

Monday Night Raw – February 12, 2024: That Stuff Is Important Too

Monday Night Raw

Date: February 12, 2024

Location: Rupp Arena, Lexington, Kentucky

Commentators: Pa McAfee, Michael Cole

We're less than two months away from Wrestlemania and now we seem to have a main event. Cody Rhodes is going to be challenging Roman Reigns, presumably on night two, but that leaves a lot to cover on the first night. Other than that, this week is going to be about Elimination Chamber qualifying matches so let's get to it.

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

I was in the arena for this show, sitting in the upper deck with the Titantron to my upper left.

Jey Uso/New Day vs. Imperium

Jey gets a crazy strong reaction to his entrance, with the fans going coconuts over the hand wave dance. Kofi and Kaiser start things off with Kofi slugging away, including a dropkick and clothesline. Woods comes in to stomp away in the corner, followed by Kofi and Jey getting to do the same. It's off to Gunther to face Uso, but instead he walks around for a bit before handing it back to Vinci.

A cheap shot takes Uso down and now Gunther is willing to come in and chop away. Uso gets knocked to the floor and we take a break. Back with Jey fighting out of a chinlock and handing it back to Kofi to clean house. A top rope splash to the back of a standing Kaiser puts him down and Kofi hits the New Day Drop

on Vinci. Kaiser is back up to ram Kofi into the steps though and Kaiser adds a boot to the face for two.

Gunther comes back in for a Boston crab so Jey comes in and slaps him square in the face. You do NOT do that to Gunther, who is rather annoyed as we take another break. Back again with Kofi backdropping his way to freedom and handing it back to Jey to clean house. Jey superkicks a springboarding Vinci out of the air and now we get the showdown with Gunther.

An enziguri staggers Gunther and a high crossbody gets two. The spear is cut off though and Gunther cleans house, setting up a hard clothesline for two more. Back up and Jey spears Gunther for two but Kaiser makes the save. Vinci walks into a three man 1D, leaving Kofi to dive onto Kaiser. The Superfly Splash finishes Vinci at 19:50.

Rating: B. This match managed to serve two purposes at once, as Uso looked like an absolute star who could be the one to take out Gunther. The fans lit up when he came to the ring and then the slap made things even better. In addition, you had a heck of a tag match with everyone working hard and nearly twenty minutes flying by. Heck of an opener.

Long recap of the Wrestlemania press event with Rock turning heel and joining Roman Reigns, at least for the time being.

Andrade talks about how much he loves wrestling and goes through his title history. He left in 2021 to remember who he was, but now he's back.

Elimination Chamber Qualifying Match: Bobby Lashley vs. Bronson Reed

Reed powers him into the corner but has to cut off a Hurt Lock attempt. An early spear attempt sends Lashley shoulder first into the post though and Reed knocks him into the timekeeper's area. We take a break and come back with Reed hitting some hard clotheslines. A Downward Spiral gives Lashley two and a

suplex is good for the same. Reed hits a superkick into a Death Valley Driver for two but Lashley is back up with a spinebuster. Reed comes back with a release Rock Bottom and a backplash before going up. That takes way too long though and Lashley slams him down, setting up the spear for the pin at 8:37.

Rating: C+. This was a fun hoss fight with Lashley being able to throw around a monster like Reed. That suplex and the slam off the top both looked good and the match worked well. I'm also a bit surprised there was no screwiness from someone like Karrion Kross to cost Lashley the match and send Reed to the Chamber in his home country but they went with the logical move instead.

We look at the end of last week's show, with Sami Zayn saving Cody Rhodes from an attack at the hands of Shinsuke Nakamura and Drew McIntyre.

Earlier today, Zayn sat in an empty arena, who said that he has been through a lot of problems and setbacks, but he will be a champion. Nakamura popped up on screen to say that Zayn sounded like Rhodes so Nakamura needs to stop him. A match was set up for later tonight.

Here is Cody Rhodes for a chat and he gets right to the point: he's challenging Roman Reigns at WrestleMania 40. He can do that because of the fans, who made their voices heard online after...well he doesn't say what caused it (him giving away his shot against Reigns in the first place). Rhodes doesn't want to get too emotional though, because it might make him a crybaby.

We see the Rock on the Pat McAfee Show, dubbing the term Cody Crybabies. Rock also lists some things that those crybabies can do with chicken nuggets, which has Rhodes so confused that he asks McAfee what Rock said. Rhodes didn't like Rock putting his hands on him and slapping him across the face so Rhodes is

going to hit back. Cue Seth Rollins to interrupt so the fans get to sing a bit.

Rhodes thanks him for the help against the Rock, with Rollins wondering what else can he say except you're welcome. Rollins says Rhodes needs to finish his story at Wrestlemania because if he doesn't, everything changes after the match. Reigns shows up and defends the title even less so this is their last chance to take the title and give it to the people. While Rhodes might be the man, he needs a plan.

Last year he got cheated out of the title and now the pressure is even high but it's even more complicated because of the Rock. Rollins says Rhodes can't do that on his own because he is tired for Reigns and Rock getting away with this stuff. We hear about Rollins helping Reigns become who he is today but there is one man suited to be Rhodes' Shield. That man is an architect and a visionary, which seems to leave Rhodes a lot to think about. Rollins was bringing the emotion here but it feels like he's being set up to cost Rhodes the title at Wrestlemania.

New Day and Jey Uso are happy with their win, but to make it even better, Jey is getting an Intercontinental Title shot next week.

Elimination Chamber Qualifying Match: Liv Morgan vs. Zoey Stark

Before the match, we get quick vignettes from both women about how much it would mean to go on to Wrestlemania. Stark misses a shot in the corner, allowing Morgan to stomp away. Back up and Stark hits a running clothesline, only for Morgan to snap off a hurricanrana. A springboard kick to the face puts Stark down and they fight to the apron. Stark Death Valley Drives her onto the apron and we take a break.

Back with Morgan hitting a middle rope Codebreaker for two but Stark's powerbomb out of the corner gets the same. Another

Codebreaker is countered into a catapult into the corner and a superkick drops Morgan for two. Stark takes a good bit too long going up top though and misses a flip dive, allowing Morgan to hit a quick Codebreaker. Oblivion finishes Stark at 9:13.

Rating: C+. They were trading some nice stuff here and while the ending wasn't exactly in doubt, it was nice to see Morgan putting in the extra effort to win here. She's being treated as a fairly big deal and that could make a difference for her in the Chamber. Stark is someone with a good bit of skill in her own right, but at some point she needs to win something on her own and that hasn't happened yet.

R-Truth talks about how JD McDonagh needs to come to reality, but Damian Priest cuts him off. He's tired of all this because it was never an initiation or anything like that. Tonight, when McDonagh faces R-Truth, it's an execution.

Post break, R-Truth is trying to find out if Miz can get here from Los Angeles in time for his match.

R-Truth vs. JD McDonagh

So there is no Miz, but there is the rest of Judgment Day minus Rhea Ripley (and McDonagh as he's kind of busy). R-Truth sends him into the corner to start and hits a splash in the corner. An AA sends McDonagh outside and we take a break. Back with R-Truth hitting John Cena's finishing sequence but the ax kick misses, allowing McDonagh to hit the Devil Inside (a Saito suplex) for the pin at 6:38.

Rating: C. They barely had any time (at least that we saw) and in the end, having McDonagh beat R-Truth clean is a weird way to go. While R-Truth is pretty much bullet proof and isn't likely to lose anything serious by being pinned here, I'm not sure why we didn't get some kind of interference. The match itself was barely anything, but it also didn't show that R-Truth needs help, because he lost a match straight up without

any interference.

Post match the beatdown is on but DIY runs in with chairs for the save.

Cody Rhodes thanks Sami Zayn for his help last week.

Here is Becky Lynch for a chat. After accepting a prom invitation for 2034, Lynch talks about how crazy the Road to Wrestlemania has already been. She loves this, starting with the time she first set foot in the ring when she was 15. Wrestling is what let her meet her husband, have her daughter and cause her to miss her father's funeral. It's also left her having some weird conversations with her daughter like why her mom's face is busted open, why her shoulder is banged up and she can't pick her up...and why Daddy wants to fight Maui (Rock's character in Moana).

Lynch knows a lot of people love Rhea Ripley and people believe no one can beat her, but Lynch isn't anyone. She gets a drink from ringside and drinks a toast to Ripley's last few days as champion. Cue Nia Jax, who talks about how she wishes her mother was half the woman Lynch is. She sounds rather emotional as she talks about how Lynch is going to win at Elimination Chamber. Just like she's going to beat Ripley...who interrupts for the fight. Lynch gets crushed in the corner though and dropkicks Jax out to the floor. They almost have to go with Lynch vs. Ripley at Wrestlemania and that's not a bad way to go.

Drew McIntyre talks about how he's the only unselfish person around here. Cody Rhodes needs to take himself out of their match next week because the only things you don't want to be are in his prayers or in a fight with him. Now Cody won't be going to Wrestlemania, just like CM Punk.

R-Truth thanks DIY for their help...but thinks they're DX. R-Truth: "How is Road Dogg?"

Elimination Chamber Qualifying Match: LA Knight vs. Ivar

Valhalla is here too and yes Cole does the antlers joke again. Knight starts fast and knocks Ivar outside for a bunch of rams into the announcers' table. Ivar sends him into the barricade for a crossbody against said barricade and we take a break. Back with Knight running the corner to superplex him down, only to fail in a powerslam attempt. Ivar's Tour of the Islands connects and a tiger bomb gets two. Ivar misses a knee though and now the powerslam can connect for two of his own. The BFT is blocked though and Ivar kicks him down, only to miss the Doomsault. Now the BFT can send Knight to Elimination Chamber at 8:26.

Rating: C. This was a different way to go than the Lashley vs. Ivar match and it went well enough. Knight wasn't about to lose to Ivar, though the good thing is Ivar was built enough for the last few weeks that he was someone who could be a problem for Knight without being a threat. That makes for a slightly more interesting match, though the match not running incredibly long helped.

Sami Zayn runs into Drew McIntyre, who wants Zayn to keep his name out of his mouth. Zayn says McIntyre is in his way, so McIntyre steps aside.

Here's what's coming on various shows, including a Last Chance battle royal for the last spot in the women's Elimination Chamber.

Chelsea Green is NOT happy with being in the battle royal with people like Indi Hartwell and Candice LeRae, who are there. She also yells about Shayna Baszler and Zoey Stark, who pop in behind her. Green yells at Adam Pearce for seeing Baszler and Stark coming but not saying anything. Management WILL be notified.

Shinsuke Nakamura vs. Sami Zayn

Nakamura kicks him in the ribs to start but Zayn sends him to the floor and bounces back to the middle. We take an early break and come back with Zayn hitting a middle rope elbow to the head but Nakamura chokes him in the corner. Nakamura kicks him in the head though and we hit the chinlock.

Zayn fights up and hits a quick Michinoku Driver for two so they can both have a breather. A clothesline puts Nakamura on the floor and there's a big flip dive, with Nakamura not exactly catching him so Zayn hits the floor HARD. We take another break and come back with an exchange of forearms until Nakamura kicks him in the head. Zayn is right back up with a Blue Thunder Bomb for two and Nakamura rolls outside.

We go old school with Zayn trying a diving DDT over the bottom rope, only to get hit in the face. Back in and Nakamura hits a middle rope knee to the back of the head, followed by another one for another two. Zayn is back up with a heck of a clothesline and then the exploder into the corner. The Helluva Kick is loaded up but cue Drew McIntyre for a distraction. Nakamura kicks Zayn's knee out and hits a running knee to the back of the head for the pin at 17:07.

Rating: B-. While it wasn't quite their masterpiece in Dallas eight years ago, it was still good stuff with both of them hitting each other rather hard. The ending was part of Zayn's issues as he continues his downward spiral. I'm not sure where that's going to go, but hopefully it isn't a heel turn as Zayn getting into the title hunt as the big underdog could be incredible.

Post match the double beatdown is on, with Cody Rhodes running in for the save.

Overall Rating: B-. The opener was rather good but the rest of the matches were little more than ok, which can often be the case with WWE qualifying matches. They didn't really do anything big here, but next week's show with Uso getting his

Intercontinental Title shot and Rhodes vs. Nakamura should be more than enough. This wasn't a show with the big stuff going on and it's ok to lighten things a bit every so often. That was the case here and while it wasn't a great show, it covered some things before we can get to the bigger stuff in the future.

Results

New Day/Jey Uso b. Imperium – Superfly Splash to Vinci

Bobby Lashley b. Bronson Reed – Spear

Liv Morgan b. Zoey Stark – Oblivion

JD McDonagh b. R-Truth – Devil Inside

LA Knight b. Ivar – BFT

Shinsuke Nakamura b. Sami Zayn – Running knee to the back of the head

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Monday Night Raw – January 29, 2024: Well That's Depressing

Monday Night Raw

Date: January 29, 2024

Location: Amalie Arena, Tampa, Florida

Commentators: Pat McAfee, Michael Cole

We're done with the Royal Rumble and officially on the Road To Wrestlemania. That means it is time to start getting ready for the big time of the year. Almost everything is going to matter now, but that is going to be more complicated because CM Punk has reportedly torn his tricep. Odds are we'll hear something about that tonight so let's get to it.

[Here is the Royal Rumble if you need a recap.](#)

We open with wrestlers coming to work.

Pat McAfee is here, and apparently will be every Monday night going forward. No word on what that means for Wade Barrett.

We get a long recap of the Royal Rumble.

Here is CM Punk, with his arm in a sling, for a chat. He talks about how close he got to winning the Royal Rumble and had it in the palm of his hand. Punk doesn't feel mad at Cody Rhodes, who earned the win. On Saturday, he tore his tricep and is going to be out for a long time. That means that main eventing Wrestlemania just isn't happening this year, and the fans are not pleased.

Punk talks about a friend of his who is battling cancer and he never says a bad word and he's the kind of person that Punk wants to be. We hear about other people Punk know who work day to day jobs and they keep going, which is what he wants to do.

He's a Chicago Cubs fan and guarantees us that there is always a next year...but here is Drew McIntyre to interrupt (Punk: "Not what I was expecting.").

McIntyre seems to feel sorry for Punk and talks about how he's going to headline Wrestlemania. He got his hands on Punk and still doesn't like him, which has Punk promising to be back next year and then getting his hands on McIntyre. The fight is on with Punk using the bad arm, which is quickly taken down. Sami Zayn makes the save. Punk was emotional here but there is nothing he can do with that kind of an injury. Hopefully he's back later this year, which should be a heck of a moment, but how many times can he keep making these comebacks?

Judgment Day is happy with how things are going and ready to take out DIY.

DIY is ready for Judgment Day and have been waiting for years for this chance.

Tag Team Titles: DIY vs. Judgment Day

Judgment Day is defending. Priest takes Ciampa into the corner and hits him in the face to take over. Everything breaks down in a hurry with DIY hitting stereo dives to the floor, meaning stereo pats on the back. We settle back down to Priest dropping Ciampa face first onto the apron.

Back in and Balor's ax kick gets two so Ciampa goes over for the tag...which the referee doesn't see. Ciampa finally gets in a reverse DDT for the breather and the tag brings in Gargano to clean house. The slingshot spear gives Gargano two and everything breaks down. Ciampa assists Gargano for an assisted Sliced Bread to Priest for two but can't hit the Fairy Tale Ending.

A heck of a clothesline gives Priest two and he throws Gargano outside for making a save. South Of Heaven is broken up though and Ciampa hits a super White Noise for two. Meet In The

Middle connects but Priest makes the save. That makes Ciampa send Priest over the announcers' table as Balor knocks Gargano into the corner but misses the Coup de Grace.

The Gargano Escape and Sicilian Stretch go on at the same time until Priest drops Ciampa onto the other two for the save. We settle back down to Gargano escaping the Razor's Edge and handing it back to Gargano. A superkick drops Balor so Priest loads up the Razor's Edge to Ciampa, only to be cut off by Gargano. Back in and Ciampa rolls Priest up for two but it's a Razor's Edge into the Coup de Grace to retain the titles at 12:49.

Rating: B+. Man this was rolling by the middle and if they had gone at somewhere in there, the roof might have come off. Instead though, it was an awesome match in front of a hot crowd and I was buying that DIY had a chance of pulling this off. Really hot match here and hopefully DIY gets another shot at some point.

Post match Dominik Mystério and JD McDonagh come in to celebrate, with Damian Priest saying we have seen a different side to the team in recent weeks and it's time to thank someone for making it happen. That would be R-Truth, so here he is for a chat, albeit after Priest assures him that he'll be safe. Truth comes in and talks about doing Priest's taxes, with Priest saying Truth doesn't know what any of that means.

They're a family, with Balor as the weird uncle. Then you have Tom and Nick, but there is nothing else to say about them. McDonagh is like that step brother you don't want to admit is in the family. Priest says they're family, but Truth isn't part of the team. He likes Truth though, which is why Dominik and McDonagh are doing this. The beatdown is on but Miz runs in for the save, only to get beaten down as well. Truth and Miz getting the Tag Team Titles could be a nice moment.

Chelsea Green/Piper Niven vs. Shayna Baszler/Zoey Stark

Niven runs Stark over to start but it's quickly off to Baszler to work on the arm. Green comes in to takeover on Stark, who hits a Z360 for a VERY quick win at 2:01. Baszler looked a bit confused there, even though her team won so I'm wondering if that wasn't as planned.

Here is Cody Rhodes for a chat and yeah the fans really like him. The fans say he deserves it, so Cody asks Samantha Irvin to introduce him as the back to back Royal Rumble winner one more time. Cody talks about how this place is supposed to be an escape for people but the last few days have been challenging. He needed the fans since then but let's make Wrestlemania official.

Cue Seth Rollins to interrupt, saying he agrees with the fans: Cody deserves it. They might not see eye to eye, but Rollins is getting serious now: if Cody chooses to face Roan Reigns at Wrestlemania, he's making a mistake. Cody should face Rollins instead and wants the fans to hear him out. At the Royal Rumble press conference, Cody said he was the guy, but neither he nor Roman Reigns is the guy anymore. Rollins is the guy, because of the World Heavyweight Championship.

It made sense to go after Reigns when there was only one champion, but Rhodes and Rollins have been on this ride together. They have made town after town and Rollins was defending the title every night. Why did the World Heavyweight Championship come to be? It's because people were tired of Reigns barely being around to defend the title, but that's not what Rollins does.

We don't need to pretend that Reigns is something special anymore because we don't need him at all. Does Cody want the Hulk Hogan Title, or does he want the Dusty Rhodes workhorse title? It doesn't matter what Dusty would do because this is about Cody and his decision. Rollins can wait on an answer, but what kind of a man does Cody want to be? An emotional Cody says he respects Rollins and did not expect to be talking

about this tonight. He'll think about it. While I still think Cody picks Reigns, they did a really good job here of sewing some doubt, which is a good thing if you want the announcement to be a big moment.

New Day is ready to win another title when Kofi Kingston beats Gunther for the Intercontinental Title.

Jey Uso vs. Bronson Reed

Reed runs him over to start and hits a hard clothesline. Back up and Jey manages to knock him outside for the suicide dive. We take a break and come back with Uso punching away and getting two off a high crossbody. The enziguiri is knocked away though and Reed's backsplash gets two. Reed goes up but gets knocked down, only to avoid the Superfly Splash. Reed's Death Valley Driver gets two but he misses the Tsunami. Uso spears him down and hits the Superfly Splash for the pin at 9:17.

Rating: C+. This is the kind of win that can do some good for Uso. He wasn't in there against a top star but he had to come from behind and gets a nice clean win. Uso is likely going to be getting to do something soon (a run at the Intercontinental Title wouldn't shock me) and this should move him forward in more than one way.

Andrade officially signs with Raw but Nick Aldis interrupts. Adam Pearce introduces the two of them and runs down Andrade's resume, though Aldis said Smackdown had its own contract offer. Andrade says say hi to Zelina Vega for him and leaves. Aldis says Bayley has been loaded to Raw for tonight, but before they can talk about the Elimination Chamber, Aldis takes a phone call from Bron Breaker.

Gunther talks about being glad Kofi Kingston challenged him because Kingston will remember this night for the rest of his life. After tonight though, Gunther will forget about Kofi and remember Gunther's record setting title reign.

Becky Lynch is disappointed in losing but she's not done fighting until she takes the title back to the main event where it deserves.

Intercontinental Title: Gunther vs. Kofi Kingston

Kingston is challenging and charges right at him to start. Some early shots to the face stagger Gunther but a backbreaker puts Kingston down. Gunther grabs the Boston crab and we're off to an early break. Back with Gunther pounding away and telling Kingston to bring it. Gunther shrugs off a comeback attempt and grabs another Boston crab as we take another break.

Back again with Kingston hitting a jumping knee but getting caught in the sleeper. The powerbomb is broken up and they head outside, with Kingston countering another powerbomb attempt into a hurricanrana into the post. Back in and Kingston hits Trouble In Paradise but Gunther rolls outside before the cover.

Kingston drapes him over the steps for a jumping shot to the back, followed by the top rope Boom Drop for two back inside. Another Trouble In Paradise is countered in a failed Boston crab attempt so Gunther hits the big clothesline. Another clothesline is countered into the SOS for two and Gunther has had enough. The dropkick and powerbomb retain the title at 16:18.

Rating: B-. This took some time to get going but once they got rolling, this got a lot better in a hurry. Kingston is in that sweet spot where he's just good enough to feel like a threat while making Gunther look good. We're coming up on Wrestlemania season and the shot against Gunther is going to be a big spot for someone. Jey Uso still feels like a real option, but it's going to be someone big.

Post match Xavier Woods comes in to check on Kingston but Imperium comes in for the beatdown.

We look back at Drew McIntyre injuring Sami Zayn last month.

Sami talks about how he keeps getting things taken away by McIntyre, who is now targeting other people. Tonight, Sami is giving him a reality check.

Kabuki Warriors vs. Natalya/Tegan Nox

Non-title. Natalya runs Sane over to start so it's off Now for some running shots to Asuka in the corner. A Cannonball keeps Asuka in trouble and it's Natalya coming back in for the double running kicks to the face. We take a break and come back with Natalya fighting back on Asuka. A German suplex and discus clothesline look to set up the Sharpshooter so Asuka screams for Sane to save her. Natalya reaches for the tag to Nox but instead she goes to the floor to brawl with Sane. That goes badly, leaving Natalya to roll Asuka up for two. Asuka kicks Natalya down and the Insane Elbow finishes for Sane at 9:50.

Rating: C. Good grief. Natalya and Nox have teamed together SIX TIMES. Can we please stop acting like them having an issue and probably splitting up is in any way a big deal? Natalya isn't interesting in the first place and pretending that this is some kind of a big deal isn't making things better. This was a fine enough match but I rolled my eyes hard at the idea of some kind of a breakup angle between a team that was barely around in the first place.

Kayden Carter and Katana Chance are ready for their rematch for the Women's Tag Team Titles next week.

Here is Bayley, with the rest of Damage CTRL, for a chat. Bayley talks about how everyone was saying she wasn't as good once she came back from her injury but now she is back as the Royal Rumble winner. She beat the best women's division ever and even broke Rhea Ripley's Iron Woman record.

Cue Ripley to interrupt but Nia Jax jumps her from behind. The

fight is on and they get in the ring, with Jax running her over and dropping the big leg. Jax drops two more plus the Annihilator before staring Bayley down in the corner. Ripley isn't making it to Wrestlemania, but Bayley says she's making her announcement on Smackdown. This was more about setting up Ripley for her Hogan vs. Andre style match in Australia.

Drew McIntyre says Sami Zayn has never beaten him and that isn't changing tonight.

Sami Zayn vs. Drew McIntyre

McIntyre jumps him to start and they go to the floor for an early break. Back with Sami hitting a sunset bomb for a much needed breather. Zayn fights back again but gets run over with a hard shot. McIntyre goes up top, only to get superplexed back down in quite the big crash.

The Helluva Kick is cut off with an elbow to the face, followed by the overhead belly to belly. White Noise plants Sami for two but he knocks McIntyre into the corner again. Another Helluva Kick is blocked with what appears to be a low blow. The Claymore finishes for McIntyre at 12:56.

Rating: C+. This got better near the end but it was kind of a flat main event. I'm not sure what WWE has in mind for McIntyre at Wrestlemania (though a match with Seth Rollins isn't out of the cards) but this was just him beating Sami again. It was a good enough match, though nothing you need to really see.

Overall Rating: B-. The show started off on a down note but was picked up by some rather good action. They could only set up so much for Wrestlemania this week due to the Punk injury and probably a bunch of fallout from the lawsuit changing everything, but it could have been worse. They have more than enough time to get ready, but the build to Elimination Chamber can start next week.

Results

Judgment Day b. DIY – Coup de Grace to Ciampa

Shayna Baszler/Zoey Stark b. Chelsea Green/Piper Niven – Z360 to Green

Jey Uso b. Bronson Reed – Superfly Splash

Gunther b. Kofi Kingston – Powerbomb

Kabuki Warriors b. Tegan Nox/Natalya – Insane Elbow to Natalya

Drew McIntyre b. Sami Zayn – Claymore

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

Monday Night Raw

Date: January 22, 2024

Location: Smoothie King Center, New Orleans, Louisiana

Commentators: Wade Barrett, Michael Cole

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

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

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

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

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

Day to jump Imperium for their scheduled match.

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

New Day vs. Imperium

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

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

Post match the brawl stays on, with Kaiser and Woods brawling at ringside and the other two going into the crowd. They get back together with Kaiser grabbing a chair but Woods makes a save. Woods picks Kaiser up and teases putting him into the tech area but Vinci makes the save. Kofi has to save Woods from going through the tech area and all our go crashing through a table. This was a hot segment and the fans were eating it up.

Video on Drew McIntyre vs. Damian Priest.

Rhea Ripley and Priest argue a big, with Priest accusing her

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

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

Ivy Nile vs. Valhalla

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

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

Here is Nia Jax for a chat. Jax talks about how she squashed Becky Lynch and Rhea Ripley, which is why it's no surprise that Ripley wants to face Lynch. She promises to kill both of their dreams this weekend, but here is Lynch to interrupt. Lynch: "Shut up Nia you dope." Lynch knows that the only thing people in the locker room can agree on is that they don't like Jax. She's probably hurt half of them, so of course she has a target on her back. Lynch is ready to see Jax lose, but here is Bayley to interrupt. She's going to win the Rumble and point to the Wrestlemania sign, but the brawl is on instead, with Jax cleaning house.

Rumble By The Numbers:

30 entrants
1,310 entrants
34 winners
2.6% have won
20 have gone on to win the title at Wrestlemania
1 woman to enter at #1 and win
20 eliminations for Ripley all time, a record
1:01:08, Ripley's record time in the Rumble
1:11:40, Gunther's record time in the Rumble
60% of the winners have come from the last ten entrants
#30 has produced the most winners (5)
3 who have won consecutive Royal Rumbles
3 wins for Steve Austin, a record
3rd time Tampa will host the Royal Rumble (1995/2021)
8 eliminations for Shayna Baszler, the most in a single women's match

More numbers later.

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

Dominik Mysterio vs. The Miz

JD McDonagh and Finn Balor are here with Mysterio. Earlier today, R-Truth told Miz not to tag in tonight (Miz: "It's a singles match.") and to watch out for the Mysterio guys. R-Truth: "Tom and Nick." Miz: "IT'S ONE GUY!" Dominik starts fast and knocks Miz to the floor, where the whole team gets to pose for a bit. Back in and Dominik keeps up the beating as this is one sided so far. Miz gets sent outside again and we take an early break.

Back with both of them down and Miz firing off some clotheslines. The Reality Check gets two and Miz dropkicks McDonagh through the ropes. A hurricanrana to the floor takes McDonagh down again and a springboard high crossbody gets two on Mysterio back inside. The YES Kicks, including the big one

to the head, looks to set up the Skull Crushing Finale but Dominik breaks it up. A Balor enziguri sets up the 619 into the frog splash for the pin at 9:18.

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

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

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

Bronson Reed wants to face Jey Uso next week.

Ivar vs. Chad Gable

Ivar starts fast with a Tour of the Islands but Gable strikes away and manages a knockdown. The top rope headbutt connects but Ivar suplexes him to the apron, setting up a splash as we take a break. Back with Gable managing a top rope superplex but Ivar grabs a tiger driver for two of his own. Gable victory rolls him into the ankle lock, with Ivar powering out.

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

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

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

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

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

Cody gets more serious and brings up the Pipe Bomb, which Punk said and inspired a generation (including Cody) but then he

left for a long time. Cody did everything Punk talked about doing, which makes him more Punk than Punk. That makes Punk take off the jacket and talk about how he's the bigger star coming to take everything Cody wants. Cody quotes his dad quoting John Wayne: "Courage is being scared and saddling up anyways."

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

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

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

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

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

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

Damage CTRL runs into Natalya and Tegan Nox and arguing ensues. Adam Pearce comes in to say save it for the Rumble, with Bayley saying they'll be around more often when the Kabuki Warriors win the Tag Team Titles. With the women gone,

Jinder Mahal and Indus Sher come in. Mahal wants to know what Pearce has planned so Pearce says meet him in his office.

Rumble By The Numbers Part 2:

9 two time winners

13 eliminations in one men's Rumble by Brock Lesnar

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

45 eliminations by Kane over 18 Rumbles, both records

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

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

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

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

Royal Rumble rundown.

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

Drew McIntyre vs. Damian Priest

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

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

A dive takes him down but here is R-Truth to offer Priest his money again. Priest shoves him away but the distraction lets McIntyre hit Future Shock. Truth tries to put the money in the

Money in the Bank briefcase but has to ask Priest the password. McIntyre punches Truth down, with the distraction letting Priest hit South Of Heaven. Priest yells at Truth and throws him out, allowing McIntyre to hit the Claymore for the pin at 13:02.

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

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

Results

New Day vs. Imperium went to a double countout

Ivy Nile b. Valhalla – Top rope bulldog

Dominik Mysterio b. The Miz – Frog splash

Ivar b. Chad Gable – Domsault

Shayna Baszler/Zoey Stark b. Candice LeRae/Indi Hartwell – Z360 to Stark

Drew McIntyre b. Damian Priest – Claymore

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Monday Night Raw – January 15, 2024: The Jinder Hinderer

Monday Night Raw

Date: January 15, 2024

Location: Simmons Bank Arena, North Little Rock, Arkansas

Commentators: Michael Cole, Wade Barrett

The slow build towards the Royal Rumble continues and that means we're likely to get some more names added to the show's namesake matches. In addition, we have Seth Rollins defending the Raw World Title against Jinder Mahal in a match that might just be crazy enough for WWE to do something off the wall. Let's get to it.

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

We open with the annual Martin Luther King Jr. Day video. That's a nice thing to bring back from the Vince days.

Seth Rollins, with daughter, arrived earlier, as did Jinder Mahal.

Here is Cody Rhodes to get things going. Rhodes brings up a song about Little Rock but isn't sure if that's what the fans

want to talk about. Instead, let's talk about why he's back in WWE. The Royal Rumble is just around the corner, but here is Drew McIntyre to interrupt. McIntyre asks Rhodes what he wants to talk about and brings up their time as Tag Team Champions (Rhodes: "The Dashing Ones."). He brings up their time on the indies, which was good enough that got WWE to call them back.

McIntyre's last match on the indies was with Rhodes, who told him he would be a World Champion one day. Rhodes needs to keep doing what he has been doing and he'll be the first member of his family to hold up that title. Rhodes will finish his story...but McIntyre is finishing his first. We hear about some people who could win the Royal Rumble but McIntyre wants him to step up.

Rhodes talks about how thankful and grateful he is while McIntyre is complaining about his second chance. McIntyre brings up the people Rhodes has brought to Raw or endorsed when he could have just left it alone. Rhodes calls him out for his complaints and says the way to do this is look at yourself and to the fans. Yes McIntyre's last match on the indies was against McIntyre, but who won? It's great to see all these personal feuds being built up on the way to the Rumble, as they could well indeed go beyond and into Wrestlemania.

Damian Priest yells at R-Truth for selling bootleg Judgment Day merchandise...until Truth hands him his cut, which is a pile of hundreds. Priest says ok but just don't talk about selling the merch. Oh and in the tag match tonight: Truth doesn't tag in.

JD McDonagh/Dominik Mysterio vs. DIY

Gargano and McDonagh get things going and head to the mat for some front facelocks. A hurricanrana sends McDonagh outside but Mysterio knocks Gargano outside as well. Ciampa drops Mysterio and DIY is happy as we take a break. Back with Ciampa

blasting McDonagh with a clothesline but another Mysterio cheap shot cuts Gargano off.

The chinlock goes on to keep Gargano down but he's back up with the slingshot spear. McDonagh pulls Ciampa off the apron before the tag though and we take another break. Back with Ciampa coming back in to clean house again. The Fairy Tale Ending is escaped but a powerbomb/belly to back suplex combination gets two on Mysterio.

We get the big exchange of strikes to the face and everyone is down. Mysterio is back up to dropkick Gargano into a 619 position but Ciampa makes the save as everything stays broken down. A slightly different kind of DDT sets up Meet In The Middle to finish McDonagh at 18:12.

Rating: B-. This match got some time and it's nice to see DIY getting a win. They could very easily be slotted into the title picture as they are building up some quick momentum. Then again, it has felt like they were ready to move up the ladder more than once so I'll believe it when I see it. On the other hand, it's nice to see Mysterio and McDonagh fitting in well as the Judgment Day jobbers.

Chelsea Green and Piper Niven met with Adam Pearce, along with Indi Hartwell and Candice LeRae. A tag match is made for later tonight.

Chelsea Green/Piper Niven vs. Indi Hartwell/Candice LeRae

Green goes after LeRae to start and it's quickly off to Niven to hammer away. An early Vader Bomb misses though and it's LeRae coming in for some step up backsplashes. Everything breaks down and Niven misses the basement crossbody. That leaves Green to get hung in the ropes for a Lionsault from LeRae for the pin at 3:30.

Rating: C. This wasn't much of a match as they were flying through everything to get to the pin. Hartwell and LeRae are

the next team up it seems, which is pretty typical for the division. There's only so much to get excited about when the division has such a revolving door of teams, but maybe they can do something given their history together.

Video on Nia Jax.

Judgment Day isn't happy with R-Truth being around, but Damian Priest whips out the stack of cash to change their mind. Oh and JD McDonagh doesn't get any because his name isn't on the shirt.

Ludwig Kaiser introduces the returning Gunther. The fans seem happy to have him back, which almost has Gunther a bit confused. Gunther says he can smell the desperation around here, but that might just be Arkansas. Last year, Gunther entered the Royal Rumble at #1 and was one elimination away from winning. This year, he's entering again and he's going to win.

For now though, he wants to focus on Kaiser. We look at Kaiser injuring Kofi Kingston last week, which Gunther loved. Cue the returning Xavier Woods, who says that was too far last week. Woods is here to get revenge on Kaiser, but maybe Kaiser has to ask daddy for permission. Gunther approves so let's do this, with Woods winning the pre-match fight.

Xavier Woods vs. Ludwig Kaiser

Joined in progress with Woods hammering away but getting kicked in the face. Kaiser stomps away until Woods gets in a shot to the face of his own. Woods goes up top, only to get pulled back down in a nasty crash. Kaiser is right back on him with more shots to the head, plus a kick to the chest for two.

Back up and Woods manages a kick to the head, only to get dropped again with a hard clothesline. A whip sends Woods shoulder first into the post and a running dropkick puts him on the floor as we take a break. Back with Woods hitting

another kick to the head, setting up a chop off. Woods unloads with stomps in the corner and hits a dropkick through the ropes for a bonus. The beating is on outside, with Woods eventually hitting him with a chair for the DQ at 10:10.

Rating: C+. This was a different side of Woods and it wound up working well. Right now it seems that we're waiting to see the partners return for what should be a big showdown tag match. If that means we have to wait and see a more intense Woods, which made him stand out for the first time in awhile, so be it.

With the match over, Woods grabs the chair again, only to have Kaiser kick it into his face. Kaiser loads up the dropkick into the steps but Woods gets up and throws the stairs at his head. Kaiser ducks away and it's time to run through the crowd as Woods is still looking angry.

Bronson Reed promises to win some unspecified title.

Ludwig Kaiser jumps Xavier Woods in the back but Jey Uso makes the save.

We look at how Jinder Mahal got a World Title shot against Seth Rollins tonight.

Akira Tozawa vs. Ivar

Maxxine Dupri and Valhalla are here too. Ivar runs him over to start but Tozawa is back up with a spinning kick to the head. Tozawa drops him again and rips the shirt off, only to get caught with a spinning slam. Dupri offers a distraction though and Tozawa grabs a sunset bomb for the pin at 1:58.

Post match Valhalla and Ivar jump Maxxine and Tozawa to leave them laying.

Here is Rhea Ripley for a chat and she gets right to the point: she is going to be waiting on whomever wins the Royal Rumble because Mami always comes out on top. Cue Becky Lynch

to interrupt, Becky talks about their similarities, which include going from nothing to the top and making a big splash at Wrestlemania.

The difference is Becky has actually won the Royal Rumble. Here they stand though, with Lynch wondering if this entire thing has been worth it. Lynch thinks Ripley is better than her, but she needs to beat Ripley to prove herself wrong. She needs to win the Rumble and point at the sign, which sounds good to Ripley. She'll see Lynch at Wrestlemania. There's your big tease and yeah I'm in.

Seth Rollins knows he's up against Jinder Mahal tonight and we've been here before. This is a different Mahal though, and Seth is ready.

Miz/R-Truth vs. Judgment Day

Non-title and most of Judgment Day is here with Damian Priest and Finn Balor. To make it more complicated, Truth comes out with Judgment Day and hands Balor his cut of the merch money. Ruth starts for the team and takes Balor into the corner, which has Balor annoyed. Balor stomps away and we take an early break.

We come back with Truth fighting out of a chinlock and kicking Balor in the head. The diving tag brings Miz in and Priest is thrown over the announcers' table. Back in and the corner clothesline hits Balor but Truth tags himself in for the ax kick. Priest yells at Truth, who kicks Balor in the face, earning himself the South Of Heaven. Balor gets the pin at 8:00.

Rating: C+. WWE has something with Truth and Judgment Day and they seem to know it. I could certainly go for more from them and it wouldn't shock me to see a rematch for the titles at the Royal Rumble. Whatever keeps Truth on TV, as he has struck gold yet again, which is hardly even a surprise at this point.

Jinder Mahal is ready to get his title back because this is twelve years in the making in one night.

Shinsuke Nakamura is mad at his loss to Cody Rhodes but he's entering the Royal Rumble.

Tegan Nox/Natalya vs. Shayna Baszler/Zoey Stark

Stark takes Nox into the corner to start and it's off to Baszler for a stomp to the chest. Nox fights out of said corner but Baszler sends her right back into the corner. The comeback doesn't take much longer as Nox gets over to Natalya for the necessary tag. Everything breaks down and Stark comes in but Baszler makes a blind tag. That's fine with Natalya, who hits a discus lariat but Stark breaks up the Hart Attack. Baszler chokes Natalya for the tap at 5:23.

Rating: C. This is the lower level of the least interesting division in WWE and another match like this doesn't make things much more interesting. It feels like these four have been feuding for a few weeks now without getting anywhere. Odds are that's all we'll be seeing from them until one of them gets a Women's Tag Team Title shot and loses. Then a new team will take their place and it starts all over again.

Here's what's coming next week.

Raw World Title: Jinder Mahal vs. Seth Rollins

Mahal is challenging and has Indus Sher with him. Sher offers an early distraction and the beating is on to start. It's too early for the Khallas, Stomp and Pedigree as Rollins is backdropped out to the floor. Rollins fights up...and here is Damian Priest to watch. We take a break and come back with Mahal dropping some knees and grabbing an abdominal stretch. Rollins fights out and hits some forearms of his own.

A crossbody gives Rollins two and it's a springboard Swanton into a Lionsault for two more. Rollins comes up favoring his

knee but he's fine enough to grab a Falcon Arrow. The Pedigree is loaded up but his knee gives out, meaning Mahal is up at two. Rollins misses another high crossbody...and Priest stands up. Cue Drew McIntyre to brawl with Priest to the back, leaving Mahal to hit a fireman's carry gutbuster for two. Veer gets in a briefcase shot into the Khallas for two, only to have Rollins come back with the Stomp to retain at 13:03.

Rating: B-. That's about all I was expecting it to be and it was not bad at all. Mahal was just enough of a minor threat to believe a long shot title change was possible, as WWE did a nice job of setting him up. Indus Sher and Priest made things even better and it was a perfectly good, one off match. Mahal as the former champion who wants to prove he wasn't a fluke is a way to go and he's done rather well in the last few weeks, including here.

Overall Rating: B-. I had fun with the show, as they built things up towards the Rumble while also covering some things this week. Rollins gets a win under his belt on the way to the Rumble and we have the hilarity of R-Truth and Judgment Day. These shows have the task of not making a major mistake before we get a better picture of WrestleMania at the Rumble and they had a pretty good one this week.

Results

DIY b. Dominik Mysterio/JD McDonagh – Meet In The Middle to McDonagh

Indi Hartwell/Candice LeRae b. Piper Niven/Chelsea Green – Assisted Lionsault to Green

Ludwig Kaiser b. Xavier Woods via DQ when Woods used a chair

Akira Tozawa b. Ivar – Sunset bomb

Judgment Day b. Miz/R-Truth – South Of Heaven to R-Truth

Shayna Baszler/Zoey Stark b. Natalya/Tegan Nox – Kirifuda Clutch to Natalya

Seth Rollins b. Jinder Mahal – Stomp

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Monday Night Raw – January 1, 2024 (Day 1): That Man Might Need A Chair

Monday Night Raw

Date: January 1, 2024

Location: Pechanga Arena, San Diego, California

Commentators: Michael Cole, Wade Barrett

It's the first show of the new year and despite this show being against the College Football Playoffs, we're getting a stacked show. Drew McIntyre is getting a shot at the World Heavyweight Championship and there are rumors of a former champion making a special appearance. Let's get to it.

Michael Cole and Wade Barrett are in the ring to open things up and run down the card, which is certainly a different way to go. The former WWE Champion is confirmed to be returning tonight as well.

We recap Becky Lynch vs. Nia Jax, which started over five years ago when Jax blasted Lynch with a right hand and hurt her. Then they didn't do anything about it for years and now we're having a showdown.

Nia Jax vs. Becky Lynch

Jax powers her around to start and shrugs off Becky's right hands. A bearhug doesn't work long for Jax but she easily blocks the Bexploder. Lynch is back up with a missile dropkick for two and we take a break. Back with Lynch getting two off a Molly Go Round but Jax runs her over. The legdrop misses though and they head outside, where Jax punches the post by mistake.

Becky avoids a cannonball against the barricade but Jax beats the count back in. The guillotine legdrop gives Lynch two so she goes for the armbar. That's countered into a heck of a powerbomb for two so the Annihilator is loaded up. Lynch realizes that might hurt and goes up top, only to have a super Manhandle Slam countered into the super Samoan Drop for two. The crowd is VERY interested in the kickout so Jax sends her face first into the mat, followed by the Annihilator for the pin at 11:53.

Rating: C+. It's one of Jax's best matches ever and the fans were way into the near falls near the end. Lynch losing is a rare sight to see and in theory sets up Jax as the big challenger to Rhea Ripley in Australia at Elimination Chamber. That being said, I'm not sure where this leaves Lynch, save for a rematch where she gets her revenge down the line.

Lynch is bleeding from the mouth.

We recap Shinsuke Nakamura's American Nightmare Before Christmas from a few weeks ago, leading to a brawl with Cody Rhodes.

Here is Cody Rhodes for a chat. Rhodes talks about how it's a

new year but he is stuck on Shinsuke Nakamura. It's not because of the poem or the poison mist, but rather because this should be over. Rhodes wants to finish this now, so here is Nakamura on the screen. He'd rather wait a week so he can finish Rhodes' story and then close the book. Nakamura mists the camera for added evil effect. That should do fine for a main event next week.

Kofi Kingston/Jey Uso vs. Imperium

Kofi is in shorts and sneakers, making me think he had a luggage issue. Kofi flips out of Vinci's armbar to start but Vinci takes him into the corner anyway. Kaiser comes in and hammers away, including sending Kofi into the corner as we take a break. Back with Kofi dropkicking Vinci out of the air...and the match is stopped at 6:18 as Vinci is hurt. Not enough shown to rate due to the break and the injury but that crash was nasty.

Vinci does walk out after the match so that's a big relief.

Video on the holiday tour.

Video on Ivy Nile.

Here is Miz for MizTV, featuring the Judgment Day as special guests. Actually never mind as here is R-Truth instead. Truth insists that the team was behind him but they slipped away. Miz asks if Truth is seeing invisible people again, which gets us a Little Jimmy reference. Truth sits down (in the one guest chair despite the whole team being scheduled) so Miz can ask him what exactly he does for the team. It turns out Truth does a lot of things, like trying to make the team more popular.

Cue JD McDonagh and Dominik Mysterio to say this is over, but Truth brings up McDonagh losing to be thrown off the team. Dominik gets booed out of the building over and over until he eventually asks Miz how bad his 2023 went. Miz talks about the moments he made, while Dominik's lone moment was being spanked

by Rey Mysterio. Then he got whipped by CM Punk over the holidays! Dominik issues the challenge for the tag match, but Truth isn't sure which team he's on. He thinks he's teaming with Miz to turn on him, but then ducks McDonagh's clothesline. The villains are cleared out and we take a break.

Miz/R-Truth vs. Judgment Day

Joined in progress with Miz taking Dominik down. Truth comes in for the twisting forearm to Mysterio as we talk about Awesome Truth for a change. A cheap shot puts Truth on the floor though and we take a break. Back with Truth getting on the apron next to Judgment Day and Miz sending Mysterio outside. McDonagh gets in a headbutt...and tags in Truth. Judgment Day isn't sure what's going on but they go with it anyway. Truth accidentally hits McDonagh though, allowing the Skull Crushing Finale (after Truth says "I'm sorry Miz. I love you.") to finish for Miz at 7:23.

Rating: C. The match was goofy comedy and they aren't hiding what they're doing here. That's a perfectly fine way to go as well, as Mysterio and McDonagh are hardly serious stars and beating them isn't going to hurt them in any significant way. I could go for more of Truth and Miz, as the two of them have some very funny moments together.

Chelsea Green and Piper Niven invade the club and want a rematch with Kayden Carter and Katana Chance. Instead they get drinks thrown in their faces, because this week is about dancing.

Rhea Ripley is ready to hurt Ivy Nile.

Raw Women's Title: Rhea Ripley vs. Ivy Nile

Ripley is defending but has to slip out of an early fireman's carry attempt. That's not cool with Ripley, who powers out and sends Nile face first into the mat. Nile is back up with a toss out to the floor and we take a break. Back with Nile

striking away and hitting a leg lariat for two. Nile slips out of a belly to back suplex but gets caught with a heck of a headbutt.

A missile dropkick gives Ripley two but Nile's suplex gets the same. Ripley drops her with a facebuster and clothesline, followed by a belly to back faceplant for two. Nile catches her on top though and, after pulling Ripley face first into the turnbuckle, grabs a bottom rope German superplex for two. Nile goes up but gets headbutted out of the air for a nasty crash. Riptide retains the title at 11:54.

Rating: C+. The problem for Ripley is she has so few serious challengers. Nile was trying here but clearly not ready for this level and that made an already obvious result a bit more obvious. The good thing here was Ripley sold for Nile and made her look a lot better than she would have otherwise. If nothing else, it's nice to see Ripley back in the ring as that isn't something that takes place very often these days.

It's time for the return of a former WWE Champion and it's....Jinder Mahal. Even he acknowledges the disappointment before bragging about his success. Mahal rants about how divided the UNITED States are right now and goes into Punjabi. He's happy because everyone is united in booing...their own National Anthem in Punjabi. Mahal talks about how he's different than foreigners like the Iron Sheik, who exposed America for what it is. We get some more Punjabi but here's THE ROCK for the big interruption.

After taking some time to get to the ring, Rock says Mahal is in trouble now. Mahal is right about one thing: he isn't the Iron Sheik. We get a Sheik impression from Rock, before Rock tells Mahal why he sucks. Well hang on though as Sheik talks to Rock and tells him what to say: Mahal is the biggest as***** on God's green earth. Also, no one likes him and he's not funny. Rock: "If you were one of the Rock's movies, it would be Baywatch." Mahal: "I've never seen Baywatch." Rock:

"Well nobody else did either. Shut your mouth when the Rock is talking to you."

Rock goes on about why America is great and doesn't want to hear Mahal call himself the Modern Day Maharajah. Instead he calls Mahal the Day 1 Douchebag and gets the fans chanting it for him, bringing back the "this side says this and this side says that". We get a version of the National Anthem, complete with what sounds like a steroids joke about Mahal, which is enough to trigger the fight. The Rock Bottom and People's Elbow leave Mahal running off so Rock talks about going to get something to eat after the show. When he goes out, should he sit in a booth, at the bar, or....at the head of the table?

Well. That happened. This was a long segment that is going to be remembered for six words at the end and that's just fine. I'm not sure what the Rock is going to do or when he's going to get in the ring (assuming he does), but there are a lot of interesting options out there for multiple shows coming up and this just made it better. I'm not the biggest Rock fan, but you can feel the energy when he is out there and he makes things seem bigger. Also: Rock's stuff hasn't aged well, but Mahal handled himself better than I would have expected here, even if he was little more than a means to an end.

Tegan Nox/Natalya vs. Shayna Baszler/Zoey Stark

Baszler runs Natalya over to start and we take a break less than a minute in. Back with Nox hitting a Molly Go Round for two but Baszler runs her over. The Z360 finishes for Stark at 5:29. Another match without enough shown to rate, but this was the death spot of death spots.

Natalya does not seem pleased.

Video on Seth Rollins vs. Drew McIntyre.

Raw World Title: Seth Rollins vs. Drew McIntyre

Rollins is defending and they go outside fast, with Rollins hitting a forearm off the steps. McIntyre can't get an Alabama Slam but can hit a belly to belly on the floor as we take a break. Back with McIntyre still hammering away but McIntyre misses a charge into the post to put him outside again.

A suicide dive drops McIntyre again and they get back in. This time McIntyre heads up and gets superplexed back down, only to reverse Rollins' Falcon Arrow into one of his own as we take a break. Back again with McIntyre hitting a super White Noise, followed by a neckbreaker. The Claymore is countered into a sitout powerbomb for two, followed by a low superkick. The Pedigree gives Rollins two and they both need a breather.

Cue Damian Priest with the briefcase and he blasts Rollins in the face! McIntyre Claymores Priest and drops Dominik Mysterio, followed by a Claymore to Rollins...but the cover pulls Rollins' foot onto the rope. McIntyre can't believe it so they go outside, with Rollins hitting a Pedigree onto the announcers' table. Back in and the Stomp retains the title at 18:03.

Rating: B. I was getting into this one and they had me wondering where it was going with the Priest appearance. At the same time, McIntyre has no one to blame but himself here, which should push him further over the edge. Rollins gets another win to clear out McIntyre and we should be on the way to his showdown with Punk, which could very well headline one night of Wrestlemania. Good main event here, with the match getting some time to develop.

Priest is mad to end the show.

Overall Rating: B-. This was a show that was more engaging/entertaining than good, as the main event was the only match that really delivered. The opener was good enough, two matches were really short (granted one was stopped early) and Ripley won a match without much drama. The thing is, there

was one big moment on here and that is what will be remembered. WWE wanted to start the year off with a bang and that is what they did, delivering a show that might not have been great but did what it was supposed to do, which is more important.

Results

Nia Jax b. Becky Lynch – Annihilator

Jey Uso/Kofi Kingston b. Imperium via referee stoppage

Miz/R-Truth b. Judgment Day – Skull Crushing Finale to McDonagh

Rhea Ripley b. Ivy Nile – Riptide

Shayna Baszler/Zoey Stark b. Tegan Nox/Natalya – Z360 to Nox

Seth Rollins b. Drew McIntyre – Stomp

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Monday Night Raw – December 4, 2023: The Wrestling Show

Monday Night Raw

Date: December 4, 2023

Location: MVP Arena, Albany, New York

Commentators: Michael Cole, Wade Barrett

We're into the final month of the year and the big story coming out of last week is the return of both Randy Orton and CM Punk. You might be able to guess what is up first for the two of them and there is a chance we'll find out some of that this week. In addition, Seth Rollins is defending the World Heavyweight Championship against Jey Uso. Let's get to it.

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

Opening sequence.

Here is Drew McIntyre to get things going. McIntyre calls Raw the land where you can do whatever you want, say whatever you want, leave and come back completely forgiven! Fans: "CM PUNK!" McIntyre: "Oh come on I could be talking about anybody!" McIntyre talks about how Jey Uso apologized to Randy Orton last week before moving on to Sami Zayn, his opponent for tonight.

Cue Zayn to interrupt, because McIntyre apparently has something to say to him. McIntyre says Zayn is the only one who deserved to be screwed over by the Bloodline. Zayn was part of the team and then screwed him over, so what was he expecting to happen? Zayn says he and McIntyre are nothing alike because Zayn turned a loss in front of his family into winning in the main event of Wrestlemania. Is McIntyre making his family proud? McIntyre wants a referee out here right now so here we go.

Sami Zayn vs. Drew McIntyre

McIntyre powers him into the corner to start and fires him off with a belly to belly. Zayn sends him to the floor though and we take a break. Back with McIntyre whipping him towards the barricade, only to have Zayn moonsault off of said barricade for a knockdown. They go back inside where McIntyre runs him over, followed by a hard chop to put Zayn down again.

Zayn fights up and avoids a charge to send McIntyre into the post. Despite favoring something in his leg, Zayn manages a suplex and a tornado DDT gets two. McIntyre gets in a neckbreaker but gets sent outside. That means a slingshot dive from Zayn but McIntyre catches him in the air and sends him over the announcers' table.

We take another break and come back again with Zayn getting two off a victory roll. McIntyre's sitout powerbomb gets the same before taking Zayn up top. What looks like a super White Noise is countered into a super sunset bomb to give Zayn two and they're both down. Stereo kicks to the face let Zayn get two off the Blue Thunder Bomb. The leg is too hurt to follow up though and McIntyre chop blocks him. The Claymore finishes Zayn at 20:06.

Rating: B. These two have had some good matches in recent weeks and that was the case again here. McIntyre didn't so much cheat here as much as he capitalized on Zayn's injury and that made for a good story throughout the match. McIntyre gets some momentum back after Survivor Series and you can almost guarantee he'll be around for the title match tonight.

Shayna Baszler is ready to hurt Nia Jax. Again.

Video on Jey Uso, who wants his first singles title tonight. We look at his entire career, but before all that, it was just him, and now it's time for him to get his own title.

Sami Zayn is getting his bad ankle looked at but here is Drew

McIntyre to jump him again. McIntyre says Zayn brought this on himself and crushes the ankle under an anvil case.

Post break, Adam Pearce, a trainer and Jey Uso check on Zayn.

Nia Jax interrupts a Becky Lynch interview to ask about Becky wanting some fights. That would include Nia, who says she's all Becky's after Nia squashes Shayna Baszler.

Nia Jax vs. Shayna Baszler

Baszler kicks away but gets crushed in the corner. A running knee rocks Jax but she powerbombs her way out of an armbar in the corner. They go outside where Nia is sent into the post, only to come back with the legdrop over the ropes. We take a break and come back with Baszler fighting out of a neck crank but getting sent into the post.

A running hip attack sends Baszler into the post but she strikes away for the next comeback. Jax plants her with a Samoan drop, only to have Baszler come back with a running knee for two. A backsplash gives Jax the same but Baszler grabs a German suplex to break up the Annihilator. The Kirifuda Clutch goes on until Jax drops back onto her for the break. Now the Annihilator can finish Baszler off at 12:13.

Rating: C+. This was about what you would have expected, with Jax doing her power offense and Baszler striking away. It didn't help that Baszler kept getting cut off every chance she had but at least she didn't get squashed. The result is pretty much expected with Jax seemingly lined up for Becky Lynch, but this was a competitive match on the way there.

Post match Becky Lynch comes out and Jax bails in short order.

We look back at CM Punk's return on Survivor Series and follow up on Raw.

Indi Hartwell and Candice LeRae fire up DIY when Imperium (facing DIY in a 2/3 falls match tonight) interrupt. Some

trash talk ensues and we're ready to go.

DIY vs. Imperium

2/3 falls. Ciampa and Kaiser start things off and don't do much of anything before it's off to Vinci. A very fast running crossbody hits Ciampa and the rather cocky Kaiser can come back in for the armbar. Ciampa hits an enziguri and rolls underneath a clothesline for the tag off to Gargano. The pace picks way up and a slingshot spear to Kaiser looks to set up Meet In The Middle but Vinci makes a save. That's enough for Kaiser to roll Ciampa up with tights for the pin and the first fall at 4:37.

DIY takes both of them down though and it's a double clap as we take a break. Back with Kaiser flipping Gargano over for a faceplant, setting up the double running dropkick in the corner. The Imperium Bomb is loaded up but this time it's Ciampa making a save, allowing Gargano to roll Vinci up at 10:12 overall to even things up.

Gargano rolls over to Ciampa for the tag as everything breaks down. A powerbomb/belly to back suplex combination (that's a new one) gives Gargano two but Vinci is back in with a backbreaker. Another Imperium Bomb attempt is broken up with a hurricanrana so Vinci goes with a moonsault for two instead. The exchange of strikes to the face and a DDT to Vinci leaves all four down. A super White Noise hits Kaiser and, after taking out Vinci, Meet In The Middle finishes Kaiser for good at 15:09 overall.

Rating: B-. DIY needed this win and it feels like this should be the big blowoff to their feud. There is no reason for it to keep going and hopefully DIY can get somewhere off of the win. If nothing else, we should get Imperium having to explain themselves to Gunther and there is no way that is going to go well.

Chelsea Green and Piper Niven interrupt Tegan Nox and Natalya

to mock their loss. Natalya says they're still coming for the Women's Tag Team Titles.

We look at the Creed Brothers becoming the new #1 contenders to the Tag Team Titles.

New Day praises the Creed Brothers when the Alpha Academy come in to offer the Creeds some training help. They seem impressed, which becomes even more impressed when Maxxine Dupri squats Akira Tozawa.

Judgment Day throws R-Truth Out and Damian Priest says he's in charge since Rhea Ripley and Finn Balor aren't here.

Kayden Carter/Katana Chance vs. Tegan Nox/Natalya

Chelsea Green and Piper Niven are on commentary. Nox spins out of Carter's wristlock to start before Natalya comes in to run Chance over. It's too early for the Sharpshooter so Carter suplexes Chance onto Natalya for two. That's broken up and it's Nox coming back in to pick up the pace. A Molly Go Round hits the illegal Carter so Chance takes her down. It's back to Natalya, who powerbombs both of them out of the corner for two. Carter hits a basement suplex to Natalya, setting up an assisted spinning splash to give Chance the pin at 4:43.

Rating: C-. This was a rough sit as they didn't have the best chemistry and the crowd was almost eerily silent. Chance and Carter tend to be mainly based around whatever fast paced and high lying moves they can do, but those spots have to work. This was more on the sloppy side and while I do like a more established team moving towards the titles, Chance and Carter really didn't impress here.

Post match an annoyed Green gets on the apron, where a dropkick puts her back down.

Here is Cody Rhodes for a chat. Rhodes doesn't even hit the catchphrase before moving into a story of the first time he

ever saw the poison mist. That was from the Great Muta, and now he has experienced it first hand from Shinsuke Nakamura. Now Nakamura has his attention so he can either explain himself, or they can fight right now.

A spotlight hits Cody and Nakamura pops up on screen to say they are part of the same story. They have both won the Royal Rumble but lost at Wrestlemania, sending them off a cliff. Now Cody is trying to get back there so Nakamura wants to take the story out of his hands. Cody says they aren't the same and welcomes Nakamura to prove it.

We recap Sami Zayn's ankle injury and Drew McIntyre attacking it further.

Jey Uso comes in to see Adam Pearce, who has no updates on Zayn. Uso is fired up for his title shot and leaves, with Gunther coming in to chat with Pearce.

Judgment Day vs. Creed Brothers

JD McDonagh/Dominik Mysterio for the team here and Ivy Nile is with the Creeds. Brutus takes Dominik down without much effort to start before grabbing a suplex. Rather than dropping Dominik, Brutus hands him to Julius or the suplex....as R-Truth is here, thinking he's in Judgment Day. McDonagh comes in and gets taken down by the arm for his efforts. The Creeds take turns kneeling McDonagh in the ribs for two but the heels manage to send the Creeds outside.

McDonagh hits an Asai moonsault and we take a break. Back with Dominik stomping Brutus down in the corner but having his third Amigo blocked. Julius comes in for the suplexes into the nip ups, which always looks awesome. Cole: "I've never seen that before. Like, ever!" Last week man, last week. McDonagh's attempt at a poisonrana is cut off but Dominik breaks up the Brutus Ball. Julius suplexes both of them down and Brutus Pounces Dominik onto the announcers' table. Now the Brutus Ball can finish McDonagh at 10:49.

Rating: B-. The Creeds are on an absolute roll right now and giving them a win over some of Judgment Day before going after the champs is as logical as it gets. There is always a place for some amateur stars in WWE and having the Creeds out there mixing up their amateur skills with crazy athleticism is making things awesome. Not a great match here, but the Creeds continue to look good.

We look at Randy Orton signing with Smackdown.

Adam Pearce tells Seth Rollins that CM Punk is invited to Raw next week so Pearce can sign him to an exclusive contract. Rollins is fine with that but for now, he's ready for Jey Uso. Cue Uso, who says he's winning the title. Uso and Rollins threaten each other but seem to have respect.

Damian Priest yells at Judgment Day, with JD McDonagh blaming R-Truth but Dominik Mysterio saying the Creeds are the real deal.

Raw World Title: Seth Rollins vs. Jey Uso

Rollins is defending. Feeling out process to start with an exchange of grappling not going to either of them. An early Stomp attempt misses for Rollins and Uso rolls him up for two as we take an early break. Back with Rollins hammering away and hitting a moonsault for two. The fans chant for CM Punk as Rollins gets two off a belly to back suplex. Uso is right back with a pop up neckbreaker for two of his own and they fight to the apron.

Rollins loads up the Buckle Bomb but gets DDTed to send us to a second break. Back again with Rollins hitting a dive, only to have Uso fight back and hit his own dive. They get back inside where stereo crossbodies leave both of them down. Uso wins a slugout but Rollins knocks him into the corner as the Punk chants start up again.

Uso fights back and hits the running Umaga Attack but Rollins

hits a Sling Blade. The top rope splash gives Rollins two but Uso's superkick into the Superfly Splash gets the same. Uso goes up again and takes too long, allowing Rollins to superplex him into the Falcon Arrow for two more. Rollins misses the Stomp though and gets speared down for two. The Buckle Bomb connects for Rollins but Uso is back with another spear into another Superfly Splash for two more. A third spear is countered into the Pedigree though and now Rollins can hit Stomp for the pin to retain at 23:00.

Rating: B. This felt like a big time title match and the two of them beat the heck out of each other. Uso was in over his head against Rollins but he put up a great fight. What mattered was making Uso feel like a major star and give Rollins a good win. Drew McIntyre won't be happy with any of this and that should this all the way to the new year.

Respect is shown post match but here is Drew McIntyre to Claymore Uso. Rollins tries to make the save but gets dropped as well, allowing McIntyre to put Uso through the announcers' table to end the show.

Overall Rating: B. Other than a tag match that didn't even last five minutes, there was nothing bad on this show, which was heavily focused on the in-ring aspect. I had a good time with this show, as they had a wrestling week with so much time to go before the Royal Rumble. Enough stories were moved forward this week and now I want to see where some of them go. The Rumble is still a long way off, but WWE didn't screw anything up here and CM Punk being back next week should make it better.

Results

Drew McIntyre b. Sami Zayn – Claymore

Nia Jax b. Shayna Baszler – Annihilator

DIY b. Imperium 2-1

Kayden Carter/Katana Chance – Assisted spinning splash to Natalya

Creed Brothers b. Judgment Day – Brutus Ball to McDonagh
Seth Rollins b. Jey Uso – Stomp

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Monday Night Raw – November 27, 2023: What's Old Is New Again

Monday Night Raw

Date: November 27, 2023

Location: Bridgestone Arena, Nashville, Tennessee

Commentators: Corey Graves, Michael Cole

We're done with Survivor Series and the big story is the return of CM Punk in a heck of a shocker. Punk returned at the end of Survivor Series and, while he didn't actually do anything, the fans certainly remember who he is. Now the

question is where things go from here, but we've got almost two months before the Royal Rumble. Let's get to it.

[Here is Survivor Series if you need a recap.](#)

Opening sequence, with a new theme song.

Here is Randy Orton to get things going and yeah the fans still like him. Orton acknowledges that the fans seemed to miss him before talking about how he got into WarGames because of Cody Rhodes. Cody's dad invented WarGames and he wanted to bring the three most dangerous letters in WWE into that match.

Cue Rhea Ripley to interrupt, with Ripley talking about how Orton doesn't get that things have changed around here. The Judgment Day has replaced the Bloodline and are on top of the WWE. Orton is the reason Damian Priest didn't get to cash in Money In The Bank and Orton needs to move away from the Judgment Day.

Orton says he's been hearing about Mami for a long time now, but Ripley needs to understand that Daddy is back. Ripley says she gave him a chance so here are Dominik Mysterio and JD McDonagh (in a neck brace) to jump Orton. That goes as well as expected, with Orton saying he's getting a match with Mysterio tonight.

Some teams in the Tag Team Turmoil are ready when Maxxine Dupri and Ivy Nile brings in country singer Jelly Roll. R-Truth comes in to not be sure who he is, leaving Akira Tozawa to dance a bit.

Tag Team Turmoil

For a future Tag Team Title match. Alpha Academy (Otis/Akira Tozawa) is in at #1 and DIY is in at #2, with Ciampa running Tozawa over to start. Gargano comes in and mocks Tozawa's dancing, only to have a splash hit raised knees. It's off to Otis to drop them both with running shoulders. A spinning

elbow hits Ciampa and the Academy hit stereo Caterpillars. Otis is sent to the floor though and Meet In The Middle hits Tozawa for the pin at 3:08.

Indus Sher is in at #3 and they take Gargano down without much trouble. A missed charge into the corner lets Gargano grab a rollup for the fluke pin at 5:33 total. The Creed Brothers, with Ivy Nile, are in at #4 with Brutus grabbing a fireman's carry on Ciampa. Julius comes in and gets caught with a quick shot, allowing the tag off to Gargano. The Creeds are sent outside in a heap before Julius comes back in to get kicked in the face.

Brutus breaks up Meet In The middle though, allowing Julius to lift Gargano into a powerbomb (from his knees, because of course he can do that). The Brutus Ball finishes Gargano at 10:09 total and it's New Day in at #5. Woods takes Julius into the corner but has to grab a leg to keep him from getting away. That lets Kofi hit a top rope splash to the back but Julius is fine enough to power up with a suplex from the mat.

Brutus hits a standing moonsault into Julius' standing shooting star press for two. Woods gets over to Kofi for the top rope double stomp/backbreaker combination but Kofi misses Trouble In Paradise. Instead Kofi hits a high crossbody on Julius, only to have him roll through for a fall away slam. Brutus moonsaults off the apron to take Woods down, setting up the Brutus Ball to pin Kofi at 17:23 total.

Imperium is in at #6 (last team) and Julius gets beaten down in a hurry. Kaiser is back up with a springboard spinning crossbody as Brutus is whipped into the announcers' table. A spinebuster into a PK sets up the Imperium Bomb for two, with Brutus having to make the save. The tag brings Brutus in to clean house but Kaiser gets in a chop block. The nerve hold keeps Brutus in trouble but he fights up for stereo running boots.

That's enough for the tag to Julius, meaning it's the suplexes into the nips to fire the fans up. A rollup with trunks gets two on Julius but he's right back up. Another Brutus Ball is broken up by Vinci so the Imperial Bomb is loaded up. Julius runs up and steps on Vinci's back (slipping off in the process) before jumping up top to superplex Kaiser down. Now the Brutus Ball can give the Creeds the pin and the title shot at 25:48.

Rating: B-. This got a lot of time and in this case that might have hurt it a bit. There were times when I was waiting on this to wrap up already and then it just kept going. The good thing is the Creeds won, as they should have, as they are already one of the best teams in WWE. With that kind of athleticism and teamwork, it's hard to ignore how good they really are. Go with what works here, and give them the shot they deserve. They won over some good teams here and that just makes them feel all the better.

Finn Balor is worried about the Creed Brothers but Damian Priest doesn't want to hear it right now. He knows they're thinking about how he cost them WarGames but Balor tells him to relax. Priest and Balor are off to check on the banged up JD McDonagh.

Here is Cody Rhodes for a chat. First up, he thanks every member of his team at WarGames for the win, including Randy Orton, who helped them win in his dad's match. The other story was the return of CM Punk, which took everyone by surprise. People want to hear what he has to say but Cody wants to say welcome back.

With all of these stories taking place, Cody wants to make his own story...by declaring for the Royal Rumble. The lights go dim though and here is Shinsuke Nakamura, who says he has been patient with Rhodes for far too long. Cue Nakamura to mist Cody down as the target is revealed. That's an interesting way to go and I could go for seeing where it heads next.

Bronson Reed vs. Ivar

Valhalla is here with Ivar. They trade the big clotheslines to start until Reed uses a running stomach shot to put him down. A seated senton out of the corner drops Reed but he's right back with a suplex. Valhalla offers a distraction though and it's a spinning kick to drop Reed as we take a break.

Back with Reed hitting a splash in the corner, setting up the rapid fire chops. They trade kicks to the face until Reed gets two off a backsplash. Ivar grabs a Tour of the Islands for two of his own but misses a moonsault. Valhalla's distraction breaks up the Tsunami though and that's good for an ejection. Ivar knocks him to the floor but Reed catches him coming off the apron...and drops him almost immediately. They fight into the timekeeper's area and it's a double countout at 8:35.

Rating: B-. I wasn't wild on the finish but these guys had a big old hoss fight and that is all it was supposed to be. It's kind of nice to not have one of them take a all here, even if the countout elt somewhat lame at the same time. There's a good chance they'll have a rematch where Reed wins, but Ivar did look solid here, as has been the case with him lately.

Post match Reed gives him a Death Valley Driver into the barricade, but Ivar is up in a few seconds for a chair shot to Reed. They keep fighting through security until they're finally split up.

Shayna Baszler gives Zoey Stark a pep talk after her loss but here is Nia Jax to say she's getting the Women's Title. Baszler doesn't want to hear it but Stark gets the match with Jax for later.

We look at CM Punk's return, including some fan reaction videos.

R-Truth is in Judgment Day's club house, eating some jelly rolls. He wants in on the WarGames match but is told it

already happened. Truth: "Did you win? How did I do?" The one thing he does remember is that Randy Orton is back so they throw him out. JD McDonagh offers to take care of Truth.

Nia Jax vs. Zoey Stark

Stark strikes away but gets knocked out of the air on a springboard. She manages to knock Jax to the floor though and there's a springboard dive to the floor. We take a break and come back with Stark fighting out of a torture rack but getting cut off with an elbow to the face. Stark goes after the knee, including crushing it with a Swanton. The Annihilator is broken up and Stark goes up top, only to get caught with a Samoan drop. The backsplash sets up the Annihilator to finish Stark at 9:02.

Rating: C+. That's about what you would expect, with Stark fighting valiantly but coming up short against the monster that is Jax. You can only do so much against her as Jax is likely coming up on a title shot so for now it's just racking up wins until they get somewhere with her. In Jax's defense, she is moving a bit better than she was in her previous run so things could be a lot worse.

We look at Gunther retaining the Intercontinental Title over the Miz at Survivor Series.

Gunther isn't happy with Imperium and wants them to deal with DIY. With the two of them off to deal with that, Miz pops in to say he heard Gunther say his next opponent needed to challenge him to his face. Well here is that challenger, which has Gunther laughing. Gunther praises Miz for bringing it on Saturday because he proved he belongs in the ring. Just not with Gunther.

Here is Seth Rollins for a chat. After saying that he is a visionary, Rollins wants to hear the CM Punk chants. Rollins isn't impressed, but that's all the time he wants to spend on Punk. Instead, we should talk about the title that he has

built up for the last six months. Rollins isn't feeling too good two days out from WarGames but he's starting to get the itch to be a fighting champion again.

Cue Drew McIntyre to interrupt, saying he wants to shake Rollins' hand after the match at WarGames. McIntyre bought into Judgment Day's plan and now he has to put everything else behind him. All that matters is the World Heavyweight Title, but Rollins says beating McIntyre was the best thing that ever happened to McIntyre. That seems to work for McIntyre, who says he deserved the slap that Rollins gave him.

Rollins thinks McIntyre should get a rematch, but there are some people who deserve one more. The title will be on the line next week....against Jey Uso. And that isn't cool with McIntyre, who drops him with a headbutt (possibly hitting the belt in the process and cutting himself open). McIntyre yells at him a lot but here is Jey for the save.

Post break, Sami Zayn comes up to Drew McIntyre and asks what is going on. Zayn has had his own issues but he keeps getting up instead of whining like McIntyre. Zayn knows the end of his road is winning the World Heavyweight Championship. McIntyre is already a two time champion and a monster. McIntyre doesn't like the implication and a match is set up for next week.

Women's Tag Team Titles: Natalya/Tegan Nox vs. Chelsea Green/Piper Niven

Green and Niven are defending. Natalya easily takes Green down to start so it's off to Niven. A missed charge sends Niven shoulder first into the post, allowing Nox to hit a PL. Natalya comes back in with a high crossbody and we take a break. Back with Natalya hitting a sitout powerbomb for two on Green and handing it back to Nox.

A Molly Go Round gets two on Green but Niven tags herself in. Nox doesn't realize it and Codebreakers Green, allowing Niven to hit her with a backslash. Everything breaks down and

Green's dive off the apron is cut off. Niven's flip dive off the apron takes Nox and Natalay down at the same time. Back in and the basement crossbody gives Niven the pin at 8:40.

Rating: C+. They were trying and the match could have been a lot worse, but these belts have never felt valuable and that is still the case here. Would it have made that big of a difference if the titles changed hands here? Not particularly, as Natalya and Nox wouldn't have had a bunch of challengers anyway. The action worked, but these titles really haven't meant much in years.

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

Randy Orton gives Jey Uso a pep talk and they seem to bury the hatchet.

Becky Lynch talks about going to war at Survivor Series but it's time to move forward.

Randy Orton vs. Dominik Mysterio

Non-title and JD McDonagh is here with Mysterio. Orton starts fast and knocks him to the floor, setting up a heck of a backdrop as we take an early break. Back with Orton shrugging off Mysterio's offense and snapping off a powerslam. The hanging DDT looks to set up the RK0 but McDonagh pulls Mysterio outside. Hold on though as Jelly Roll stands up and shoves McDonagh down, allowing Orton to drop Mysterio onto the announcers' table. Orton does it again before DDTing McDonagh. The distraction lets Mysterio hit a 619 but he takes too long, allowing Orton to come back with the RK0 for the pin at 9:26.

Rating: C. Mysterio wasn't so much a threat to Orton here as the first victim after his return at Survivor Series. Orton looked good in his singles return here, with all of the old signature stuff plus the bulked up frame. I'm not sure what is next for him, but there were worse ways to get his feet wet again.

Here is CM Punk for the big return speech. Punk says it looks like h*** froze over, because a Blackhawks an is being cheered in Nashville. That's just him being himself but after Saturday, two words have been coming to him and he's a little scared of how true they are. The truth is that he's changed and now he's home. He hasn't been here in about ten years and the fact that the people who haven't forgotten him is touching.

The voiceless found their voice and that is why he is back. He missed all of this and he wishes he could say he never should have left, but at one time a wise man told him he would have to leave to get everything he needed out of this place. Everyone has welcomed him back with open arms...well almost everybody. Some people are afraid that the brass ring is in his back pocket and they can't grab it.

Some people are afraid that their best efforts at being the best in the ring, on the microphone or on commentary isn't enough. The Best In The World is in this ring on Raw in Nashville and his nae is CM Punk. After the music starts playing, he says he's here to make money instead of friends...and that's it to end the show.

This wasn't a promo with a lot of meat included, but it was more along the lines of "hey, I'm here again and still somewhat the same person". They didn't drop anything big here as it's clear that Seth Rollins already has problems with Punk. They can develop something later, but they took a slower start here and that was kind of nice for a change.

Overall Rating: B. This show was all about having Orton and Punk back, which worked out well. Since they have so much time to go before the Royal Rumble, they were able to set things up slowly and get us ready for what is coming in the next few weeks. At the same time, Cody Rhodes vs. Shinsuke Nakamura should be good and the Drew McIntyre issues are going to continue with Jey Uso getting the title shot next week. This

wasn't a great show, but it did what it needed to do at a slower pace.

Results

Creed Brothers won Tag Team Turmoil last eliminating Imperium
Bronson Reed vs. Ivar went to a double countout

Nia Jax b. Zoey Stark – Annihilator

Chelsea Green/Piper Niven b. Tegan Nox/Natalya – Basement
crossbody to Nox

Randy Orton b. Dominik Mysterio – RK0

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Survivor Series 2023: The Comeback

Survivor Series 2023

Date: November 25, 2023

Location: Allstate Arena, Rosemont, Illinois

Commentators: Michael Cole, Corey Graves

We're back to WarGames this year with a pair of the big team fights. The big story for the men's edition is the return of Randy Orton after a year and a half's absence due to a back injury. Other than that, Damage CTRL is up against a team who can't get along and Gunther defends the Intercontinental Title against Miz. Let's get to it.

The opening video looks at WarGames, talking about how important it is to go to war.

Quick WarGames rules rundown:

- Two wrestlers start and fight for five minutes.
- After five minutes, the team with the advantage (as determined before the match) gets a three minute advantage.
- The teams alternate until all ten are in and then it's first pin/submission to win.
- No it isn't the original WarGames rules. Let it go already.

Women's WarGames

Charlotte, Bianca Belair, Becky Lynch, Shotzi Bayley, Iyo Sky, Asuka, Kairi Sane

Becky and Bayley start things off with Bayley getting in a few shots to take over. Becky knocks her off the top but gets sent hard into the cage to even things up. They go in between the rings to fight over a suplex until Bayley finally drops her on the steel. Becky is sent into the cage again as Shotzi comes in to give the good women the advantage. A bunch of chairs and a trashcan are thrown in so Shotzi can launch herself at Bayley a few times.

Bayley cuts off Shotzi's dive but Becky is up with some hard kendo stick shots. Bayley climbs the cage to get away from both of them but she can only get so far. Sky is in to tie things up and throws Shotzi down with a chain. A double

superplex drops Becky again but Bianca Belair unevens things again. Belair drops Bayley onto a trashcan in the corner and hammers away on Sky. A double suplex drops the villains until Kairi Sane does a weird dancing skip to the ring.

Sane grabs a trashcan lid to clean house before Shotzi is buried underneath a bunch of chairs. That means a pop up elbow so Sane can crash onto the pile but Belair is back with a gorilla press toss. Charlotte comes in to complete the team but is quickly powerbombed into the cage to cut her off. That doesn't last long as Charlotte fights up and hits a double Natural Selection off the top.

Hold on though as we get a Charlotte vs. Becky faceoff until Damage CTRL rams them into each other. Sky goes up to the top of the cage and drops a chain down so Dakota Kai can tie it around a trashcan. That lets Kai go up top, put the can over her head, and dive onto everyone else. Asuka completes the team but has to throw in a bunch of kendo sticks before getting in. Oh and of course a table. And a fire extinguisher.

The match officially begins with Damage CTRL standing up with the sticks and...just kind of standing there as the other team is all down. Becky and Belair are tied together with the chain for a four way dropkick. Shotzi is up but gets misted down by Asuka, who dropkicks a trashcan with Becky inside. The table is set up but the delay lets Damage CTRL get powerbombed out of the corner.

Charlotte goes to the top of the cage for a moonsault onto everyone and a near fall on Bayley, leaving almost everyone down again. Becky and Charlotte start wrecking people before hugging for the big friendship moment. Stereo submissions go on but Becky and Sane make the saves. Becky is right back with the Disarm-Her to Sane but Bayley makes another save.

Sane and Becky slug it out until Bayley is over with the Rose Plant to put Becky down. Belair gets in a fire extinguisher

blast but a parade of shots to the face leave almost everyone down. Bayley takes Charlotte's spear to save Sane, setting up a top rope backplash, the KOD and the super Manhandle Slam through a table to destroy Bayley for the pin at 33:36.

Rating: B-. The violence was good and they had some good spots but there were so many times where you might as well have watched them set everything up before the show. As usual in modern WarGames matches, there was a lot of standing around and reliance on weapons rather than violence and hatred. It's certainly not bad, but as usual, cutting of a good ten minutes would do wonders.

A bunch of wrestlers eat Ruffles (sponsor) with Pretty Deadly and Otis arguing over what to call them. R-Truth pops up for his first appearance in over a year but says he's been here the whole time. Akira Tozawa comes in to dance.

Sami Zayn and Jey Uso are a bit nervous because Randy Orton isn't here yet. Zayn says it's ok because they have history and are ready to fight together.

We recap Gunther vs. the Miz for the Intercontinental Title. Gunther doesn't think much of Miz, who is fighting for the title and respect.

Intercontinental Title: Miz vs. Gunther

Gunther is defending. Miz kicks away at the leg to start before ducking a chop in the corner. Chops and left hands in the corner have Gunther in trouble until a shot to the face gets on his nerves. The chase is teased but Miz grabs the leg and wraps it around the post in a smart move. The Figure Four around the post has Gunther in more trouble but he boots a diving Miz out of the air.

Gunther gets in his own shots in the corner and a German suplex has Miz's eyes bugging out. Another big boot has Miz trying to get up but he reverses a powerbomb into a

hurricanrana. Miz strikes away some more and goes back to the leg in a smart move. More kicks to the leg set up kicks to the chest and a tornado DDT gives Miz two. Back up and Gunther's powerbomb gets two, leaving more than a few people shocked.

Gunther smacks him around a bit and grabs a sleeper until Miz grabs a turnbuckle pad. With that ripped off, the referee has to make some repairs, allowing Miz to kick Gunther low. The Skull Crushing Finale gets two but the sleeper goes on again. Gunther is driven into the corner but the sleeper goes on again. This time Miz flips backwards into a rollup for two, only to have Gunther blast him with the clothesline. A not perfect top rope splash hits Miz's back and the Boston crab retains the title at 12:21.

Rating: B-. I was thinking they might have pulled the trigger on Miz here but they did the smarter thing here and saved that for a bigger deal with Gunther. The match was structured well with Miz trying to get under Gunther's skin and take out the legs as often as they could. Gunther adds another win, though I'm not sure who is going to be the next challenger as he's running out of people to smash.

Judgment Day is excited because Randy Orton isn't here yet. Even if he shows up, there's always the chance that he turns on his team.

We recap Santos Escobar vs. Dragon Lee. Escobar turned on the LWO so Carlito stood up for the team, only to be hurt by Escobar as well. Lee is standing up for all things good.

Santos Escobar vs. Dragon Lee

Escobar starts fast and stomps him down in the corner, setting up a tilt-a-whirl backbreaker. Lee gets tied in the Tree of Woe for some stomping, setting up a running dropkick for two. Lee avoids getting his knee crushed in the steps and snaps off a hurricanrana from the apron. There's the big running flip dive to the floor, followed by a running knee to the head back

inside. They both wind up on top, with Escobar snapping off a super hurricanrana for two of his own.

We get the almost required mask tearing until Lee is sent to the apron. Lee manages to tie him in the Tree of Woe for the top rope double stomp but walks into a superkick. They slug it out until Lee muscles him up for a sitout powerbomb and another near fall. Back up and Escobar snaps off a Destroyer, followed by the Phantom Driver to finish Lee at 8:19.

Rating: B. I was a bit surprised by the clean ending but it was nice to see Escobar get a big win like this. He's the new big bad in the story and it wouldn't have made sense for him to lose here. At the same time, I would have expected Lee to have some more protection in the loss. For now though, I can go with a rather good match and the right result.

New Day arrives in the Slim Jim car.

We recap Rhea Ripley vs. Zoey Stark for the former's Raw Women's Title. Ripley is the dominant monster but Stark wants her shot at the belt.

Raw Women's Title: Rhea Ripley vs. Zoey Stark

Ripley is defending and they go to the mat for the slugout to start. Stark knocks her outside for the dive, followed by a springboard missile dropkick for two back inside. Ripley drops her as well before they head to the apron. That works better for Stark, who hits a DDT and a springboard corkscrew splash for two back inside.

Ripley posts her hard and takes it back inside for some headbutts. The double arm crank and some stomps have Stark down again but she fights back up. A kick to the face gives Stark two but Ripley kicks her even harder. Riptide is escaped and Stark gets in a sliding kick to the face for two. The Z360 is cut off and it's a headbutt into Riptide to retain at 9:16.

Rating: B-. There was only so much that could be done here as there was no reason to believe that Stark was going to take the title. Ripley is a force in the women's division right now and her title reign isn't going to end until some big moment on the major stage. Stark did well though should be fine going forward, even if Ripley was the star here, as she so often is.

Seth Rollins assures his teammates that Randy Orton will be here.

We recap the men's WarGames match. Judgment Day (with Drew McIntyre as an associate) is the dominant force on Raw and a bunch of other people are trying to do something about it. The question now is whether Randy Orton, who has been out of action for a year and a half, can come back and turn the tide.

Men's WarGames

Seth Rollins, Cody Rhodes, Jey Uso, Sami Zayn, Randy Orton
Damian Priest, Finn Balor, Dominik Mysterio, JD McDonagh, Drew McIntyre

There's no Orton to start as they're milking the heck out of this. Balor and Rollins start fast with Rollins diving right at him to get it going. Balor is sent into the cage a few times but slips out of the Buckle Bomb and hits a clothesline. Rollins is sent into the cage as well but comes right back with a Sling Blade. A running knee to the face puts Balor down as McDonagh comes in to give the villains control.

Kendo sticks are brought in as well and the double beating has Rollins down. McDonagh moonsaults from one ring to another to drop Rollins again and more kendo sticks make it worse. Uso evens things up and hammers away with right hands and kicks to the head. McDonagh manages a running Spanish Fly to Uso but he and Rollins are back up with stereo superkicks. The four of them split off as the clock runs down...and Priest tells McIntyre that he's going in instead.

Priest comes in and is quickly double teamed but the numbers game gets him out of trouble. Some baton shots have the good guys in trouble, setting up Priest's flip dive off the top. The beating continues until Zayn comes in, though only after slamming the door on Balor's head. A table is brought in to clean house, including a Blue Thunder Bomb to Balor. McDonagh catches Zayn going up but gets knocked back down, leaving Zayn to pull out a pipe.

With things slowing down, McIntyre comes in to wreck a variety of people until Uso cuts him off with some right hands. A 1D cuts McIntyre down and it's Rhodes in to even things up again. Rhodes pulls out a bullrope but Rollins wants to know if Orton is going to be here. Mysterio is in to complete the Judgment Day and loads up Three Amigos on Rhodes. The rest of the other team surrounds Mysterio though and the big beatdown is on fast.

The rest of Judgment Day gets up, with McIntyre and Priest hitting stereo moonsaults. Priest Razor's Edges Rollins through a table as the clock expires....and here is Rhea Ripley with the Money in the Bank briefcase but heeeeeeeeeere's Randy, meaning WarGames is officially on.

House is quickly cleaned and we get the staredown with McIntyre as the fans are impressed. Orton and company start cleaning house, including the quintuple hanging DDTs. Hold on though as Jey and Orton have a staredown (remember the Bloodline put Orton out in the first place) but Jey takes a shot aimed at Orton. Back up and Judgment Day is beaten down, with McDonagh trying to run. That's cut off and McDonagh is thrown down into the RK0. Cross Rhodes finishes Priest off at 34:21.

Rating: B+. This was a better match than the first, if nothing else due to the match not feeling like it was trying to stretch out time. The Orton return was the big moment, even if he didn't exactly do much. There was a better story here and

it was a heck of a fight, which is how WarGames is supposed to feel. Best match on the show here, which is a good sign given that it was by far the most important.

The winners pose....and CM PUNK RETURNS! Punk comes to the entrance and hits IT'S CLOBBERIN TIME before hugging some fans to end the show. Well that's quite the shock.

Overall Rating: B. I kind of like the slimmed down match card, as two matches combine to be almost seventy five minutes counting entrances. The show was all about WarGames with three other matches in the middle doing little more than bridging the gap between the featured showcases. Those matches worked well enough though and it was a good show overall, with the big surprise at the end likely overshadowing everything else.

Results

Team Lynch b. Damage CTRL – Super Manhandle Slam through a table to Bayley

Gunther b. The Miz – Boston crab

Santos Escobar b. Dragon Lee – Phantom Driver

Rhea Ripley b. Zoey Stark – Riptide

Team Rhodes b. Judgment Day/Drew McIntyre – Cross Rhodes to Priest

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Survivor Series 2023 Preview

I've always loved Survivor Series and but it is the show that has evolved more than any other Big Four pay per views. The days of the elimination tag matches are long gone but now things are more focused on the ideas of survival. We have a pair of WarGames matches this year, which should be more than enough to carry the show. Other than that, the show is looking decent enough so let's get to it.

Raw Women's Title: Rhea Ripley(c) vs. Zoey Stark

We'll start with what should be the easy one here as Ripley is by far the biggest star in women's wrestling and needs a victim. The good thing is that we're getting someone fresh in Stark, who only had her one shot in a five way, which barely means anything. This is a match we haven't seen before and it should make for a nice showdown, even if there might not be the most drama.

So of course Ripley retains here, as it could be a very, very long time before she loses the title. I'd be rather surprised if we don't get a Becky Lynch showdown at WrestleMania next year and that isn't going to be derailed by Stark winning here. Stark will definitely get in some offense, but this is going to be Ripley hitting Riptide and doing her dominant cover to retain and move on to something bigger.

Dragon Lee vs. Santos Escobar

This is an adjusted match as Lee is replacing Carlito, who was injured by Escobar on Smackdown. What has me interested here is that this could be part of a much bigger story, especially with Rey Mysterio out of action for the next good while. It's pretty clear that WWE sees a lot in Lee and it would make

sense to push him in a spot like this one. That leaves some questions here though and that makes it a bit more interesting.

I'll take Escobar winning here, likely through some shenanigans. There are more than a few other people who have to be accounted for in this story and I'm expecting some of them to get involved here. If Escobar is supposed to be the new big bad, there is little reason to care about what he is going to be doing with Mysterio later on. Escobar wins here, albeit with some shenanigans.

Intercontinental Title: Gunther(c) vs. The Miz

Now this one could go either way and that makes for a good bit of fun. The thing is, now that Gunther has the record, there is a much greater chance that he could finally lose the title. Other than the total combined days record, which he would break some time in February, there isn't much else for Gunther to do with the title. Miz also has a nice track record of winning matches where he seems to have no chance and that would be the case again here.

Now that being said, as much as I believe there is a chance Miz could pull off the big upset here, I think I'll go with Gunther to retain. I could see the Imperium minions causing drama here, but Gunther deserves a better ending to his title reign than that. I'm not sure how that is going to happen, but I don't think it's going to be at the hands of Miz and what would probably be a fluke win.

Women's WarGames

We're getting to the meat of the matter here with one of the two matches that really matter and what will probably open the show. This is the latest band of thrown together heroes against Damage CTRL, though the villains are hardly all together either. Smackdown focused on the issues between Lynch and Charlotte, but that could very well be a red herring going

into the big showdown.

I'll go with Lynch and company winning here, as Damage CTRL seems to be ready to fall apart, with a loss coming here making sense. I could see Lynch and or Charlotte saving the other in a Sting/Nikita Koloff way (look it up) and Bayley taking the fall, earning her big trouble from the rest of the team. Having this at four on four helps a lot as it could shorten the match, which has been one of the biggest problems in WarGames past. But yeah, Damage CTRL loses here.

Men's WarGames

Here's the real main event as an even rag taggier band of good guys are getting together to fight Judgment Day/Drew McIntyre. On paper, this should be Judgment Day going over and causing a bunch of chaos on Raw, though any match where JD McDonagh is included means a chance of the good guys picking up a win. That's just one of the ways this could go though and that has me wondering.

I could see this going either way but I'll take Judgment Day/McIntyre winning here. At the end of the day, it makes more sense to have them win, perhaps even with a Money In The Bank tease as Seth Rollins will be right there. What matters here is keeping McIntyre strong though, as he is freshly turned heel and you don't want him to lose in his first big match on the new side. The villains win, after a war that goes on a good bit long.

Overall Thoughts

This is a show with a shorter card and in a way that makes sense. Save for LA Knight not being on the card, there isn't much missing from the show and we could be in for a good night. I'm liking the idea of the women's WarGames match going a bit shorter, as it should make for a better match. This show doesn't really have a marquee matchup but in a way that works, as it's more about the team showdowns anyway. Now just don't

have WarGames be an overly long and bloated mess and everything will be fine.

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Monday Night Raw – November 20, 2023: Wait...Who?

Monday Night Raw

Date: November 20, 2023

Location: Van Andel Arena, Grand Rapids, Michigan

Commentators: Michael Cole, Wade Barrett

It's the final Raw before Survivor Series and that means WarGames needs an advantage. As luck would have it, that's the big featured match this week as a member from each team will face to see who gets the advantage at Survivor Series. Other than that, it's probably going to be a lot of final pushes towards the show so let's get to it.

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

We open with a recap of last week's main event, where Drew

McIntyre cost Cody Rhodes and Jey Uso the Tag Team Titles as part of an alliance with Judgment Day. Cody and pals are going to need some backup of their own.

Here is Drew McIntyre for a chat, saying he isn't Dominik Mysterio so the people will listen to him talk. No one is more upset about what he did last week than he is. If you turned on him, you were never a fan in the first place and he doesn't care about you. Last week he looked Jey Uso in the face and then laid him out, which is more than Jey ever did for him. Yeah Cody Rhodes was caught in the crossfire but Cody brought Jey to Raw. McIntyre rants about Clash At The Castle again before clarifying that he has NOT joined Judgment Day but he'll team with them at WarGames.

Rhea Ripley let him have Jey in a cage...and here is Jey to interrupt. Jey says McIntyre needs to let it go but here is Judgment Day to back things up. Seth Rollins, Cody Rhodes and Sami Zayn come out to even a lot of this up but Adam Pearce says WarGames is on Saturday. If anyone throws the first punch, their team automatically loses the advantage. Pearce says Cody and company need a fifth team member tonight and by 9:00 (about 50 minutes from now), they need to decide on their participants in the advantage match.

Post break, Damian Priest and Rhea Ripley chat about Drew McIntyre being added to the team. Priest likes the move, but she should have consulted with him because he's the leader going into WarGames. Ripley gets that and they seem cool. Priest also thinks he should be in the advantage match, but she says they should wait for Drew. Works for Priest as well.

Nia Jax vs. Raquel Rodriguez

Rodriguez charges into the corner and hammers away to start but a release Rock Bottom puts her back down. Jax is knocked outside but manages a posting as we take a break. Back with Jax grabbing a chinlock until Rodriguez powers up. Her back

gives out though and Jax hits a backslash to crush her again. The Annihilator is countered into a powerbomb attempt but the back gives out a second time. Now the Annihilator can finish for Jax at 9:03.

Rating: C. The commercial in the middle hurt this a good bit as we really just saw a bunch of Jax cutting Rodriguez off and then sitting on her chest for the pin. That's the kind of monster Jax is and in theory it's setting up a showdown with Ripley for the title. While that might make sense on paper, it doesn't make for the most interesting match as Jax is...well she's Jax.

Video on Xia Li.

Judgment Day, now with Drew McIntyre, has a chat about the advantage match. McIntyre and Damian Priest don't see eye to eye on this, but Priest eventually relents. Priest even tells McIntyre to go show his worth.

We look at how the women's WarGames match was set up.

Cody Rhodes and company aren't sure who should face Drew McIntyre but Jey Uso wants to hurt him most and gets the match. With that out of the way, they still need a fifth member and apparently Smackdown guys are NOT off limits. Cody has an old friend he can call as well.

Becky Lynch vs. Xia Li

Lynch takes her down without much trouble to start and snaps off some armdrags. Li gets in a shot in the corner but Lynch sends her outside without much trouble. A kick to the face knocks Lynch off the apron though and we take a break. Back with Lynch unloading with forearms and managing to knock her into the corner.

The Bexploder gets two but Li is back with a spinning kick to the back for two of her own. The Manhandle Slam is blocked so

Lynch goes for a cross armbreaker but Li slips out again. Li grabs something like a torture rack airplane spin for a crash and two, followed by some choking in the corner.

Another trip to the top is countered into a superplex to give Lynch two more, with Barrett saying this is a Wrestlemania main event. No. The Manhandle Slam is blocked and Li manages the big spinning kick to send Lynch outside. Lynch is back up and gets in a posting but the both beat the count back in. A quick Manhandle Slam finishes for Lynch at 13:38.

Rating: B-. While I wouldn't have had a #1 contender to the NXT Women's Title take a clean loss, Li got in a lot here and made Lynch work for it. There isn't much shame in losing to Lynch, though it would have been nice to not do it the night before Li challenges for the title. Anyway, good match here and pretty easily the best of Li's career.

Post match Damage CTRL and the rest of Becky's team come in for the brawl until referees break it up.

Ludwig Kaiser and Giovanni Vinci argue in the back, with Kaiser telling him to stay here while Kaiser takes care of Johnny Gargano.

Video on Zoey Stark.

Ludwig Kaiser vs. Johnny Gargano

Tommaso Ciampa is here with Gargano. Kaiser chops away in the corner to start but Gargano snaps off a running hurricanrana. They trade kicks to the head in the corner with Kaiser being knocked outside. Gargano's big dive is cut off though and we take a break. Back with Kaiser punching One Final Beat out of the air but getting caught with the slingshot spear instead.

Gargano kicks him in the head and grabs a middle rope spinning Downward Spiral for two more. The rolling kick to the head is cut off and a tilt-a-whirl faceplant gives Kaiser his own near

fall. A Death Valley Driver connects on Gargano but here is Giovanni Vinci to distract Kaiser. Said distraction lets Gargano hit One Final beat for the pin at 9:53.

Rating: C+. The back and forth between these guys continues but the issues for Imperium are making things more interesting. While Gunther doesn't need them to win, the underlings having their own problems might come back to cause him trouble later on. For now though, I can go with Gargano winning, though unless DIY wins the blowoff match between the teams, it might not matter much.

Earlier today, a bunch of teams argued over the next Women's Tag Team Title match so it's a four way #1 contenders match tonight. Chelsea Green is going to call Nick Aldis about this. Adam Pearce: "Tell him I say hi."

Rhea Ripley and Dominik Mysterio run into Shayna Baszler and Zoey Stark, sitting in the Judgment Day's clubhouse. Stark loves all of the decorations, especially the Women's Title. Ripley kind of respects the guts it took to do this, but the beating is coming at Survivor Series.

Candice LeRae/Indi Hartwell vs. Tegan Nox/Natalya vs. Maxxine Dupri/Ivy Nile vs. Kayden Carter/Katana Chance

Chelsea Green and Piper Niven are on commentary. Natalya and Nile start things off as Green thinks Cole's first name is Matthew. Nile dropkicks Natalya into the corner and hands it off to Dupri, who actually takes Natalya down. Nile comes back in and gets Russian legswept but Hartwell tags herself in to take over.

The rapid fire tags continue and everything breaks down, with Chance and Carter taking over. Nox and Natalya are sent outside so Carter can dive onto a bunch of people. Dupri hits her own dive and poses as we take a break. Back with Chance striking away at Natalya, who Michinoku Drivers her for two.

Nile powerbombs Nox and Natalya out of the corner, allowing Carter to flip Chance onto both of them for two more. Maxxine comes in to clean house, setting up a Caterpillar to Nox. A bridging suplex gives Maxxine two so Nile and Maxxine hit a double suplex to drop Nox again. Maxxine goes up top for a high crossbody but Nox rolls through for the pin at 11:45.

Rating: C+. This was pretty much all about Maxxine and she did well enough as the fun star who is playing above her skills. I'm not sure I would have had her take the pin when there were so many others out there, but at least Nox and Natalya have a bit of a history together. The action was what you would expect for a four way tag match, but at least one of the better (I guess?) options won.

Gunther isn't pleased with Ludwig Kaiser and thinks maybe he should have put Giovanni Vinci in charge instead.

A bunch of tag teams argue over who should get a Tag Team Title shot so Adam Pearce makes Tag Team Turmoil for next week. Akira Tozawa comes in for the comedy. With the teams gone, Nick Aldis pops up to talk with Pearce.

Here is Miz for a chat about Gunther. Miz has been called the underdog...and here is Gunther to interrupt. Gunther doesn't like him and doesn't think anything of Miz, but Miz talks about the past Intercontinental Champions he loved as a kid (Savage, Michaels, Rude, Hart). He worked and tried for twenty years to become what they were because they're memorable and not a one note robot like Gunther.

Miz will do whatever it takes to survive and win because that is what he does. He is tired of the disrespect and is ready to beat a lesson into Gunther. That sounds good to Gunther, but he sees it differently. Miz was a fan who got made fun of because he loved wrestling so he tried to get into the business. Then other wrestlers bullied him because he doesn't belong in this sport. Instead, he belongs behind the barricade

with other weirdos like these people.

The fans chant USA, which Gunther mocks before saying Miz hasn't been bullied enough. Gunther gets in his face and tells Mike to stand up for himself so Miz slugs away...and is promptly booted down. Gunther mocks him with the title so Miz kicks him low and hits the Skull Crushing Finale. Cole: "DO IT FOR ALL OF US WEIRDOS MIZ!" This was a heck of a promo battle as Miz can still talk with just about anyone. You don't get that from Gunther very often but he more than held up his end here and sold the story of the match.

Seth Rollins gives Jey Uso a pep talk.

Ivar and Valhalla want revenge on Bronson Reed next week.

Shinsuke Nakamura vs. Chad Gable

The rest of Alpha Academy is here too. They go with the grappling to start until Nakamura kicks him into the corner. Gable fights back up and dumps him to the floor as we take a break. Back with Nakamura in control and grabbing a chinlock. That's broken up so Nakamura elbows him into the corner and hits a kick to the face for two.

Kinshasa is countered into Chaos Theory for two and a dragon suplex drops Nakamura again. Gable's moonsault hits raised boots but he's able to get the ankle lock. Nakamura makes the rope as Cole says Kurt Angle made the ankle lock famous. Back up and Gable has to stop himself from going into an exposed buckle, allowing Nakamura to roll him up for the pin at 12:22.

Rating: B-. there are instances where you know a match is going to be good if the people involved are given the chance to make it work and that was the case here. Gable as a more serious amateur style wrestler works well and Nakamura's striking balanced it out nicely. They had a good match as Nakamura's star continues to rise, though I have no idea where they're going with him.

Damian Priest tells Drew McIntyre to not blow it.

Bronson Reed is in for next week because Ivar is a cosplayer instead of a true warrior.

Survivor Series rundown.

Video on WarGames.

Sami Zayn couldn't get anyone from Smackdown, but Cody Rhodes' friend answered the phone and he's in. His partners are thrilled.

Jey Uso vs. Drew McIntyre

For the WarGames advantage. They slug it out to start with McIntyre getting the better of things. An elbow to the face gives McIntyre two but Uso fights back and they head outside as we take a break. Back with McIntyre slugging away in the corner but getting kicked in the head for his efforts. A high crossbody gives Uso two and they head outside again, this time with McIntyre ramming him into various things.

Uso's head gets crushed against the post and McIntyre gets to taunt him a bit. McIntyre tosses him over the announcers' table and we take a break. Back again with Uso taking McIntyre down as Cole goes over the rules of WarGames. Uso misses a discus lariat though and gets neckbreakered down. The Claymore is cut off by a superkick to give Uso two but McIntyre is back with Futureshock for the clean pin at 18:34.

Rating: B-. Well that was abrupt. The match went long and then just ended with a clean pin. It's not a bad thing but you see it so rarely that it's almost hard to process. The villains getting the advantage is WarGames 101 though and thankfully WWE understood that this year. Good main event, though it never really got to a higher level.

Post match Judgment Day comes in for the beatdown but Cody Rhodes and company come in with chairs for the ring clearing

save. Cody gets the mic and says they have a fifth member. It's someone Cody has a LEGACY with (the fans really like that one) and no they're not prey, because they have the APEX PREDATOR.

You're not just hearing voices inside your head because the people are right. And....no one comes out to end the show. I guess that's about as much of a confirmation as you can get, but Cody never said a name. Granted saying the people are right is about as much of a guarantee as you can get, but that was a really weird ending.

Overall Rating: C+. I'm not sure what to think of this show as this was about two parts of the same WarGames match. They covered the advantage, but they only kind of covered the fifth member reveal. I mean, unless there is some huge swerve coming at Survivor Series they're fine, but it wasn't exactly a smooth ending. The rest of the show was pretty much right in the middle, without much stuff that really mattered. Miz and Gunther were good, but this was about WarGames and what we got was a bit off. Then again, none of that matters after Saturday and the show is built up well enough.

Results

Nia Jax b. Raquel Rodriguez – Annihilator

Becky Lynch b. Xia Li – Manhandle Slam

Johnny Gargano b. Ludwig Kaiser – One Final Beat

Natalya/Tegan Nox b. Kayden Carter/Katana Chance, Maxxine Dupri/Ivy Nile and Indi Hartwell/Candice LeRae – Rollup to Dupri

Shinsuke Nakamura b. Chad Gable – Rollup

Drew McIntyre b. Jey Uso – Futureshock

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