of buffalo wings, with Dominik not being pleased and making threats. Rollins apologizes to Ripley, because she isn't the only one who is going to be whipping Mysterio tonight.

Post break, Damian Priest comes up to Ripley and Mysterio, saying that went as expected. Ripley tells him to fix this with Balor.

Imperium vs. Drew McIntyre/Matt Riddle

Gunther is at ringside as Riddle powers out of Kaiser's

headlock and gutwrench suplexes him down. It's off to McIntyre vs. Vinci, with the former taking him down for an assisted Floating Bro from Riddle. Back up and Vinci gets Riddle into the corner and sends him crashing out to the floor as we take a break.

We come back with Riddle getting two off a crucifix before Vinci kicks him in the face. Riddle starts winning a strike off with Kaiser until a Downward Spiral brings him back down. A kick to the head isn't enough for Riddle either, as Vinci plants him with a brainbuster. Riddle's next kick is enough to get over to McIntyre though and house is quickly cleaned. Gunther pulls McIntyre to the floor but Riddle takes him down. Back in and the Claymore finishes Vinci at 10:57 as Riddle ankle locks Kaiser.

Rating: C+. This was a nice way to get McIntyre back into the swing of things as he is ready to face Gunther for the title soon. Other than that, Riddle gets to be on the winning side to give him a bit of a boost as well. Gunther has lackeys for just this kind of occasion and it was a fine enough match as well.

Post match, Imperium glares at Vinci and leaves him behind.

Finn Balor and Damian Priest are arguing again but Rhea Ripley tells them to cool it. Balor says he'll save Rollins for him if Balor can get to him first. Deal.

Long recap of the Bloodline's implosion.

Sami Zayn and Kevin Owens say they have taken care of everyone and are ready for anyone else. Rhea Ripley and Dominik Mysterio come in to say Judgment Day should have been on that list. Any combination of the team could take the titles anytime because Dominik worked on cardio in prison and never gets tired. Sami and Owens discuss what that could mean.

Video on Indus Sher.

Dominik Mysterio vs. Seth Rollins

Non-title and Rhea Ripley is here with Dominik, who jumps him before the bell. They fight into the crowd and here is the rest of Judgment Day to jump Rollins. Cue Sami Zayn and Kevin Owens for the save as Judgment Day is cleared out. No match.

Here is Ricochet for a chat. He's happy to be here for the fans but he's here for one individual person: Logan Paul. He knows Paul is here tonight but first of all, we need to talk about what Paul was saying on his podcast. Paul was blaming Ricochet for what went wrong at Money In The Bank, but then said he himself didn't know what he was doing. So come say something to his face.

Cue Paul, to say he doesn't want to be in this town any longer than he has to be. He stands by what he said on his podcast, as Ricochet cost them both the briefcase. Ricochet says no one wanted Paul to win, and we cut to Paul taking a picture with a fan in a great moment. The fans chant for Paul, which has him cracking up that Ricochet can't even get cheered during his own promo.

Ricochet promises to hurt him but Paul laughs off the threats from someone who is 90% forehead. Paul calls himself a superstar but Ricochet is just about replays and clips. Ricochet flips over the top and lands in front of Paul (mostly sticking the landing), who says that was cool....for a TikTok. Paul starts swinging but gets dropped with a Sliced Bread off the apron. Talking still isn't Ricochet's strong suit, but when you can move like that, it can be ignored.

Becky Lynch vs. Zoey Stark

Trish Stratus is here with Stark, who grabs a headlock to start. With that not working for Lynch, she grabs a front facelock to slow Stark down instead. The first gear continues until Trish trips Lynch down, allowing Stark to stomp away. A springboard missile dropkick puts Lynch on the floor as we

take a break.

Back with Stark getting caught on top and kicked in the ribs over and over. A baseball slide drops Stark on the floor and Lynch hits a running shot off the apron. Back in and Stark kicks her into the corner, setting up a springboard spinning hilo for two. Lynch tries the Disarm-Her but gets kicked in the face for her efforts. Z360 is blocked and Lynch kicks Trish down, but the distraction lets Stark get a rollup pin at 10:26.

Rating: C+. That's a bit of a weird way to go but Lynch does have an out after being cheated away from a victory. You can all but guarantee the Stratus vs. Lynch match for Summerslam and maybe Lynch finds a friend to deal with Stark? For now though, the build for Lynch vs. Stratus continues and that should be a heck of a fight when we get there.

Kevin Owens, Sami Zayn and Seth Rollins have a plan for Judgment Day tonight: hurt them.

It's time for Maxxine Dupri's graduation ceremony from the Alpha Academy. Chad Gable praises Maxxine's accomplishments last week and brings her out to receive her diploma. Maxxine didn't think much of Gable when she started but she has grown to realize that he is a great trainer and a wonderful friend. She also has to thank Otis for catching her eye in the first place. Finally, thank you to the WWE Universe for accepting her and helping her become a star. Otis whips off his gown and puts on his jacket, with Maxxine being presented with one of her own. Cue the Viking Raiders to jump the Academy and steal her jacket.

Earlier today, Emma came up to Shayna Baszler in the back and dared to speak to her, setting up a match for later.

Emma vs. Shayna Baszler

Emma kicks her in the face to start and hits the running

crossbody in the corner. Baszler is right back with the rights and lefts and the Kirifuda Clutch finishes Emma at 1:30.

Post match here is Ronda Rousey to brawl with Baszler, who runs off.

Here is Cody Rhodes for a chat. Since he has returned, he has been talking about life goals instead of career goals. When he was in the United Kingdom, he was asked how his momentum has been making him feel. This question has been haunting him but he answered honestly by talking about how the fans have great and by every measure, he's doing great.

As for in the ring though, things have been a bit shaky because of the Brock Lesnar shaped mountain. Everyone has a Brock Lesnar in their way but in his case it's a 6'3 285lb living symbol of Darwinism and natural selection. Cody wants a rubber match with Lesnar at Summerslam because he wants to be next in line. More solid words from Cody, as he has to fill in a lot of gaps as Lesnar isn't around every week and the story is already set up.

The Miz vs. Tommaso Ciampa

No DQ and Ciampa jumps him on the floor before the bell as Graves gets very tongue tied trying to explain what "No DQ" means. They get inside with Ciampa hammering away and the bell rings. Ciampa sends him outside and over the announcers' table, setting up a running knee to the face.

Back in and the Fairy Tale Ending onto the chair is blocked so Miz kicks him in the head. Ciampa grabs a chair to knock Miz out of the air though and then wraps it around Miz's neck for the posting. The pat on the back sends us to a break and we come back with Ciampa grabbing a chair. Miz kicks him over the announcers' table though, only to get thrown off said table and into the barricade.

Ciampa grabs a bunch of weapons, including a table, but Miz

gets in a cheap shot to slow him down. Back in and Ciampa knees Miz out of the air before some running knees drive a trashcan lid into Miz's face. An Air Raid Crash puts Miz through a table but here is Bronson Reed to jump Ciampa. Reed crushes him on the floor and hits the Tsunami inside to give Miz the pin at 11:20.

Rating: B-. They had a good fight and having Reed come in for the interference works. He and Miz have a history together and Ciampa vs. Reed could make for some interesting fights. Ciampa didn't lose clean and now he and Miz can be wrapped up, or he might need some backup. Like say someone else from Cleveland who could deal with Miz?

Chelsea Green and Sonya Deville talk trash to Raquel Rodriguez and Liv Morgan. Rhea Ripley comes in to tell Rodriguez to stay out of their business, because she's on two strikes. Green: "That's right and three strikes you're out. Basketball!" Ripley glares Green and Deville away, but Morgan says they're not afraid of her. Sounding tough is really not in Morgan's wheelhouse.

Chelsea Green/Sonya Deville vs. Kayden Carter/Katana Chance

Deville gets double teamed in the corner and a running dropkick staggers her again. Green comes in and rolls Carter up, with Deville adding a knee to the face to make it worse. Chance comes in and takes Green down, with an assisted middle rope splash getting two. Everything breaks down and Green rolls Chance up, with an assist from Deville, for the pin at 2:21. Kind of a messy match but Green and Deville getting another win is all that matters.

Matt Riddle and Drew McIntyre are heading out again, with Byron Saxton not invited.

Seth Rollins/Sami Zayn/Kevin Owens vs. Judgment Day

Rollins chases Dominik around to start, with a quick tag

bringing in Balor. That's fine with Rollins, who stomps Balor in the corner before Priest comes in and gets hit in the face as well. Zayn comes in and everything breaks down with everyone but Owens fighting on the floor. Owens flip dives onto Judgment Day and we take a break.

Back with Balor beating on Owens until a quick shot allows the hot tag to Rollins. A kick to the face gets two on Dominik but Priest blasts Rollins with a clothesline for the same. Rollins is right back with a superkick into the Pedigree, with Balor having to make the save. Dominik frog splashes Rollins for two with Sami making the save, giving us a hilarious reaction from a stunned Ripley. Sami hits the Blue Thunder Bomb for two but Ripley offers a distraction. South of Heaven sets up the Coup de Grace to give Balor the pin at 12:30.

Rating: B-. This was a good bit shorter than I was expecting but it served a nice purpose. You can probably pencil in Judgment Day for a Tag Team Title shot at Summerslam and that could make for a nice match. As Zayn and Owens said earlier in the night, they need some more challengers and this is a fresh team to come after the belts. Rollins needs an opponent as well though, and I can't imagine that is anyone here.

Balor and Priest are cool to end the show (as Ripley approves).

Overall Rating: B. Another good show here as we are well on the way to Summerslam, though there are some spots that still need to be filled. Other than the main event, this show didn't set much up for Summerslam, but it did keep some of the already established stories going. Throw in some solid wrestling of its own and this was a pretty nice show for three hours.

Results

Drew McIntyre/Matt Riddle b. Imperium – Claymore to Vinci
Zoey Stark b. Becky Lynch – Rollup

Shayna Baszler b. Emma – Kirifuda Clutch

Miz b. Tommaso Ciampa – Tsunami

Chelsea Green/Sonya Deville b. Kayden Carter/Katana Chance –
Assisted rollup to Chance

Judgment Day b. Sami Zayn/Kevin Owens/Seth Rollins – Coup de
Grace to Zayn

Remember to follow me on Twitter @kbreviews and head over to
my Amazon author page with 30 different cheap wrestling books
at:

<http://www.amazon.com/Thomas-Hall/e/B00E6282W6>

AND

[Remember to check out Wrestlingrumors.net](http://Wrestlingrumors.net) for all of your
[wrestling headline needs.](http://Wrestlingrumors.net)

Money In The Bank 2023: It's Over

Money In The Bank 2023

Date: July 1, 2023

Location: O2 Arena, London, England

Commentators: Michael Cole, Wade Barrett

We're going international with this one and things could get
very interesting. Aside from the two regular ladder matches,

we also have the Bloodline Civil War, which is the real meat of the show. Throw in Seth Rollins defending the Raw World Title against Finn Balor and this could go somewhere. Let's get to it.

The opening video looks at London itself with a James Bond style theme. The matches get their usual hypes.

Butch vs. Ricochet vs. Shinsuke Nakamura vs. Logan Paul vs. LA Knight vs. Damian Priest vs. Santos Escobar

Men's Money In The Bank, with Butch and Knight getting some crazy reactions. Paul gets surrounded and jumped to start before the people pair off. The ring clears out until Paul slides in the first ladder but Nakamura makes the save. Back in and a bunch of people crush Priest in the corner with a ladder until Knight drops everyone. Nakamura kicks Knight down and drops a knee to drive Priest into the ladder. Butch and Nakamura slug it out until Paul goes up again, only to get pulled down and beaten up again.

It's time for the table and the cricket bat as Butch gets to clean house. Paul tries to get an alliance going with Priest, which includes setting up some tables before Priest lays him out. Escobar is back with a dive before Priest knocks a diving Paul out of the air. Paul is back up with a frog splash off the apron onto Priest onto a ladder, which doesn't move. Back in and Escobar and Nakamura climb up, with Escobar's arm getting cranked through the ladder.

Butch chokes Escobar on the ladder and they fall down onto a bridged ladder, allowing Ricochet to add a springboard 450 onto both of them. Almost everyone gets back in and Priest goes up until Knight suplexes him down. Paul drops Knight with a springboard Blockbuster and Nakamura dives off the ladder with a knee to Escobar. Butch climbs a ladder at ringside and moonsaults onto almost everyone, only to have Paul pull him down back inside.

It's Escobar coming in to make the save but Nakamura makes another save. They both climb up on a ladder each until Ricochet and Paul join them. The big brawl is on until Knight shoves Nakamura and Escobar down. Knight shoves the other ladder over and Ricochet and Paul try to land on the ropes, with Ricochet hitting a springboard Spanish Fly onto (only through one) two tables at ringside.

As the referees check that Paul isn't dead (since he landed on his face), Priest cuts Butch off but Knight breaks that up as well. Blunt Force Trauma hits Escobar and Nakamura is tossed, leaving Knight to...get cut off by Priest, who Broken Arrows him down. Priest gets the briefcase at 20:34.

Rating: B. Oh that's going to be a risky move, as the crowd was all but begging for Knight to win. Priest was the third best option after Knight and Paul but it still only feels so interesting. They did a good job of making Paul feel like a star here as everyone was trying to cut him off, which had me thinking he would pull it off. For now though, I can go for this much carnage, though less going through stuff with your head would be nice.

Women's Tag Team Titles: Shayna Baszler/Ronda Rousey vs. Liv Morgan/Raquel Rodriguez

Baszler and Rousey are defending. Morgan avoids Baszler's arm stomp to start and sends Baszler to the apron for a springboard dropkick. Rodriguez powerbombs Morgan over the top onto the champs but Baszler goes after the arm back inside. Rousey comes in for some arm cranking but Morgan gets over to Rodriguez for the tag.

A choke doesn't work for Rousey, who gets caught in a superbomb for a heck of a crash. Morgan comes back in and gets armbarred by Baszler...and ankle locked by Rousey at the same time. Rodriguez makes the save and Morgan has to escape the Kirifuda Clutch. Rousey comes back in and Baszler decks her,

setting up the Clutch on Rousey as Morgan looks shocked. Oblivion gives us new champions at 8:28.

Rating: C. Well, uh, ok then. I'm assuming this is a way to set up Baszler vs. Rousey in a hurry, but the Women's Tag Team Titles continue to look rather worthless. I'm sure there will be a good reason for what happened, but Morgan and Rodriguez as the latest thrown together team with all of a few months' of experience being some great team is a bit much.

Damian Priest doesn't know which title he'll cash in on, but he'll be champion.

Intercontinental Title: Gunther vs. Matt Riddle

Gunther is defending and has to fight out of an armbar to start. Riddle's kicks to the ribs are blocked and the big chop puts Riddle down hard. Some forearms don't get Riddle very far so he goes for the leg, only to have Gunther stomp him down. Gunther goes after the previously damaged ankle, including a legbar.

Riddle fights up and hits a heck of a clothesline but Riddle is right back with a Penalty Kick. The Floating Bro gets two (because Riddle's leg can heal really fast) but he gets chopped down. The splash is countered into a triangle choke but Gunther powerbombs his way out of trouble. The half crab is broken up so Gunther chops at the ankle (that's a new one) and then cranks away to retain at 7:40.

Rating: C+. This was an interesting one as Riddle is just good enough to be a threat to Gunther, but that ankle injury wasn't going to let him get very far. At the end of the day, Gunther only felt like he was in so much danger and then he mixed it up to beat Riddle. Nice match, but nothing we haven't seen done better before.

Post match Drew McIntyre makes his return and lays out Gunther with the Claymore. Yeah he's still popular.

We recap Dominik Mysterio vs. Cody Rhodes. Dominik was his usual disrespectful self and slapped Cody in the face. It's time for revenge, as Cody wants to teach him some respect.

Cody Rhodes vs. Dominik Mysterio

Rhea Ripley is here with Dominik, who runs off to start. Back in and Dominik slaps him, only to have Cody rip off the cast on his arm. Now the beating is on, including the drop down uppercut and a powerslam, meaning it's time to head outside. Dominik tries to bail through the crowd but gets sent back, where Rhea gets between them. The distraction lets Dominik get in a few cheap shots and we hit the chinlock back inside. Cody fights up and, after shrugging off the Three Amigos, hits the Disaster Kick. An Alabama Slam sets up the Cody Cutter and Cross Rhodes finishes Dominik at 6:35.

Rating: C. I don't think there was any doubt about the result here, save for some shenanigans, as Dominik isn't someone who is going to win a big match. Like many a good heel, the best thing about Dominik is that he can shrug off a loss and get the fans on him all over again with the same stuff he has been doing. This felt a bit like a Raw match, or at least just a way to get Cody on the show, which isn't a bad thing.

And now, here's John Cena! He doesn't know what to think of the fans singing the right words to his song and wonders why it took twenty years to come back here for another major event. The decision makers around here think this is a hostile environment with fans who try to take over the show. The people ARE the show and he is here to let them know that they are underappreciated.

Cena is big on respect and the people here have earned his respect. The fans chant him a thank you and Cena talks about how much fun it is to stop like this for a special moment. He's here to try to bring Wrestlemania to London (oh the people like that one) and seems to officially announce it

(Maybe. It's not entirely clear.). Cue Grayson Waller to talk about how much he loves Cena's movies. He loves Cena's hustle, loyalty and respect, so why is Cena lying to these people about Wrestlemania?

Waller thinks Australia sounds better but the fans don't agree. He could even get Cena a spot on the show! Waller brings up Cena's recent Wrestlemania failures and says he can be on the Grayson Waller Effect. Cena will pass and doesn't understand Waller, who decks Cena from behind. The AA leaves Waller laying. That wasn't an official announcement, but it's hard to imagine that kind of a tease with something that specific without it going somewhere.

Trish Stratus vs. Becky Lynch vs. Zoey Stark vs. Iyo Sky vs. Bayley vs. Zelina Vega

Women's Money In The Bank and according to the ring announcer, Bayley is now part of Judgment Day. Stratus sends Stark to jump Lynch in the aisle and the fight is on fast. Sky jumps off the apron to take out Bayley before Trish and Stark grab another ladder. Becky sends them into the ladder and Bayley (as the fans serenade her) throws in the big ladder. Sky and Bayley get into it, allowing Becky go try a climb.

Stark cuts her off and gets beaten down for her efforts and the Disarm-Her goes on, only to have Stratus make the save. Vega and Trish slug it out on a pair of ladders until Becky goes up, with Bayley not far behind her. Sky goes up but the ladder is off center, meaning it's a moonsault to take out the pile instead. Becky and Trish go up top for a slugout but Zelina makes a save. That earns her a double powerbomb and it's Trish vs. Becky fighting again. Stark pulls Becky outside for a ram into the post and let's get the handcuffs.

Becky blocks being cuffed and bridges a ladder between the announcers' table and the apron. As commentary points out that his is taking a LONG time, Becky hits the Manhandle Slam onto

Trish onto the ladder. Back in and Vega hits a Code Red to bring Stark down off the ladder onto another bridged ladder in a scary crash. Sky goes up but Bayley shoves the ladder over. With Bayley going up, Becky makes the save and tries to handcuff Bayley's mouth. Sky breaks that up and cuffs them together (through the ladder), allowing her to pull down the briefcase at 18:01.

Rating: C+. The ending was the big saving grace here, as that was one of the most clever finishing sequences I've seen WWE run in a ladder match. Other than that though, this was a lot of things that had little to do with getting the briefcase, as it felt more focused on hitting spots. I wasn't big on this, but they got the winner right and the finish was rather good.

We recap Finn Balor challenging Seth Rollins for the Raw World Title. Balor wants revenge on Rollins for costing him so much of his career after Balor beat Rollins with one arm. This is about revenge, with the title being there too.

Raw World Title: Seth Rollins vs. Finn Balor

Balor is challenging. They go to the mat to start and slug it out with Balor getting the better of things off a shot to the bad ribs. The fight heads outside with Seth hitting a suicide dive but having to dodge another double stomp to the ribs back inside. The Pedigree attempt is countered though and now the stomp can connect.

Balor stays on the ribs and knocks Rollins back to the floor as the confidence is picking up. Back in and Balor hits some shoulders to the ribs but Rollins manages a clothesline. Some kicks to the face and a backbreaker give Rollins two but Balor goes right back to the ribs. A Sling Blade hits Rollins, who Buckle Bombs Balor right back.

Balor gets his knees up to stop a splash and a rollup gets two. Rollins manages a Pedigree for a delayed two...and here's Damian Priest with the briefcase. There's no cash -in yet as

Rollins hits a superkick to send Balor to the floor. The Priest distraction lets Balor hit a pair of Coup de Graces but another misses inside, as Balor was glaring at Priest. Rollins hits the Stomp to retain at 12:34.

Rating: B-. The Priest stuff is interesting as the Judgment Day issues continue. I'm not sure where they're going, but there's certainly a story there. Rollins beating Balor isn't a shock, though I was hoping for something a bit more epic here. Balor not winning the big one continues, and unfortunately I don't know how many more chances he is going to get.

Balor isn't happy with Priest.

Kevin Owens and Sami Zayn are watching in a sky box.

We recap the Bloodline Civil War. The Usos finally got fed up with Roman Reigns treating them like garbage and fought back. The team is splitting and now it's time for the big fight.

Usos vs. Solo Sikoa/Roman Reigns

Paul Heyman is here with Reigns and Sikoa. Jimmy and Sikoa stare at each other to start before Sikoa knocks him down hard. Jimmy isn't sure what to do here but it's off to Jey via a blind tag and Sikoa gets dropped. Reigns wants in and, after a rather long time, he gets to headlock Jey. Jey gets powered down but is fine enough to bring Jimmy back in. The threat of a double superkick sends Reigns bailing to the floor, where Heyman says I Jey has his way, Reigns' son will be sitting at Jey's table.

Back in and Jimmy slugs away but gets dropped with a single right hand. Sikoa gets to stomp away and we hit the nerve hold for a bit. One heck of a forearm drops Jimmy again as the fans decide that they should stand up if they hate Roman Reigns. That makes Reigns sit on the apron and complain to Heyman about how much he hates England. With that out of the way, Sikoa hits the running Umaga Attack and Reigns comes back in

to add some shots of his own.

The nerve hold goes on again but Jimmy fights up. Reigns comes in and cuts Jimmy off so Jimmy kicks him away. There's no Jey though as Sikoa makes a perfectly timed cut off so the beating on Jimmy can continue. Jimmy dodges the Superman Punch though and a Cactus crossbody puts them both on the floor. Back in and the hot tag brings in Jey to clean house, including a high crossbody for two on Sikoa.

Reigns tags himself back in but gets knocked outside, where the Superman Punch cuts off a diving Jey. Another one connects back inside but Jimmy makes his own blind tag and a double spear hits Reigns. Sikoa has to make a save this time around as Reigns wasn't getting up. We get the big showdown and Reigns Superman Punches Jimmy (didn't get all of it) for two. Reigns is frustrated and it's made even worse when the spear is cut off with a superkick.

The Superfly Splash is pulled into the guillotine but Jimmy powers up. Jey comes in...and the referee gets bumped. Jey superkicks Reigns into a not great 1D with no one to count. Sikoa breaks up the double Superfly Splashes and it's a pair of release Rock Bottoms to the Usos. Jimmy gets Spiked and a spike/spear kill Jey dead so Reigns can stack them up for....two. Reigns looks like he's about to cry and Heyman is speechless.

Sikoa loads up the announcers' table but the splash misses Jimmy and Reigns knows he's in trouble. Jey superkicks Reigns (camera misses it) but he cuts Jey down with the spear for two...and a low blow on the kickout. A bunch of superkicks drop Reigns and Jey hits the Superfly Splash for the pin at 31:55 and a ROAR from the crowd.

Rating: B. This is another big step in a long, long story as we're seeing Reigns fall off his mountain. He's lost his cousins, he's lost his security, and now he's lost a match.

This is some awesome storytelling and that's how it should have gone. The match itself could have been better as the heat on Jimmy went on for the better part of ever, but the last ten minutes or so were excellent, with the kickout from the spear/Spike completely catching me. This is the only way the show could have ended and it was great.

The Usos celebrate as the Bloodline looks lost to end the show.

Overall Rating: B. This show was not a home run, but it got enough done to make it work. The opener and main event are the matches of the night and the Cena segment, while long, was a nice surprise. As has been the case for most of the last several WWE pay per views, there was nothing terrible to drag it down and the big emotional moment worked. Solid show, though I was hoping for a bit more.

Results

Damian Priest won the Men's Money In The Bank ladder match
Liv Morgan/Raquel Rodriguez b. Shayna Baszler/Ronda Rousey – Oblivion to Rousey

Gunther b. Matt Riddle – Leg crank

Cody Rhodes b. Dominik Mysterio – Cross Rhodes

Iyo Sky won the Women's Money In The Bank ladder match

Seth Rollins b. Finn Balor – Stomp

Usos b. Roman Reigns/Solo Sikoa – Superfly Splash to Reigns

Remember to follow me on Twitter @kbreviews and head over to my Amazon author page with 30 different cheap wrestling books at:

<http://www.amazon.com/Thomas-Hall/e/B00E6282W6>

AND

[Remember to check out Wrestlingrumors.net](http://Wrestlingrumors.net) for all of your [wrestling headline needs](#).

Money In The Bank 2023 Preview

We're back to one of WWE's signature shows but this time they have taken it overseas to London (I think it's in Paraguay) to spice it up a bit. As usual there are two namesake ladder matches but in this case we also have the Bloodline Civil War and some other stuff that probably won't feel anywhere near as important. The show will certainly be a big one so let's get to it.

Intercontinental Title: Gunther(c) vs. Matt Riddle

Gunther is in a weird place as while he is only a few months ago from breaking the all time record for longest Intercontinental Title reigns but it doesn't feel like this must reach achievement. Gunther has long since been established as a big star and even losing the title won't particularly hurt him. It might not be what happens here, but it's something that feels like it's possible.

Now that being said, no I won't pick Riddle to dethrone the monster here as it doesn't feel like the right change. Riddle has been built back up a bit as a serious fighter and the MMA stuff could give Gunther trouble, but ultimately this feels like a way for Gunther to get another nice win on his resume as the roster continues to be cleared out on the way to...whatever is next for him. Gunther retains, as he should.

Women's Tag Team Titles; Ronda Rousey/Shayna Baszler vs. Raquel Rodriguez/Liv Morgan

This is a match that could go either way, though that might not be a good thing. Rousey and Baszler feel like a team who could dominate the division for a long time to come, but WWE LOVES itself some thrown together teams ala Rodriguez and Morgan. They only lost the titles in the first place so putting the titles back on them here would hardly be some big shock.

Perhaps for the sake of my own sanity, I'll go with the champs retaining here. Rousey and Baszler haven't even had the titles for a month and I would hope they don't lose them to the combined forces of Rodriguez's back and Morgan's spunkiness. The villains winning here makes sense and dethroning them this soon would feel like a really bad idea. That makes me think I'm wrong, but I'll hope that the champions retain.

World Heavyweight Title: Seth Rollins(c) vs. Finn Balor

Here we have a rather WWE dilemma: do you go with the title change that makes Balor a star all over again and give him the chance that he never really had, or do you stick with the guy who makes the crowd "sing" and has a gimmick that is so odd that it really can't be explained? I think you know where this is going and unfortunately there isn't much of a way around it.

Rollins retains here, as for some reason that weird conducting the crowd deal is one of the biggest things in WWE at the moment. I'm not sure what the point of the whole thing is, but the fans being into it is at least a sign that they're doing something right. Unfortunately that means Balor continues to spin his wheels, even as they close one of the bigger stories that he has had in WWE.

Women's Money In The Bank Ladder Match: Becky Lynch vs. Trish Stratus vs. Zoey Stark vs. Zelina Vega vs. Bayley vs. Iyo Sky

As is usually the case with these things, we'll go with a process of elimination. First of all, we'll drop Stark, Bayley and Vega. While the latter is at best a dark horse underdog, Bayley and Stark just aren't winning the thing and shouldn't. That leaves us with four options, and it's hard to imagine Stratus getting there either. Therefore, it's down to Lynch and Sky and that opens up some doors.

I'm going with Sky here, as the women's division is in serious need of some fresh blood other than Rhea Ripley. The Horsewomen are WAY past their peaks, Bianca Belair has been the top star for so long that she needs a replacement, and Asuka can only carry things for so long. They need someone fresh and Sky would fit that bill. As a bonus, Bayley can get annoyed at Sky for winning the briefcase and their issues can continue. Sky wins here, as she should.

Men's Money In The Bank Ladder Match: LA Knight vs. Logan Paul vs. Santos Escobar vs. Butch vs. Ricochet vs. Shinsuke Nakamura vs. Damian Priest

This is a trickier one as there are more options for potential winners. Again, we'll take out some people who just aren't going to win, meaning Butch, Ricochet, Nakamura and probably Escobar are out. That leaves us with three options, which has kind of been the case for the last few weeks. In other words, it depends on if you want to go with the logical choice, the people's choice, or the "HE'LL GET VIEWS" choice.

I want this to be Knight and it almost NEEDS to be him. Knight's reactions have been growing bigger and bigger and at some point, WWE needs to pull the trigger on someone that hot, being 40 years old or not. I'll hope beyond hope that they do, but Priest makes some sense as well given his recent history with Rollins and Paul is Paul. Those are some solid options, but this would/could/should be Knight so we'll go that way.

Roman Reigns/Solo Sikoa vs. Usos

And now for the real main event, despite WWE announcing something else as the main event. The Bloodline story has dominated WWE for a very long time now and it is almost impossible to imagine that anything else is going to be nearly as important. This story has gotten one huge reaction after another and this is a showdown that has been built up for a long time. But someone has to win.

There is absolutely no reason for the Usos to lose here so we'll go with that. The Bloodline is falling apart right in front of your eyes and Reigns has to lose everything before the end. I don't think that involves him taking the fall here, but Siko getting pinned and earning a yelling from Reigns before they split as well makes sense. This is all about the Usos, and they'll go over in the end.

Dominik Mysterio vs. Cody Rhodes

Well not really the end because THIS is the main event due to reasons that should makes sense later. This is giving me a Kurt Angle vs. Mark Henry from the 2006 Royal Rumble vibe, as the only reason for the match to headline is for something screwy to happen. That something is likely to be from the king of "here he is to end the show" and I think you know where this is going.

I'll take Mysterio to win here, as a mixture of the crowd hating him so much and Brock Lesnar returning to screw Rhodes over would fit nicely. Rhodes vs. Lesnar III has to be set up and that can be done with one heck of a massacre to end the show. Rhodes flat out told Lesnar where to come to fight him again so Rhodes will have no one to blame but himself. Lesnar interferes and gives Mysterio the win to end the show, because Lesnar is more important than anything else. Again.

Overall Thoughts

As much as I can't stand the build towards Money In The Bank most years (though this year's has been a notable

improvement), the show has a tendency to be good. The ladder matches will both work by definition and some of the other stuff involved should hold up as well. If that is the case on both ends we will be in for a strong night as the Road To Summerslam can begin almost immediately.

Remember to follow me on Twitter @kbreviews and head over to my Amazon author page with 30 different cheap wrestling books at:

<http://www.amazon.com/Thomas-Hall/e/B00E6282W6>

AND

[Remember to check out Wrestlingrumors.net](http://Wrestlingrumors.net) for all of your [wrestling headline needs](http://Wrestlingrumors.net).

Monday Night Raw – June 26, 2023: A Tale Of Two Ideas

Monday Night Raw

Date: June 26, 2023

Location: Enmarket Arena, Savannah, Georgia

Commentators: Kevin Patrick, Corey Graves

It's the last Raw before Money In The Bank and then it's off to England. That might not make for the most thrilling Raw but there are some stories that could use a final push before the big show. If nothing else, Seth Rollins is going to want to

get his hands on Finn Balor so let's get to it.

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

We open with a recap of Finn Balor vs. Dominik Mysterio over the last few weeks.

Here are Rhea Ripley and Dominik Mysterio to the reaction you would expect. Ripley promises that Dominik will end Cody at Money In The Bank so here is Rhodes (HUGE reaction) to interrupt. Cody welcomes us to the show and threatens Dominik, who bails to the apron. Just to make it worse, Cody quotes the Cat In The Hat, because Dominik is a scared little boy. Dominik leaves as Cody begs him to come in here and take a free shot. When Dominik won't come in, Cody says he wants to see if Dominik is half the man his father is, or if he's just Mami's little boy.

Ricochet vs. Shinsuke Nakamura

Bronson Reed is at ringside. They trade strikes to start with Nakamura kicking him in the ribs, only to get kicked right back down. An exchange of kicks sent them both outside where they take turns kicking Reed. Before he can do anything it, Reed is ejected and we take a break.

Back with Nakamura blocking a running shooting star press and stomping at the ribs to keep Ricochet down. Kinshasa misses though and Ricochet kicks him down for two. Ricochet dodges some kicks and hits a standing Sliced Bread, setting up a shooting star press to finish Nakamura at 10:42.

Rating: C+. Seeing Ricochet getting a clean pin over a bigger name is nice to see, even if there is little reason to believe that this is going to last. We still need the triple threat match between these two and Reed, which very well may be coming next week. For now though, Ricochet getting a win is nice to see.

We recap Matt Riddle being beaten down by Imperium.

Riddle has challenged Gunther for the Intercontinental Title at Money In The Bank but cue Imperium to beat him down. The bad ankle is taken out again as Gunther accepts the challenge.

Dominik Mysterio wants Adam Pearce to give him a match tonight....but Rhea Ripley whispers something to him, so he'll get back to Pearce on an opponent.

And now, Money In The Bank By The Numbers.

93 Participants

7 WWE Hall Of Famers

28 Winners

78% Of Male Contract Holders To Successfully Cash In

100% Of Female Contract Holders To Successfully Cash In

13 Winners Who Cashed In For Their First World Title

3 People To Cash In Twice

30 Ladder Matches

5 Appearances For Natalya, The Most By A Woman

7 Appearances For Kofi Kingston And Kane, Tied For The Most By A Man

380 Ladders Used

287 Days Carmella Waited, The Longest Ever For A Cash In

50:15 Minutes Kane Waited, The Shortest Ever For A Cash In

5 People Who Cashed In The Same Night

1 Person To Cash In At Wrestlemania

17 Cities Have Hosted

12 States Have Hosted

8 First Timers This Year

Raquel Rodriguez vs. Ronda Rousey

Liv Morgan and Shayna Baszler are here too. They take turns throwing each other around until Rodriguez powers out of the ankle lock. Rousey gets tossed with a fall away slam as Morgan goes after Baszler. In the melee, Rousey grabs a rollup for the pin at 2:13.

Video on Finn Balor vs. Seth Rollins, with Balor talking about how the man who beat Rollins seven years ago being dead. He had a horrible arm injury but had to vacate the Universal Title twenty two hours later. Then Rollins came out to laugh at him at his lowest point. Now Rollins has his crazy outfits and his song, but now, after seven years, Balor is taking it all back. Good stuff here from Balor, as he sold the story in just a few moments.

Here is Seth Rollins for a chat. The fans sing so long that we get a graphic of the title match again before Rollins finally speaks. Hold on though as he sees NXT Champion Carmelo Hayes in the front row and thanks him for having his back on NXT. Rollins tells Hayes to take care of Baron Corbin in their title match tomorrow night, just like he'll do to Finn Balor. He has been wondering which Balor will show up, so why not have Balor come out here right now?

There's no Balor, which doesn't surprise Rollins, as Balor likes to hide in the shadows. Rollins isn't 100% right now and he won't be at Money In The Bank, but as good as Balor is, he doesn't know what he's getting into. Cue Balor with a chair but Rollins takes him down so the brawl can be on. Balor goes for the ribs and grabs the chair, only to get sent into the corner. The fight goes to the floor and Balor goes for another chair, which is taken away by Carmelo Hayes. Balor runs off and we might have a main event for later.

We recap Tommaso Ciampa returning last week to take out the Miz.

Ciampa talks about recovering over the last night months and never heard from Miz once. That gave him a lot of time to wonder why he played second fiddle to Miz, but now he is creating his own opportunities.

Carmelo Hayes vs. Finn Balor is set for tonight.

Tommaso Ciampa vs. The Miz

Miz jumps Ciampa from behind during the entrances and lays him out on the floor with the Skull Crushing Finale. No match, which is good in a way because the story should have been over and another match isn't needed, but bad in a way because why is this continuing.

Sami Zayn and Kevin Owens run into Imperium in the back, with Sami having to explain to Owens that they're mad because of what happened to Matt Riddle. Owens yells at Gunther and the result is Gunther vs. Sami tonight. Owens going from indifferent to yelling because Sami told him to was great.

Dominik Mysterio vs. Akira Tozawa

Tozawa is Dominik/Rhea Ripley's (at ringside) handpicked opponent. Dominik jumps him to start but Tozawa hammers away with right hands. Tozawa's top rope elbow sends Dominik outside and a suicide dive drops him again. A Ripley distraction lets Dominik crotch him on top though and the frog splash finishes for Dominik at 1:49.

The Viking Raiders are ready for violence.

Here are Trish Stratus, Zoey Stark, Becky Lynch, Bayley, Iyo Sky and Zelina Vega in the ring for the Money In The Bank Summit. Bayley calls everyone stupid and declares herself the favorite but Sky seems to interrupt. Vega knows there are some legends in the match but Trish has never been in a ladder match. Bayley laughs at the idea of Vega winning but Vega says the LWO is winning both briefcases.

Stark cuts the bickering off and Trish says she sees a bunch of girls in the ring. They should all thank her, but Becky doesn't qualify as a woman because she's the Man or whatever. The big brawl is on and Sky moonsaults onto everyone but Becky. That leaves Becky to climb up and grab the briefcase. You could guess everything that was going to be said here and the question was who got the briefcase at the end.

Carmelo Hayes says he was invited here by Seth Rollins and it is an honor to be on this show. Maybe he is going to go out there in a blaze of glory, but tomorrow, he's taking out Baron Corbin. Sometimes you have to take shots to make shots, and tonight he isn't missing.

Becky Lynch runs into Rhea Ripley and teases cashing in on her. Ripley promises violence if Lynch even tries. Lynch calls Ripley a main event side attraction and wants to get the briefcase just to make Ripley squirm.

Gunther vs. Sami Zayn

Non-title and Ludwig Kaiser/Kevin Owens (the latter on commentary) are the seconds. Gunther grabs a headlock to start but Zayn is back with an armdrag into an armbar. Cue Giovanni Vinci on crutches, allowing Gunther to snap off a German suplex as we take a break. Back with Gunther having to block the exploder suplex into the corner and knocking Zayn down hard. Owens applauds Gunther's chop and the distraction lets Zayn fight back and grab a sunset bomb for a close two.

The pace picks up and Zayn hits a clothesline but the Blue Thunder Bomb is countered into the sleeper. Zayn powers up and gets the Blue Thunder Bomb for two more. Gunther chops him out of the air though and the top rope splash gets two, leaving Gunther a bit shocked. Owens cuts off an interfering Kaiser but gets kicked in the face by Gunther. Zayn hits a big flip dive though and the exploder sends Gunther into the corner. Vinci gets on the apron though and a crutch shot sets up Gunther's powerbomb for the pin at 12:13.

Rating: B. This was what you would have expected from these two as they had the time to put a match together, even with all of the other moving parts. What matters here is Gunther had to break a heck of a sweat to beat Zayn, who is far from some nothing opponent. Vinci being back brings Imperium back to full strength and I'll take that here over a surprise

return so he can help cheat Riddle out of the title on Saturday.

Post match the big beatdown is on until Matt Riddle limps down for the save, complete with some crutch shots.

Video on Carmelo Hayes.

The Alpha Academy is ready for the Viking Raiders, thanks to Chad Gable's coaching.

Natalya isn't giving up after being knocked down so many times. She wants a title shot next week.

Finn Balor vs. Carmelo Hayes

Non-title. Balor takes him down to start and hits some forearms to the back. The chinlock goes on but Hayes knocks him outside or the big dive. We take a break and come back with Hayes fighting up but missing a crossbody out of the corner. Hayes fights up again but gets dropped with a hard clothesline.

A superkick sets up Hayes' springboard DDT for two as Balor can't keep him down. Nothing But Net (top rope Fameasser) doesn't connect so Balor is right back with a gutbuster. The shotgun dropkick sends Hayes into the corner and it's the Coup de Grace to give Balor the pin at 8:45.

Rating: C+. This is a good example of "well then why did you have the match?" Hayes has a big title match coming up tomorrow night so you don't want him to lose. Balor has a big title match coming up this weekend so you don't want him to lose. In other words, this is a match that shouldn't have taken place here as there was no good way out of it, save for some kind of a screwy finish. Balor beating Hayes is fine, but it shouldn't have taken place here.

Cody Rhodes, with his dog Pharaoh, is ready for Dominik Mysterio on Saturday and Damian Priest tonight.

Video on the Bloodline Civil War.

Money In The Bank rundown.

Cody Rhodes vs. Damian Priest

They fight over a lockup to start with Cody trying for the leg. That is broken up without much trouble as Priest powers him into the corner, only to get countered into a delayed gordbuster. Cue Dominik Mysterio and Rhea Ripley though and the distraction lets Priest...well get pulled into the post though.

Rhodes hits a dive but another distraction allows Priest to grab a Downward Spiral as we take a break. Back with Priest hitting a flapjack to put Rhodes down but he's able to run the ropes and super armdrag Priest off the top. Rhodes slugs away until a headlock driver gives Priest two.

A Pedigree cuts Priest off, only to have him come back with a jumping superkick for two more. Dominik's distraction breaks up the Disaster Kick and South of Heaven gets two , leaving Ripley livid. Back up and Cody sends Priest into Dominik, setting up the Cody Cutter into Cross Rhodes for the pin at 13:34.

Rating: B-. This was a good way to close the show as Cody still doesn't get his hands on Dominik. You have to wait for Saturday to see that happen and it should be one heck of a beating when it finally takes place. Here though, it was Cody having to get through the pesky Dominik while still dealing with Priest, which is already a task in its own right. Priest got in his offense here and still looks great, but Cody probably isn't losing to anyone named not named Lesnar anytime soon. Or maybe Dominik on Saturday.

Dominik gets in a cheap shot on Cody and runs off to end the show.

Overall Rating: C+. There was good wrestling mostly throughout the show, but there were also things that brought it back down. Stuff like Hayes losing for no apparent reason, the long stretches between matches and a not exactly inspiring women's Money In The Bank segment didn't leave me wanting to see the show. It wasn't a bad show, but you could definitely feel a different style in a lot of ways, which isn't exactly encouraging to see.

Results

Ricochet b. Shinsuke Nakamura – Shooting star press

Ronda Rousey b. Raquel Rodriguez – Rollup

Dominik Mysterio b. Akira Tozawa – Frog splash

Gunther b. Sami Zayn – Powerbomb

Finn Balor b. Carmelo Hayes – Coup de Grace

Cody Rhodes b. Damian Priest – Cross Rhodes

Remember to follow me on Twitter @kbreviews and head over to my Amazon author page with 30 different cheap wrestling books at:

<http://www.amazon.com/Thomas-Hall/e/B00E6282W6>

AND

[Remember to check out Wrestlingrumors.net](http://Wrestlingrumors.net) for all of your [wrestling headline needs](http://Wrestlingrumors.net).

Monday Night Raw – June 12, 2023: Something Good About This Week's Show

Monday Night Raw

Date: June 12, 2023

Location: Intrust Bank Arena, Wichita, Kansas

Commentators: Kevin Patrick, Corey Graves

We're less than three weeks away from Money in the Bank and tonight we have another qualifying match. We also have Kevin Owens/Sami Zayn getting to deal with Imperium, but the bigger story might be Finn Balor coming after Seth Rollins and the World Heavyweight Championship. Let's get to it.

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

Here is Rhea Ripley, who is quickly presented with the Women's World Title (which looks like the World Heavyweight Title but with a white strap). The fans cheer, but here is Dominik Mysterio to put the title around here waist. He calls the booing disrespectful but here is Cody Rhodes to interrupt.

Cody could talk about his match with the Miz, but we look at Dominik calling him a deadbeat dad last week. Dominik slapped him last week but Cody was hoping that Brock Lesnar was coming out here this week. Instead, how about he faces Dominik at Money In The Bank? Rhea accepts for him but cue Miz to jump Cody from behind. Cody drops him but gets jumped by Dominik.

Cody Rhodes vs. The Miz

Miz flips out of an early belly to back suplex but it's way too early for the Skull Crushing Finale. Instead Cody sends him outside for a Disaster Kick off the apron. The suicide dive connects and Cody grabs an armbar back inside. Cody

misses a charge into the post though and Miz sends him into the post as we take a break.

Back with Cody fighting back and hitting a powerslam as Cody vs. Dominik is officially confirmed for Money in the Bank. Another Disaster Kick gives Cody two but Miz kicks him in the arm and gets two off a DDT. The Cody Cutter connects though and Cross Rhodes finishes for Cody at 10:38.

Rating: C+. Cody gets another win as he keeps getting ready for his third showdown with Brock Lesnar, even if that might not take place for a good while. As usual, Miz can be there to take a loss to anyone and look good in defeat. The arm work was a fine enough story here and they had a perfectly watchable match.

Becky Lynch passes the Alpha Academy and Maxxine Dupri working out on her way to the ring.

Here is Lynch in the ring for a chat. She talks about how we have been conditioned to think that the champion is the most important person. Instead, it should be the person with the most power, and who has more power than the person holding that briefcase? That should make the champ scared, but it should make Trish Stratus scared too.

Cue Zoey Stark to interrupt, saying Lynch can't beat Trish. Lynch says learning from her failures is what made her great, but we haven't learned much about Stark. She knows Stark is good, but she has no personality. Stark is ready to take Lynch out at Money in the Bank. Lynch says we can do this right now but cue Chelsea Green and Sonya Deville to say they'll handle this. Zoey did well in her first major promo on the main roster and held her own against a star like Lynch. We'll also ignore Lynch saying that having a title shot is more important than having the title itself.

Chelsea Green vs. Becky Lynch

Sonya Deville is here with Green, who gets shouldered down to start. We take a break and come back with Lynch fighting out of a chinlock but getting sent face first into the corner. Lynch isn't having that and counters I'm Prettier. A rollup is countered as well and it's the Disarm-Her for the tap at 6:28.

Rating: C. Not much to this one as it's hard to imagine that Lynch is going to be in any kind of danger against Green. Despite coming back to some fanfare, Green hasn't done much of note so far. That being said, she can still be out there driving people crazy and lose over and over without missing a beat. That's a good person to have around and Green plays the role well.

We recap last week's main event, with Seth Rollins retaining the World Title over Damian Priest.

The Judgment Day is in the back and Finn Balor says he has a lot on his mind. Priest does too, like qualifying for the Money in the Bank ladder match. Alone.

Money in the Bank Qualifying Match: Matt Riddle vs. Damian Priest

Riddle goes straight to a Kimura before having to switch to a sleeper. Priest is sent outside where the kick from the apron is cut off, allowing Priest to send him face first into the apron. A huge dive misses for Priest, who goes flying over the announcers' table. Back inside and Priest hits a lifting Downward Spiral, followed by the knee between Riddle's shoulders.

Back up and Riddle kicks him in the head, setting up a backsplash to send Priest outside. The springboard Floating Bro takes Priest down and Riddle grabs a bridging German suplex for two back inside. Priest is right back with the Broken Arrow and they're both down as we take a break.

Back with Riddle pulling him into an ankle lock before

switching into another sleeper. Priest drops backwards for the escape and blasts him with a clothesline. Riddle's springboard is broken up and a hanging headlock driver gives Priest two more. Priest catches him up top but is reversed into a fisherman's superplex for two. Back up and Priest catches him on the ropes and hits a Razor's Edge for the pin at 14:20.

Rating: B. This was a hard hitting back and forth fight with Priest winning in the end, which was a bit of a surprise. That being said, Riddle hasn't exactly had the best success since his return but at least he is doing well in the ring. The fans are reacting to him as well, which means he is probably going to be pretty high up on the card for the time being. If he can have matches like this on a regular basis, I can go for that.

Post match Gunther and Ludvig Kaiser come out to stare down Priest. After a quick look at Priest, Gunther and Kaiser go inside and beat down Riddle.

Cody Rhodes is ready to face Dominik Mysterio at Money in the Bank because it's a step on the path to finishing the story, just like beating Brock Lesnar again.

Natalya says maybe changing is a good thing because she doesn't know how to be herself anymore.

Kevin Owens and Sami Zayn are ready to face Imperium, who interrupt them. Owens is ready to get annoyed, to the point where he agrees to make their previously scheduled match for the titles. Gunther chuckles but Sami holds up the titles. Adam Pearce isn't sure if the match will be for the titles.

We recap the Bloodline issues from Smackdown.

Indus SHERA and Jinder Mahal want to hurt Shelton Benjamin and Cedric Alexander again.

Ricochet vs. Bronson Reed

Reed knocks him into the corner to start and here is Shinsuke

Nakamura. Ricochet fights back but a tornado DDT is countered into a drop over the top rope. A hard crash off of said ropes leaves Ricochet in trouble as we take a break. Back with Ricochet slipping out of a powerbomb and hitting a jumping kick to the shoulder. Reed gets kicked to the floor for a suicide dive, followed by the springboard crossbody back inside. A Lionsault gives Ricochet two but another moonsault is pulled out of the air, with Reed throwing him at Nakamura. Back in and Nakamura jumps Reed for the DQ at 7:35.

Rating: B-. That is the kind of storyline ending that keeps things going and you might even be able to pencil in a triple threat match after Nakamura faces Reed next week. As for the match itself, it was a rather decent power vs. speed match, as Ricochet is on a nice little roll as of late. Reed is a good monster too, and seeing him run people over is a nice thing to see on a regular basis.

Post match Ricochet is mad at Nakamura for costing him a match, which is a rather fair criticism. Reed runs them over and goes up, only to be pulled back down in a double superplex.

Kevin Owens goes off on Sami Zayn about all of the stress they have been having recently. But don't worry, because he's good for out there.

Adam Pearce makes the main event a Tag Team Title match when Ricochet comes in. He wants Bronson Reed next week, but Reed already has Shinsuke Nakamura, who pops in, next week instead. Ricochet asks Nakamura what was up out there and threatens violence if it happens again. Nakamura doesn't seem threatened.

Here is Finn Balor for a chat. He wants Seth Rollins out here, minus the singalong and jokes, so here is Rollins, complete with singalong. Balor tells everyone to shut up and mentions what he was doing in 2016 before Rollins hurt him. Rollins

asks the fans if they're having fun tonight and they cut Balor off again.

Balor goes over the injuries Rollins gave him in 2016 and now it's time Balor takes it all back at Money in the Bank. That makes Rollins laugh because he's glad to see the Balor he has been wanting for seven years. Rollins has changed over the years and is the best version of himself. So which Balor is coming to London? The one who beat him in 2016 has a shot, but this guy is a joke. Balor looks serious to wrap it up. Balor as the challenger of the month at a show filled with ladder matches works just fine, especially with their history.

Raquel Rodriguez vs. Shayna Baszler

Ronda Rousey is here too. Baszler grabs a fall away slam to start and powers Baszler into the corner. That's broken up and Baszler pulls her down, only to have Rousey offer a distraction. Baszler grabs a rollup with an assist from Rousey for the pin at 2:13.

Iron Sheik tribute video.

Erik vs. Chad Gable

Their respective partner/manager are here too. Erik takes him down to start but we pause for Maxxine to armdrag Valhalla on the floor. Maxxine celebrates like nuts and the distraction lets Gable get a sunset flip for the pin at 1:48.

Video on Rhea Ripley.

Finn Balor is talking to JD McDonagh when Damian Priest comes in. They're both happy with each other's success but Priest wouldn't cash in on Balor. Priest says make it work and end this at Money in the Bank.

Seth Rollins is ready for Balor at Money in the Bank and seems to think Priest isn't happy. He's so happy that we can just do another open challenge for a title match next week.

Tag Team Titles: Gunther/Ludvig Kaiser vs. Sami Zayn/Kevin Owens

Gunther and Kaiser are challenging and Gunther powers Sami into the corner to start. Sami manages to knock him outside though and there's the big running flip dive to take Gunther down. We take a break and come back with Zayn taking Kaiser down into a quickly broken armbar. Sami knocks him down again but it's off to Gunther off a blind tag. The big boot gives Gunther two and it's Sami in trouble in the corner. Zayn is draped over the top and kicked down to the floor as we take a break.

Back with Owens getting the tag to clean house, including a t-bone suplex to Gunther. A superkick sets up the Cannonball to Gunther and the Swanton gets two. The Stunner is cut off though and Gunther boots Owens down. The double tag brings in Sami to suplex Kaiser into the corner but Gunther pulls Sami outside.

Gunther's chop only hits the post though, leaving Kaiser to Death Valley Driver Zayn. Back in and Gunther hits a rather hard lariat for two and the Imperium Bomb gets the same, with Owens having to make the save. Cue Matt Riddle, with the distraction letting Owens take Gunther down on the floor. The Blue Thunder Bomb retains the titles at 18:43.

Rating: B. This was a longer match and it made the titles feel that much more important. Gunther has that aura to him that makes whatever he does seem important and Kaiser is a rather suitable partner. The ending also keeps Riddle vs. Imperium going and actually made the Blue Thunder Bomb feel like a finisher, which has been the case maybe twice ever for Zayn. Good main event here, as Owens and Zayn get another nice title defense.

Overall Rating: B. This was kind of a strange show as it set up some things for Money in the Bank but it didn't exactly

feel important. Maybe that's because neither match exactly comes off as big, but the ladder matches are going to carry the show anyway. Other than that, you had solid action here though and a lot of stuff did happen. It might not have been great, but it was efficient, and that's not a bad night.

Results

Cody Rhodes b. The Miz – Cross Rhodes

Becky Lynch b. Chelsea Green – Disarm-Her

Damian Priest b. Matt Riddle – Razor's Edge

Bronson Reed b. Ricochet via DQ when Shinsuke Nakamura interfered

Shayna Baszler b. Raquel Rodriguez – Rollup with assist from Ronda Rousey

Chad Gable b. Erik – Sunset flip

Kevin Owens/Sami Zayn b. Gunther/Ludvig Kaiser – Blue Thunder Bomb to Kaiser

Remember to follow me on Twitter @kbreviews and head over to my Amazon author page with 30 different cheap wrestling books at:

<http://www.amazon.com/Thomas-Hall/e/B00E6282W6>

AND

[Remember to check out Wrestlingrumors.net](http://Wrestlingrumors.net) for all of your [wrestling headline needs](http://Wrestlingrumors.net).

Monday Night Raw – June 5, 2023: I Accept This

Monday Night Raw

Date: June 5, 2023

Location: XL Center, Hartford, Connecticut

Commentators: Kevin Patrick, Corey Graves

We're near WWE's home this week and it's a big night as Seth Rollins is defending the World Heavyweight Title against Damian Priest. Other than that, we'll have some more Money In The Bank qualifying matches and more from Imperium and Kevin Owens/Sami Zayn. Let's get to it.

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

Here is Seth Rollins to get things going. It has been a party since he won the title but tonight, he has Damian Priest. Judgment Day is good, but they're not as good as him. Cue Priest and Finn Balor, with Rollins wondering where Rhea Ripley and Dominik Mysterio are. Priest brags about how awesome he is so Rollins challenges him to make it one on one tonight, with Judgment Day in the back.

Rollins also brings up how things go badly for Finn Balor when they square off, including a poke to the shoulder, which is a rather cruel line given how badly Balor was hurt in their first match. Anyway, Priest say deal and promises to win the title while Rollins can go down in history with one of the shortest reigns ever. Actually it's already the longest in the history of the title but that's not the point Priest is going for.

Money In The Bank Qualifying Match: Becky Lynch vs. Sonya Deville

Chelsea Green is here with Deville, who knocks Becky into the

corner to start. Some forearms in the corner and against the rope have Becky in trouble but she's right back with the Bexploder. A middle rope crossbody gives Becky two but cue Trish Stratus and Zoey Stark to watch. The distraction rollup gets two and we take a break.

Back with Deville hitting a superplex for two, followed by the forearm off. Becky starts slugging back but Green offers a distraction, earning herself a heck of a beating on the floor. Deville goes to help and gets sent into the barricade as well (with some hair extensions coming out). Deville's rollup with feet on the ropes gets two back inside but Becky has had it with this, setting up the Manhandle Slam for the pin at 11:24.

Rating: C+. The interference was needed to help make this match competitive as Deville has never been a big deal in the singles ranks. Winning the Money in the Bank briefcase is about all that there is left for Becky to do in her career so giving her the win here was the way to go. Green and Deville need something to do, but beating Lynch isn't it.

We look at the Bloodline split on Smackdown.

Kevin Owens and Sami Zayn won't say they told you so about the Bloodline, but you get the idea. Imperium pops up, sending Owens into a rant about how no one said their name. Gunther comes in to say Owens is undisciplined so Owens wants to go to the ring right now.

Kayden Carter and Katana Chance are ready to party. And wrestle.

Gunther vs. Kevin Owens

Non-title. They go right to the slugout to start with Owens hitting him in the face and knocking Gunther into the corner. Gunther is back with a German suplex and we take a break. We come back with Gunther working on a neck crank and hitting a big boot for two. Another big boot sets up a Boston crab but

Owens is back up with a failed suplex attempt.

Instead Gunther blasts him with a clothesline, but Owens is back with some clothesline of his own. They trade German suplexes and both of them are down for a breather. Owens knocks him into the corner for the Cannonball and another near fall. Gunther blasts him with the shotgun dropkick but Owens' fisherman's buster gets two.

Back up and Gunther takes him to the top for a single underhook superplex, only to have the big splash hit raised knees. Owens' Swanton hits Gunther for two but Imperium and Zayn get in a fight on the floor. Kaiser comes inside and gets Stunned, allowing Gunther to roll Owens up for the pin at 17:10.

Rating: B+. These guys beat the fire out of each other and it was a heck of a lot of fun to watch them out there. Gunther can go with anyone and those chops are still great. At the same time, Owens is going to be out there swinging away against anyone and he did thing rather well here. The ending made sense too, as you don't want Owens taking a clean pin and Gunther rolled him up for a pin rather than hitting him low or something like that. Makes sense, and it suited him well.

Post break, Imperium interrupts Matt Riddle's interview so Riddle takes Vinci down and hurts his leg before being pulled off. That's a different Riddle and that's what he needs to do.

Ronda Rousey and Shayna Baszler want competition and Kayden Carter/Katana Chance (both about six inches shorter than the champs) come in to ask about a title shot. The champs laugh but sure.

Women's Tag Team Titles: Katana Chance/Kayden Carter vs. Ronda Rousey/Shayna Baszler

Rousey and Baszler are defending. Baszler takes Chance into the corner to start and it's off to Rousey, who wants Carter.

That's exactly what she gets as everything breaks down, with Carter and Chance hitting dives out to the floor. Back in and Rousey works on Chance's arms but Chance fights up and brings Carter in. Carter hits a low superkick to Baszler and a hanging Pedigree, only to get elbowed in the face. Rousey comes back in but gets caught in the neckbreaker/450 combination (Carter/Chance's finisher) for two, with Baszler making the save. Baszler has had enough and chokes out Carter to retain at 6:42.

Rating: C+. This was a weird one as you had the newcomers trying to get their start but being up against a couple of monsters in Rousey/Baszler. Carter and Chance did look good in defeat, but having a loss in their main roster debut isn't the best look. Rousey and Baszler are likely going to be the champs for at least a bit as not only are they dominant, but there is no one out there to give them a serious challenge at the moment. Maybe there is some kind of a big twist coming, but for now, we could be seeing Baszler and Rousey with the titles for a long time.

Bronson Reed isn't happy that Ricochet is in the Money in the Bank ladder match instead of him. Ricochet said he earned his shot and Reed lost his, but Reed says he was dominating until...and here is Nakamura to interrupt. Reed leaves, saying next time would be different.

Video on Johnny Gargano's rise through NXT and road here, despite being told he had no place in WWE. This Gargano is more interesting than whatever else he's been doing lately.

Ricochet vs. Shinsuke Nakamura

Ricochet grabs a headlock to start but gets his leg kicked out. Nakamura kicks him down again but gets knocked off the top and out to the floor in a crash. Ricochet's big running flip dive connects and Nakamura is down as we take a break. Back with Ricochet knocking Nakamura down and hitting the

running shooting star press for two. Nakamura takes him into the corner for Good Vibrations but Kinshasa is countered with the Recoil. Ricochet gets caught up top but here is Bronson Reed to jump Nakamura for the DQ at 8:07.

Rating: C+. They were both talented stars in the ring and got to show themselves off a bit here, but there is only so much you can do in an eight minute match with about four minutes of that being in a break. Throw in that this is the first of the still idiotic “building momentum to Money in the Bank” (because getting a pinfall or submission somehow makes it easier to climb a ladder) matches and they did rather well with a good number of factors making it harder.

Post match the destruction is on, with Ricochet getting crushed with the Tsunami. Fans: “ONE MORE TIME!” Reed: Nah.

We look at Maxxine Dupri being chased off by Valhalla last week.

Maxxine Dupri and Chad Gable aren't sure what to do about the Viking Raiders, but Otis seems to have a plan. Dupri is ready to train and has the perfect outfit in her locker.

It's time for MizTV with Miz wasting no time in bringing out Cody Rhodes. Miz: “You look dashing tonight.” Miz brings up Rhodes challenging Brock Lesnar to a fight anytime, which Miz thinks is rather stupid. Cody: “Mike...” Miz: “In this ring, it's the Miz. First name The, second name Miz.” Instead, Cody has been told it was brave, not that Miz would know anything about large testicles.

Miz talks about how we love surprises around here, so here are Dominik Mysterio and Rhea Ripley. After Ripley shushes Miz (Miz: “Yes ma'am”), Dominik deals with quite the chorus of booing to get to his point: Cody is a bad father. Dom compared him to Rey Mysterio, but Cody says that Dominik was in jail for about 15 minutes. Cody: “You even have a worse prison tattoo than mine.”

Then Dominik got a public spanking at Wrestlemania. Dominik slaps Cody and then hides behind Ripley when Cody comes after him. Cody drops Miz with a cast shot to blow off some steam. Funny stuff here, and Cody needs something to do until Lesnar gets back. If nothing else, Dominik going against another high level opponent is a good thing, as it tells me WWE has faith in him.

We look back at the opening sequence.

Money In The Bank Qualifying Match: Zoey Stark vs. Natalya

Trish Stratus is here with Stark. Natalya takes her down by the arm to start but Stark fights up and goes after the knee. Stark stomps on said knee as Trish seems to think this is rather intelligent. Some knees to the ribs have Natalya in more trouble but she armdrags her way out. A German suplex drops Stark for two and the Sharpshooter goes on. Stark makes the ropes so Natalya yells at Trish, who kicks her in the knee. The Z36 finishes Natalya at 3:45.

Rating: C. It's a Natalya match without much time so I think you know what you're getting here. As has been the case for...oh the last five years or so, Natalya is as smooth of an in-ring worker as you can get and there is very little reason to get interested in anything she is doing. She's there to put people over and make them look good, which she often does, but the lack of excitement over her being in the ring doesn't help things whatsoever.

Paul Heyman invites us to hear Jey Uso's decision this week on Smackdown. This week, Jey will choose to stand by his brother Solo, because he can share a womb with Jimmy, but he'll never be closer to him than he will be to Roman Reigns.

Indus Sher vs. Cedric Alexander/Shelton Benjamin

Indus Sher jumps them before the bell and lays Cedric out. No match.

Raw World Title: Seth Rollins vs. Damian Priest

Rollins is defending and takes Priest down fast to start, meaning we go to a break in less than a minute. Back with Rollins taking him to the floor but being sent into the timekeeper's area. Rollins dive is punched out of the air, followed by a superkick back inside. We hit the chinlock for a bit, followed by a double arm crank to keep Rollins in trouble. Rollins fights up and hits a few shots, followed by a backbreaker.

The frog splash misses though and Priest kicks Rollins in the head. Rollins knocks him to the floor but the suicide dive is countered into a Downward Spiral onto the announcers' table. We take a break and come back with Rollins hitting the superplex into the Falcon Arrow for two. Three straight suicide dives send Priest over the announcers' table and the frog splash gives Rollins two back inside.

Priest is back up with a headlock driver for the same and a spinning kick to the head catches Rollins on top. A super hurricanrana brings Rollins down for two but he's back with a Pedigree for the same. They go to the floor and a barricade powerbomb hits Priest, followed by a superkick to cut off an interfering Finn Balor. Priest hits South of Heaven for a slightly delayed two back inside. Rollins is back with a superkick though and the Stomp retains the title at 21:53.

Rating: B. The match was the good stuff you would expect in this spot, but they are hammering in the "workhorse title" concept like something that is hammed in rather quickly and often. Rollins beating Roman Reigns by DQ about a year and a half ago doesn't make him feel like the other World Champion, but rather trying to make the Intercontinental Title feel like a big deal when Brock Lesnar wasn't around. I'll certainly take Rollins having one good match after another, but this "it's the other World Title" stuff is going to feel lame until Reigns gets beaten, which could take a very long time.

Rollins and Balor have a staredown to end the show. Because Rollins is going to have to defend against him next, because it's the WORKHORSE TITLE you see.

Overall Rating: B. All in all, this was a rather good Raw, as they took care of some stuff for Money in the Bank with the qualifiers, gave us a pair of very strong matches and didn't do anything overly stupid. Cody even made fun of his own tattoo to throw in some comedy. This show worked, and I'll absolutely take it as the offering from one of WWE's brands for a weekly show.

Results

Becky Lynch b. Sonya Deville – Manhandle Slam

Gunther b. Kevin Owens – Rollup

Ronda Rousey/Shayna Baszler b. Kayden Carter/Katana Chance – Kirifuda Clutch to Carter

Shinsuke Nakamura b. Ricochet via DQ when Bronson Reed interfered

Zoey Stark b. Natalya – Z360

Seth Rollins b. Damian Priest – Stomp

Remember to follow me on Twitter @kbreviews and head over to my Amazon author page with 30 different cheap wrestling books at:

<http://www.amazon.com/Thomas-Hall/e/B00E6282W6>

AND

[Remember to check out Wrestlingrumors.net](http://wrestlingrumors.net) for all of your [wrestling headline needs](http://wrestlingrumors.net).

Monday Night Raw – May 22, 2023: There's Something Missing

Monday Night Raw

Date: May 22, 2023

Location: Giant Center, Hershey, Pennsylvania

Commentators: Kevin Patrick, Corey Graves

It's the go home Raw for Night Of Champions and that means it is time for the final push towards the show. That might be a little tricky since there are three main events, all of which are only half Raw stars. Maybe they have a way to draw in some interest tonight otherwise so let's get to it.

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

We open in the back with Brock Lesnar beating down Cody Rhodes. The beating goes on for a bit and Rhodes is left laying, including his arm being crushed against a door with a keg (similar to what he did to Undertaker about 20 years ago).

Here is Paul Heyman in the ring to say he had nothing to do with that beating. That's just the kind of thing you can expect to see at Night Of Champions (Note that Heyman said the show is on Saturday at 1pm. That's more detail than you often get from WWE and I have no idea why it's that much to ask. You want people to watch the show. Let us know when we can do so.), where there will be three main events.

This includes the Bloodline taking the Tag Team Titles from Kevin Owens and Sami Zayn, who come to the ring as Heyman leaves. Zayn: "Where did Heyman go?" Sami talks about their

title defense on Saturday but he has already said everything he has to say to Reigns' face. Tonight they have a six man tag match and here is Imperium to interrupt. Matt Riddle runs in to even things up and Gunther calls the troops off. Imperium charges back in and are promptly kicked out to fight another day. Or probably later tonight.

Ricochet vs. Bronson Reed

Earlier today, Reed blamed Ricochet for losing the battle royal last week. Suffering is promised. Reed misses a charge into the corner to start so Ricochet kicks the knee out to stagger him. Ricochet scores with an enziguri but gets run over, setting up the rolling splash to crush Ricochet down.

We take a break and come back with Ricochet slipping out of a suplex to hammer away at the head. The standing moonsault gets two but Ricochet gets knocked to the floor. Reed's dive off the apron misses though and they head back inside, where Ricochet's springboard is broken up. That's enough to set up the Tsunami for the pin at 8:29.

Rating: C+. There's always room for a big man vs. little man match and that's what we had here. These two worked well together and had a nice match, as Ricochet tried to keep the pace up but ultimately got crushed by Reed. There is some serious potential for a monster with Reed's athleticism and we very well may be seeing him get a heck of a push sooner rather than later.

Apollo Crews is back but gets cut off by Dominik Mysterio and Rhea Ripley. Dominik isn't happy that Crews is getting this time, but Ripley is apparently scheduled next. Dominik: "Apollo who?" Crews isn't impressed, only to have Ripley talk about how she is going to beat Natalya at Night Of Champions. Crews still isn't cool with this and seems to get a match with Dominik tonight.

We get part three of the Seth Rollins interview. Rollins loves

Roman Reigns but doesn't like him. We see some clips of the Shield days (or at least 2/3 of them) but that's not the Reigns that we're seeing today. Rollins has no respect for this Reigns, who has been poisoned by his own ego. Raw can be a different place with Rollins on top. Someone has to take his place when he's gone or when Reigns is gone and that's who he wants to rise up. He's ready for AJ Styles at Night Of Champions. He also sounds like he's ready for some major showdown with Reigns down the line. Maybe even after Reigns costs him the title?

We look at Shinsuke Nakamura arguing with Judgment Day last week on Raw Talk.

Damian Priest yells in Spanish about Nakamura.

Video on Zoey Stark, who trains a lot and is ready to end our heroes.

Zoey Stark vs. Candice LeRae

Stark drives her into the corner to start and hammers away on the mat. The chinlock goes on but here is Nikki Cross to cheer LeRae on. LeRae knocks her to the floor and hits a springboard dive, only to have Nikki celebrate with her (against LeRae's will). The distraction lets Stark send them both into the steps. Back in and the Z360 (Stark picks her up and backflips her into a knee to the chest) finishes LeRae at 2:29. Solid squash for Stark.

Mustafa Ali can't bring himself to say anything positive about Night Of Champions. He has always tried but only come close over and over. No one believes he can do it...and Brock Lesnar walks past him on the way to the ring. Lesnar: "Get a life kid." And with that, Lesnar heads into the arena, as Ali should probably hope he has a shovel to get out of the grave Lesnar just buried him inside.

Lesnar asks what we want to talk about. The thing is, Cody

Rhodes is not going to be able to wrestle at Night Of Champions, but don't worry. Lesnar is going to issue an open challenge for Night Of Champions, and all you have to do is step up right now. Cue Cody Rhodes with his arm in a sling and a big bag of ice under it but referees and Adam Pearce beg him not to do it. Cody gets in anyway, but Brock quickly Kimuras him and seems to break the arm. Lesnar steps on the arm to make it worse before leaving (and drops his hat on the way out).

Alpha Academy vs. Viking Raiders

Maxxine Dupri and Valhalla are here too. Erik blocks Gable's flying headscissors (complete with a THANK YOU) to start but gets armdragged into an armbar. The Vikings be clubbering on Gable as the fans want Otis. Instead they get Gable taking another beating from both Vikings until he rolls over for the hot tag to bring in Otis. House is quickly wrecked and the Caterpillar hits Erik. Gable gets kneed in the face but knocks Ivar off the top as Valhalla chases Dupri off. A bridging rollup finishes Erik at 4:54.

Rating: C. So I guess Otis is just going to be with both Gable and Dupri, which is better than picking a side...I think? Either way, it's more of the best thing they can do with Otis as he's really only succeeded at oddball comedy. Other than that, this was another run of the mill Academy match, which they have perfected by being on TV pretty much every week for what feels like the last ninety four years.

Cody Rhodes refuses medical attention and still wants to fight Brock Lesnar.

Indus Sher is menacing and threatening.

Shinsuke Nakamura vs. Finn Balor

Damian Priest is here with Balor. Feeling out process to start with Balor taking him down and working on the wristlock. A

headscissors keeps Nakamura in trouble and Balor slams his leg down onto Nakamura's face. Back up and Nakamura hits the running knee to the ribs in the corner but Priest gets in a clothesline on the floor as we take a break.

We come back with Nakamura fighting out of a chinlock and screaming at Balor a bit. Nakamura sends him into the corner for the sliding German suplex and then tells Priest to COME ON. Priest chases him back inside, where Nakamura hits a spinning kick to the head for two.

The Sling Blade looks to set up Kinshasa but Balor reverses with the standing double stomp. It's too early for the Coup de Grace though and they're both down for a breather. Priest pulls Balor away from Kinshasa though, earning himself a clothesline into the timekeeper's area. Balor scores with a quick dropkick and now the Coup de Grace finishes Nakamura at 11:21.

Rating: B-. This is a good example of "well, what were you expecting?". Was there any doubt that Balor and Nakamura were going to have a good match together? I'm not wild on Nakamura losing again, but there are certain things you just get used to in wrestling. Balor gets a boost back up the ladder, but there is little reason to believe that anything he does is going to stick these days. For now, I'll settle for just having a nice match.

We look at Liv Morgan's shoulder injury, which forced the Women's Tag Team Titles to be vacated.

Raquel Rodriguez vs. Sonya Deville

Chelsea Green is here with Deville and offers a quick distraction so Deville can jump Rodriguez from behind to start. A middle rope knee to the face drops Rodriguez for two but she runs Deville over. The corkscrew Vader Bomb connects and the Texana Bomb finishes for Rodriguez at 1:48.

Post match the double team beatdown is on but Shotzi runs in for the save.

Trish Stratus is here for the contract signing and suggests that Adam Pearce put a no touch clause in effect for her contract signing with Becky Lynch. That's a negative actually.

Video on Matt Riddle.

It's time for the contract signing between Trish Stratus and Becky Lynch. Becky, in some odd sunglasses (they look like hands covering her eyes), signs before Trish comes out and then tells her to get out here. Cue Trish to say Becky was a lot more eager to sign than it was to come back to Raw after she kicked Becky in the head.

This is Trish's first contract signing and she wants to savor it here...wherever we are. Trish is back to be the biggest star again and she won't need a broken nose to do it (Becky is still sitting still and not looking at Trish whatsoever). We're not done as Trish talks about how Becky's worst enemy was herself. Trish signs, saying that this is going to be Becky's last contract signing. Becky says Trish is scared of time passing her by, because the fans remember her being better than she is.

If Trish wants her flowers, Becky says "Thank You Trish", for being everything Becky doesn't want to be. Trish can stab people in the back and Becky will hit them in the face. Becky has had a career that Trish can only dream of, while Trish has done things that would embarrass Becky horrible. If she thinks barking like a dog was embarrassing, just wait for what Becky does at Night Of Champions. Trish turns the table over and leaves. This made it feel a lot more personal and that is what the feud needed.

We look at Brock Lesnar beating Cody Rhodes down earlier tonight (twice).

Adam Pearce is on the phone with someone and reiterates that Cody Rhodes will not accept any medical attention.

Shotzi and Raquel Rodriguez are a team and they'll win the Tag Team Titles next week.

Dominik Mysterio vs. Apollo Crews

Rhea Ripley is here with Dominik. Crews starts fast with a suplex into a delayed gorilla press for two. Dominik catches him on top though and takes Crews down for the stomping. A suplex gives Dominik two and we're off to the chinlock. Crews fights up and hits something close to a Blockbuster, followed by a middle rope crossbody for two of his own. They head to the floor where a clothesline hits Dominik but Ripley offers a distraction. Dominik trips him into the steps for a nine count, followed by the frog splash to give Dominik the pin at 4:56.

Rating: C. This is the kind of match that makes me wonder how far Dominik can go. While he's not his dad in the ring, he's certainly able to wrestle a competent match and is far from some joke that was turned into a heat magnet. Dominik gets amazing reactions from the crowd and does well enough in the ring to back it up. You don't get that kind of a combination very often and he is making it work.

Video on AJ Styles.

We get the final part of the Seth Rollins interview. As Rollins said when he started, he but he wants to change things around here and this is his moment to do something special. He's going all in for the World Heavyweight Championship.

Night Of Champions rundown. Rhea Ripley vs. Natalya is official.

Imperium vs. Matt Riddle/Sami Zayn/Kevin Owens

Kaiser strikes Zayn into the corner to start but Zayn takes

him over for the tag to Riddle. Vinci comes in as well and strikes away at Riddle, who sends him flying with a gutwrench suplex. It's off to Gunther, who blocks Riddle's double leg but can't block the kicks to the chest. We take a break and come back with Gunther blasting Riddle for two before hitting a heck of a clothesline. Riddle enziguris his way to freedom though and the tag brings Owens in.

House is cleaned, including a Cannonball to Vinci, but Owens is knocked off the apron for a crash as we take a break. Back with Owens hitting a frog splash to Vinci, setting up the desperation tag to Zayn. The Helluva Kick is blocked though and Gunther chops the heck out of Zayn. A Blue Thunder Bomb gives Zayn two on Gunther as everything breaks down again. Owens Stuns Vinci but Gunther cuts off the Helluva Kick with a sleeper. Riddle breaks it up with the Floating Bro before throwing Gunther over the announcers' table. That leaves Zayn to Helluva Kick Vinci, setting up Owens' Swanton for the pin at 15:18.

Rating: B. I could have gone for a more complete version of this without losing so much time due to the two breaks. Owens and Zayn get some momentum heading into Night Of Champions, Gunther still looks like a monster and the match was good as a bonus. Not a bad use of a main event match and everyone did what they needed to do.

HHH comes in to see Cody Rhodes, who still refuses medical attention. They both know Cody's arm is broken but he is NOT afraid. No one is questioning Cody's bravery but he brings up what HHH has done before. Cody is going to Night Of Champions to fight Brock Lesnar. HHH finally accepts it and leaves to end the show. They're pushing this Cody match hard but him winning on another fluke sounds pretty insane.

Overall Rating: B-. The show wasn't bad at all but there were some dull stretches that dragged it out. In other words, it's what I once dubbed the Raw Special: a solid two hour show that

was stretched out to three hours and lost a lot of steam as a result. Night Of Champions should be a good show, but there are some matches that haven't quite made it to must see, or even want to see, territory. This Raw didn't exactly help that and while the action was good, it needed something else to really make it a smash.

Results

Bronson Reed b. Ricochet – Tsunami

Zoey Stark b. Candice LeRae – Z360

Alpha Academy b. Viking Raiders – Bridging rollup to Erik

Finn Balor b. Shinsuke Nakamura – Coup de Grace

Raquel Rodriguez b. Sonya Deville – Tejana Bomb

Dominik Mysterio b. Apollo Crews – Frog splash

Kevin Owens/Sami Zayn/Matt Riddle b. Imperium – Swanton Bomb to Vinci

Remember to follow me on Twitter @kbreviews and head over to my Amazon author page with 30 different cheap wrestling books at:

<http://www.amazon.com/Thomas-Hall/e/B00E6282W6>

AND

[Remember to check out Wrestlingrumors.net for all of your wrestling headline needs.](http://wrestlingrumors.net)

Monday Night Raw – May 15, 2023: That Sounds Heymanish

Monday Night Raw

Date: May 15, 2023

Location: Greensboro Coliseum, Greensboro, North Carolina

Commentators Kevin Patrick, Corey Graves

We are less than two weeks away from Night Of Champions and the main event (in theory) is set with Seth Rollins vs. AJ Styles for the inaugural World Heavyweight Championship. Other than that, we have a different form of the Bloodline coming after Kevin Owens and Sami Zayn, who might have something to say about it this week. Let's get to it.

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

Opening sequence.

Here are Kevin Owens and Sami Zayn for the opening chat (after a clip of the announcement that they will defend against Roman Reigns and Solo Sikoa). Zayn is fired up about the match because it is their chance to check Reigns for good. Reigns is pushing the Bloodline way too hard and everything is falling apart. Now Reigns being champion for 1,000 days isn't enough because he wants the Tag Team Titles too. Well HE CAN'T HAVE THEM, but Zayn and Owens can have an interruption at the hands of the Judgment Day.

Owens doesn't care what they have to say because he wants to fight, but Zayn says we should hear them out. Zayn: "Gentlemen and Dom." The team gets in the ring to talk and Finn Balor says they'll be waiting on the titles after Night Of Champions. Rhea Ripley laughs at the idea but Dominik Mysterio is booted out of the building. The fight starts fast with Zayn clearing the ring with the save. Dominik's heat continues to be amazing and it is just awesome to see the fans loathe him

like this.

Shinsuke Nakamura vs. The Miz

Nakamura sends him into the corner to start but runs into the general vicinity of Miz's boot. Another boot doesn't connect either (though Nakamura goes down anyway), only to have Nakamura kick him down for the apron knee. Miz neckbreakers him across the rope though and we take a break.

Back with Nakamura's kicks being blocked so he kicks Miz in the head instead. The running knee in the corner sets up a cross armbreaker but Miz stacks him up for two. Miz's short DDT gets two so Nakamura kicks him in the head again for the same. The sliding German suplex looks to set up Kinshasa but Miz bails to the apron. The distraction lets Miz hit the Skull Crushing Finale for two, only to walk into Kinshasa for the pin at 9:57.

Rating: B-. This was one of the better Miz matches in a bit as he was hanging in there with Nakamura, and mostly clean at that. Nakamura needed the win after coming up short last week, so at least he is getting somewhere. WWE needs to reestablish things a bit with the new roster and this should be held set the lineup a bit.

Chelsea Green and Sonya Deville aren't happy that Liv Morgan is hurt, meaning their Women's Tag Team Title match is off for tonight. Raquel Rodriguez is willing to beat up Green tonight, with Green sounding a bit nervous, even as she yells.

We get a video on Seth Rollins, going all the way back to his NXT days.

Corey Graves sits down with Rollins, who talks about winning the first NXT Title in a tournament. He became a force for change, which included turning on Roman Reigns to break up the Shield. More on this later.

Here is Imperium, with Gunther standing on the announcers' table. Gunther has been the most dominant Intercontinental Champion of the modern era and now he will continue his reign on Raw. For now though, no one has been named as his next challenger for this prestigious championship (WHY DOES NO ONE ELSE PRAISE THEIR TITLES LIKE HIM???). That will be solved soon, and he will defeat them at Night Of Champions.

Battle Royal

Ricochet, Bronson Reed, Erik, Ivar, Johnny Gargano, Akira Tozawa, Elias, Humberto, Angel, Apollo Crews, Von Wagner, Dolph Ziggler, Xyon Quinn, Cedric Alexander, JD Drake, Dexter Lumis, Mansoor, Mace, Riddick Moss, Baron Corbin, Otis, Riddle, Chad Gable, Shelton Benjamin, Mustafa Ali

For the Intercontinental Title shot at Night Of Champions and I believe that's everyone. Corbin, in shorts, dumps Tozawa to start and is immediately clotheslined out by Lumis. The Models get rid of Lumis and are tossed out by the Alpha Academy, followed by McDonagh headbutting Humberto out. Ziggler kicks McDonagh out but gets eliminated by Wagner (that an upset). McDonagh goes after Ziggler on the floor and we take a break.

Back with the Vikings tossing out Benjamin and Quinn, plus Benjamin. The Academy and the Vikings have a standoff with Erik being sent to the apron. Gable is suplexed to the apron with him but hangs on and can't quite German suplex Erik out. The knee knocks Gable silly (but not out), allowing Otis to dump Erik. Ivar knocks Gable out but Reed tosses Ivar and Otis at the same time.

We're down to eight (Reed, Riddle, Ricochet, Moss, Gargano, Elias, Crews and Ali) with everyone else going after Reed. With that not working, Gargano snaps off a hurricanrana to Ali, who is right back with the rolling neckbreaker. The slingshot spear hits Ali but Ricochet crushes Gargano with a running shooting star press. Moss fall away slams Gargano but

walks into Reed's Samoan drop. Crews Blockbusters (or kind of flip dives into) Reed, only to get kneed in the face by Elias.

Crews gets rid of Elias but gets eliminated by Reed, leaving us with six. Reed Rock Bottoms Gargano onto Ricochet but Riddle is there with the strikes. The Floating Bro finally drops Reed but Moss hits a heck of a shoulder to knock Riddle down. Not that it matters as Riddle dumps Moss, followed by a hurricanrana to get rid of Gargano.

Gunther sends the rest of Imperium after Riddle and that's enough for Reed to knock him out. Ricochet knees Reed in the face and dropkicks him...not quite out, as Ali has to help but they only get Reed to the apron. A triangle dropkick staggers Reed again but another one is countered into a fireman's carry. That leaves Ali to dropkick both Reed and Ricochet out for the win at 12:28.

Rating: B-. This got WAY better after the break and Ali vs. Gunther could be quite the nice title match at Night Of Champions. Reed continued to look like a monster here and Riddle felt like one of the biggest stars around. Ali winning is a nice choice and he should be fine as a fresh challenger for Gunther. Good stuff here overall, and multiple people got a nice showcase.

Here is Becky Lynch for a chat. Becky talks about how she has been going through a lot lately but in this business you put on your best face and keep going. She got some help from two legends in Trish Stratus and Lita, the latter of whom was great. Becky and Lita won the Women's Tag Team Titles and she even let Trish get close to them. She didn't see what was really going on, because Trish was just here to help herself like the backstabbing egomaniac that she really is.

Becky is out there to say Thank You Trish...for turning on a light that had been off for many, many months. Trish called Becky's daughter stupid and that gave all of the badness in

her head a face and a name and a target. Trish wants to be #1 again but Becky has had it, been it, done it and has it. She's going to kick Trish's head in at Night Of Champions. That's sooner than I was expecting the match but this felt more like old school Becky, which is always a good thing.

Rhea Ripley is seen watching in the back and doesn't seem impressed with Becky. When asked about Natalya, Ripley says Natalya needs to stay out of her way. Natalya comes in to say this is about Ripley attacking an already beaten Dana Brooke. Ripley deserves respect but she isn't allowing it for anyone else. That doesn't work for Ripley, who knows Natalya wasn't there for Brooke last week. If Natalya ever interrupts her again, it will be the end of her legendary career.

Mustafa Ali is very proud of his win when he runs into the Alpha Academy. They should try being more positive, but Ali keeps going and runs into Imperium. Gunther says Ali is the rightful challenger to what is rightfully Gunther's, but we get a good luck handshake anyway. Ali feels sorry for Gunther having to go halfway around the world, just to lose his title. Gunther smiles at him and seems to like Ali's moxie.

Dominik Mysterio vs. Xavier Woods

Rhea Ripley is here with Mysterio, who is again booed out of the building for trying to talk about Woods being all alone. Woods says he's alone right now, but unlike Mysterio, he's a grown man who can fight on his own without needing permission to speak from Mami. Woods hammers away to start and hits the running dropkick to the back for two. Back up and Dominik actually wins a test of strength, at least until Woods sweeps the leg to escape. They head outside, with Rhea getting between the two of them to quite the reaction.

We take a break and come back with Woods hammering away but getting knocked down for a fast two. Woods fights back up with the Honor Roll for two but Dominik grabs some Amigos. The frog

splash only hits raised knees though and Woods hits a gorilla press gutbuster for two more (as Ripley is looking nervous). Ripley breaks up the Limit Breaker so Woods dives onto Dominik on the floor instead. A Ripley cheap shot takes Woods down though and Dominik rolls him up for the pin at 11:01.

Rating: C+. The Dominik push continues to work well, as he is just good enough in the ring to get by but Ripley is perfect as his heater. There are a few places Dominik could go and that should make things interesting for him in the future. Woods isn't likely to win anything important on his own but he'll be fine when Kofi Kingston gets back.

Video on JD McDonagh.

McDonagh is leaving and says he attacked Dolph Ziggler to teach him a lesson: never bet against an ace.

Indus Sher vs. ???/Trey Thompson

Jinder Mahal is here with Sher. The non-Thompson is knocked silly with a shot to the face to start and it's quickly off to Thompson. A big jumping elbow and a hard whip into the corner sets up the old Smoking Gunns' Sidewinder of all things for the pin on Thompson at 1:51. Impressive squash, though "we're big foreign heels" doesn't have the longest shelf life.

Post match Mahal seems to promise more violence. After a replay, Mahal grabs a headset to say Sher runs this show. Then he grabs the mic to say the same thing in another language.

Kevin Owens and Sami Zayn are in the back when Imperium comes in. Gunther isn't happy with their disrespect and a six man is set for next week.

Here is Cody Rhodes for a chat. Cody gets right to the point and tells the story of the scorpion and the frog (scorpion doesn't trust the frog, the frog eventually agrees to take him across the river, scorpion stings him in the middle, ensuring

they're both going to do, just because stinging is his nature). It is Brock Lesnar's nature to hunt, but how is Lesnar's face feeling?

Cody is ready to face him at Night of Champions, even though the reality is Lesnar is better than 99.9% of the Superstars he faces. What seems to have Lesnar upset is that he was defeated, meaning he might not be the biggest game on Raw anymore. Maybe Lesnar isn't the big thing around here these days and it's time to say next. He's ready for Night Of Champions. Cody leaves, and signs some autographs on the way out in a great touch that isn't used often enough.

Zoey Stark is kind of mean to Nikki Cross and gets a match with Candice LeRae as a result. Cross looks....annoyed?

Raquel Rodriguez vs. Chelsea Green

Sonya Deville is here with Green. Rodriguez hits a big boot at the bell but a Deville distraction lets Green send her face first into the buckle. A basement dropkick cuts Rodriguez off again but she powers Green up into a reverse Alabama Slam onto the top rope. The clothesline comeback is on and the Texana Bomb finishes Green at 3:43.

Rating: C. That's a bit of a weird way to go for Green, who has been angling for a Tag Team Title shot. I'm fine with not having Rodriguez lose, but there was an easy way to have her get pinned due to the numbers game, which can be evened out when Liv Morgan is back. For now though, it could have been worse and they got out rather quickly so it could have been a lot worse.

Post match Ronda Rousey and Shayna Baszler appear and jump Rodriguez, promising to win the Women's Tag Team Titles.

Imperium shakes hands with Paul Heyman, who calls Roman Reigns.

We get the second half of the Seth Rollins interview, with Rollins talking about being a visionary and reinventing himself. This is the best part of his career and he's not sure why. Maybe it is the hard work, but for the first time, the fans got behind him and connected with him. That changed him and now it is time to give us a World Champion who is here for everyone. As for Roman Reigns...more next week.

Video on Apollo Crews. He runs a lot.

Judgment Day vs. Sami Zayn/Kevin Owens

Non-title. Balor and Zayn start things off rather slowly until Zayn snaps off some armdrags. Priest comes in to slug away but Owens comes in to punch him in the face. An enziguri staggers Priest, who misses a charge to the floor. Balor is sent outside as well, so here are Rhea Ripley and Dominik Mysterio to uneven things up as we take a break.

Back with Zayn in trouble but managing to send Balor into the corner. That's enough for the hot tag to Owens, who gets to clean house on everyone but Ripley. The cannonball hits Priest for two so Ripley and Dominik interfere. They're a bit slow though and get ejected, allowing Owens to superkick Priest down. Cue Xavier Woods to go after Dominik and they fight to the back, leaving Priest to roll Owens up...as Paul Heyman comes out.

We take another break and come back with Owens in trouble, including a middle rope legdrop/backbreaker combination. Owens knocks Priest off the ropes though and nails a Swanton for a double knockdown. The hot tag brings in Zayn and takes Balor down to hammer away. The Michinoku Driver gives Zayn two and the Blue Thunder Bomb gets the same.

Cue Imperium for a distraction, allowing Balor to hit 1916 for two. Owens comes back in (without a tag) to Stun Priest, leaving Zayn to suplex Balor into the corner. The Helluva Kick connects but Imperium offers a distraction. Owens takes them

out so Priest chokeslams Owens onto the apron. Zayn hits the big flip dive onto Priest but Gunther breaks up another Helluva Kick. Balor's shotgun dropkick sets up the Coup de Grace for the pin at 20:58.

Rating: B. This one had some vibes of a Paul Heyman produced match and it worked out well, with so many moving parts and pieces that all seemed to fit together. Heyman working with Imperium makes for some interesting future returns, but for now it was a good enough way to keep Owens and Zayn looking strong on the way to Night Of Champions. Solid main event here, and a good enough way to protect the champs, as Heyman is trying to get inside their heads again (shouldn't be hard with Zayn) before the title match.

Heyman is rather pleased and appears to call Roman Reigns to end the show.

Overall Rating: B-. There was quite a bit going on with this show and it's kind of hard to keep track of everything. I liked having wrestlers appearing throughout the show, as having them disappear once their main match/segment of the night never made a ton of sense. Other than that, we had the Rousey/Baszler return and some stuff set up for Night Of Champions. What matters here is that the show still felt like it was structured despite coming off as a bit chaotic, which is more of a sign of the new WWE regime than the "classic" McMahon stuff.

Results

Shinsuke Nakamura b. The Miz – Kinshasa

Mustafa Ali won a battle royal last eliminating Bronson Reed and Ricochet

Dominik Mysterio b. Xavier Woods – Rollup

Indus Sher b. ???/Trey Thompson – Side slam/middle rope legdrop combination to Thompson

Raquel Rodriguez b. Chelsea Green – Texana Bomb

Judgment Day b. Kevin Owens/Sami Zayn – Coup de Grace to Zayn

Remember to follow me on Twitter @kbreviews and head over to my Amazon author page with 30 different cheap wrestling books at:

<http://www.amazon.com/Thomas-Hall/e/B00E6282W6>

AND

[Remember to check out Wrestlingrumors.net for all of your wrestling headline needs.](http://Wrestlingrumors.net)

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 shouldered 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,

Remember to follow me on Twitter @kbreviews and head over to my Amazon author page with 30 different cheap wrestling books at:

<http://www.amazon.com/Thomas-Hall/e/B00E6282W6>

AND

[Remember to check out Wrestlingrumors.net](http://Wrestlingrumors.net) for all of your [wrestling headline needs](http://Wrestlingrumors.net).

Smackdown – May 5, 2023: A Really Big Preview

Smackdown

Date: May 5, 2023

Location: Coliseo de Puerto Rico, San Juan, Puerto Rico

Commentators: Wade Barrett, Michael Cole

We are in Puerto Rico for the first time ever as Backlash will be held in the same venue tomorrow night. In addition, this is the final night for the old Smackdown roster as the Draft takes effect starting on Monday. We should be in for a big show tonight though, with what will likely be a red hot crowd. Let's get to it.

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

We open with a camera shot from outside, through the doors and into the arena (seemed like it was from a drone). That was a very cool shot and the arena looks GREAT (as well as packed).

Here is the LWO (with no huge video screen, making it look more like a house show for a change of pace) to get things going. Rey Mysterio addresses the crowd in Spanish and hypes up Bad Bunny and Zelina Vega. The latter goes to speak but is a bit overwhelmed, only to be interrupted by Judgment Day.

After the fans go nuts on Dominik, we get an argument in Spanish between the Mysterios. Rey switches to English and challenges Dominik to a Wrestlemania rematch but Ripley is between them. She'll fight Rey, but Vega gets involved as well. A mixed tag seems to be made and Dominik gets in a cheap slap on Rey before bailing.

Viking Raiders vs. Good Brothers

Valhalla and the rest of the OC are here too, including AJ Styles on commentary. Erik and Anderson go to an early standoff so it's off to Ivar vs. Gallows. Ivar knocks him into the corner but Gallows fights out and hands it back to Anderson. That earns him a knock out to the floor, giving us a Michin vs. Valhalla showdown as we take a break.

Back with Gallows coming in to clean house, much to the fans' delight. Everything breaks down and Ivar's top rope splash gets two on Anderson. Gallows makes the save but is ready for Valhalla's attempted interference. Michin takes Valhalla down and Gallows kicks Ivar. Erik gets knocked outside and the Magic Killer finishes Ivar at 8:07.

Rating: B-. This was your often required hoss fight and the Good Brothers showed that they can still do their thing when they're able to get in the ring. I'm not sure why they needed to be held out while AJ was gone as they are perfectly

serviceable as a middle of the road tag team. The Vikings continue to lose and again I'm not sure why, as they could easily be used closer to the titles.

There will be a tournament for the inaugural World Heavyweight Title, with a pair of triple threats on each show. The winners will face off with each other, with the winners of the singles matches will face each other at Night Of Champions for the title.

We look at the recent European tour.

Here is Bianca Belair for a chat. She is happy to be here in Puerto Rico but she is focused on Iyo Sky. Belair has faced the best of the best and she will do it again right here tomorrow night at Backlash. That victory will make her the longest reigning Women's Champion of the modern era but here is Damage Ctrl to interrupt. Bayley talks about how Sky is going to end the title reign and Belair will need a ticket out of the ring. The fight is on with Belair getting to stare down Sky, only to get jumped from behind. Bayley escapes the KOD and Sky dropkicks Belair down. Raquel Rodriguez and Liv Morgan make the save.

Karrion Kross, with Scarlett, is ready to take out Shinsuke Nakamura tonight.

We look back at the Usos losing last week.

Solo Sikoa ignores Jimmy Uso and Jey Usos isn't happy about it. Sikoa heard him, but says he'll be doing his part tomorrow. They better do theirs, and he looks at the taped thumb before leaving.

Street Profits vs. Imperium

Imperium starts with a blind tag and Kaiser is able to kick Ford down. The referee didn't seem to see the tag so Vinci goes up top and dives onto both Profits. Back in and Vinci

moonsaults Ford for two but he suplexes his way out of trouble. The hot tag brings in Dawkins to clean house. Dawkins plants Vinci and the Cash Out finishes for Ford at 2:41. They packed a lot into a short match here, to the point where I was surprised at how short it lasted.

Long video on Cody Rhodes vs. Brock Lesnar.

Here is Cody Rhodes for a chat. After addressing the fans in Spanish, Cody talks about some of Brock Lesnar's accomplishments. His old coach Double A talked about how the goal was to claim the Kingdom and Brock is the one guarding the door to that kingdom. There are ways to avoid facing Lesnar but Lesnar came after him. Lesnar still hasn't said why he did that but maybe Cody can beat it out of him tomorrow night as he claims his kingdom. Short and to the point here but Cody sold it hard.

Shinsuke Nakamura tells Karrion Kross to COME ON.

Riddle talks about beating the Bloodline at Backlash as Sami Zayn and Kevin Owens kind of stare. Riddle: "Am I talking too much?" Sami says there is nothing left for the two of them to say so they're ready for tomorrow.

Karrion Kross vs. Shinsuke Nakamura

Scarlett is here with Kross, who knocks Nakamura outside for a powerbomb against the post. We take a break and come back with Nakamura kicking away and hitting the running knee in the corner for two. Scarlett offers a distraction though, allowing Kross to grab the Doomsday Saito for two of his own. Nakamura slips out of a sleeper and kicks Kross in the head. Kinshasa is cut off with a clothesline but Nakamura is back with more kicks to the head. The second Kinshasa attempt finishes Kross at 8:48.

Rating: B. These two had some nice chemistry together and they beat each other up rather well in Nakamura's Smackdown

farewell. Nakamura is someone who could easily be reheated for a run at a title sooner than later and he looked good in one of his first matches back after his hiatus. Kross was his usual self: looking intimidating and losing in a match, as he still can't really get going.

Video on the NXT stars coming up via the Draft.

Adam Pearce welcomes Cameron Grimes to Smackdown when Baron Corbin interrupts. Corbin mocks Grimes for being the last pick, but Grimes brings up the Corbin wasn't picked at all. The match is made for next week.

Backlash rundown.

Bad Bunny and Damian Priest got into it at the Backlash press conference.

Zelina Vega/Rey Mysterio vs. Dominik Mysterio/Rhea Ripley

Finn Balor is here with Judgment Day. Vega ducks some shots to the face to start and hits Ripley in the jaw, which does not seem to be the best idea. Ripley misses a big stomp and gets taken down with a hurricanrana, allowing Vega to wave at her. It's off to Rey vs. Dominik, with the fans not liking the latter. Rhea's cheap shot from the apron doesn't do much as Vega comes in and loads up a 619 on Dominik, only to get kicked in the face by Ripley.

We take a break and come back with Vega hitting Ripley in the face, followed by a rolling kick to the head. Ripley drops her again and we hit the chinlock as Dominik hits the Eddie dance. Vega jawbreaks her way out of a powerbomb attempt and kicks Ripley off, allowing the diving tag to Rey.

Dominik comes in as well and gets hit in the head for his efforts. A big spinning springboard crossbody drops Dominik again but he manages to send Rey face first into the buckle. Dominik hits a Michinoku Driver for two, with Vega having to

make the save. Dominik tries the Three Amigos but Rey reverses the last one into a small package for the pin at 9:27.

Rating: B-. I don't think there was any secret about how this one was going to end as Rey had to win and Ripley wasn't going to take the all. Vega was doing her thing here and the evasive stuff and using her smaller stature to her advantage worked against the much bigger Ripley. She still doesn't have a real chance at the title, but points for giving her that little, tiny glimmer of hope.

Post match the beatdown, including Damian Priest, is on but Bad Bunny (in a sweet old WWF logo jacket), with kendo stick, and the LWO, come in for the save. Priest runs off as the good guys clean house. Bunny puts on the LWO shirt to end the show.

Overall Rating: B. This show was about getting everything ready for Backlash and they made me interested in seeing the show. If nothing else, the crowd reaction and energy this show had made it feel that much more important and we should be in for a big night tomorrow. The place came unglued for Bad Bunny and if he can back that up in the ring, we should be in for a heck of a Saturday. There wasn't a bad match on the show and you can tell the fans were into what they were seeing, making this a rather fun and quality show.

Results

Good Brothers b. Viking Raiders – Magic Killer to Ivar

Street Profits b. Imperium – Cash Out to Vinci

Shinsuke Nakamura b. Karrion Kross – Kinshasa

Rey Mysterio/Zelina Vega b. Dominik Mysterio/Rhea Ripley – Small package to Dominik

Remember to follow me on Twitter @kbreviews and head over to my Amazon author page with 30 different cheap wrestling books

at:

<http://www.amazon.com/Thomas-Hall/e/B00E6282W6>

AND

[Remember to check out Wrestlingrumors.net for all of your wrestling headline needs.](http://www.wrestlingrumors.net)