

Smackdown – April 7, 2016: They're Lulling Early This Year

Smackdown

Date: April 7, 2016

Location: Toyota Center, Houston, Texas

Commentators: Mauro Ranallo, Byron Saxton, Jerry Lawler

Things have changed a bit since last time and WWE has hit the ground mostly running since this Sunday's Wrestlemania. The big story coming out of Monday is AJ Styles being crowned as a surprising #1 contender to new champion Roman Reigns, which might get some buildup starting tonight. Also we have the Vaudevillains making their main roster debut so let's get to it.

We open with a long recap of Wrestlemania.

Opening sequence.

Here's Roman Reigns to get things going, drawing a good deal of booing in the process. Reigns gets right to the point by saying he took on the Authority and won this title. When you have this title, everybody wants it so that means it's one vs. all again. Reigns gets in the "I'm THE guy" line again and I'm still not sure how I feel on that. I get what they're going for here but it's still not the answer to their problems. Saying Reigns isn't a good guy might take away some of the stigma around him but it's not going to make people like him either. Maybe that's what they're going for and if so then cool, though it's still not working great.

Anyway Reigns brings up being the new champion and getting ready to beat AJ Styles, which brings out AJ himself. Styles praises Reigns for having a great Wrestlemania, but he had a heck of a Monday Night Raw. That means it's time for AJ to come for the World Title because he's been all over the world and wants to win that prize. Reigns says AJ can want it all he wants but it means he has to beat THE GUY. Yeah AJ has beaten a lot of

guys but he's never beaten Reigns, and he never will.

This feud could go somewhere interesting but I'm still not sure how well it's going to get there yet. Reigns beating AJ as a challenger of the month is a good idea because AJ will get a good match out of him, though that THE GUY idea needs some work. It's certainly an interesting idea but they need to figure out how to put everything together.

We look back at Vince giving Shane control over Raw, completely negating the importance of the last six weeks or so of this story. That might be better for everyone involved actually.

Lucha Dragons vs. Vaudevillains

This is the Vaudevillains' (Aiden English/Simon Gotch) main roster debut after a long time down in NXT. Cara and English get things going with Mauro telling us about some martial art that English practices. Cara backdrops him down and brings Kalisto in for the monkey flip 450. As Lawler seems to call him "Hayden English", Simon breaks up Kalisto's dive with a quick knee from the corner.

English puts on a chinlock as Mauro gives a quick history of some martial art that Gotch uses called Bartitsu. Cara armdrags Aiden down and makes the hot tag off to Kalisto as things speed way up. Everything breaks down with Cara being taken down on the floor, leaving Kalisto to take the Whirling Dervish for the pin at 4:03, because SIN CARA CAN'T TAKE A PIN FOR WHATEVER FREAKING REASON.

Rating: D+. The match was watchable and fine but had no spark to it. The Vaudevillains really aren't that exciting of a team as you see their gimmick and realize there's nothing more to it than what you see. Kalisto losing makes me shake my head and reenforces the fact that this team needs to split or Kalisto needs to drop the title. You can't be in a low level team and hold a title at the same time as it leads to bad losses like this which mean nothing but still devalue the title.

Stills package of the ladder match and a video of Ryder losing the title the next night to Miz.

We see Lita presenting Charlotte with the new Women's Title and everyone but Natalya leaving, probably setting up a title match soon down the line.

Natalya vs. Summer Rae

Charlotte is on commentary with Flair by her side. Natalya easily takes it to the mat to start and does her stepover into the basement dropkick. Summer sends her outside for a snap suplex as we actually get a Beautiful Fierce Females reference from the champ. That's a faction I haven't thought of in years. We hit the chinlock back inside, only to have Natalya pop up and grab the Sharpshooter for the tap out at 2:54. This was exactly what you would have expected.

We look back at Reigns winning the title and being challenged by Jericho, Styles, Owens and Zayn, followed by Styles winning the four way to become #1 contender.

Intercontinental Title: Zack Ryder vs. Miz

Miz is defending and has Maryse introduce him. Ryder gets a quick rollup for two and he's already looking desperate. A forearm and slingshot splash get two for Ryder, followed by a dropkick through the ropes for the same. Back from a break with Miz kicking out of something we don't see and getting in a quick shot to set up the Reality Check for two. A knee to the ribs keeps Ryder in trouble and Miz makes it even worse by calling him a loser. Now come on. Just because you're a cocky heel with a gorgeous wife doesn't mean you have to be impolite.

Ryder comes back with a dropkick but dives <http://onhealthy.net/product-category/diabetes/> into a sitout powerbomb. That's not something you see Miz use that often. The short DDT gets two on Ryder but he comes right back with a facebuster for two of his own. A Broski Boot on the floor sets up the Elbro (yes the Elbro) for two back inside. Not that it matters as Maryse offers a distraction, allowing Miz to hit the Skull Crushing Finale to retain at 12:36.

Rating: C-. Well so much for Ryder. I get that this was supposed to be Neville (it would have made much more sense) and that it was never going

to last but it begs the question: why not put the title on Ziggler? I know the match has been overdone but Ziggler at least has some credibility. Ryder has won two Raw/Smackdown matches in about two years and we were supposed to buy him as Intercontinental Champion? That just doesn't work, no matter how you spin it.

The Social Outcasts play Rock Paper Scissors to determine who gets to face Apollo Crews. Axel is the odd man out but says he wins because the ax beats all.

Curtis Axel vs. Apollo Crews

Axel gets in a quick shot but heads outside for the Bo Train. That's not cool with Crews who goes outside and pops Axel in the jaw. A Rose distraction lets Axel get in another cheap shot to take over but Crews clotheslines him down and nips up. The standing moonsault gets two and the lifting sitout powerbomb puts Axel away at 2:35.

Video on the Andre battle royal, focusing on Shaquille O'Neal appearing and Baron Corbin getting the win. We also see Corbin beating up Ziggler, though the match wound up as a double countout.

Corbin says the end of days is here.

Stills of the Women's Title triple threat from Sunday. Thankfully Ranaallo says the Women's Title is back instead of being introduced.

Becky Lynch says Sunday was a brutal match but she'll never lose her passion. That's what it's all about and that's why she walked out of Charlotte's speech on Monday. Emma comes in to brag about getting to the WWE first, probably setting up a match for some point in the future.

Primo and Epico video about how awesome Puerto Rico is.

Dean Ambrose vs. Tyler Breeze

Dean is right on him with shots in the corner and avoids a charge to make things even worse. A big clothesline sets up Dirty Deeds for the pin on Breeze at 1:15.

Ambrose leaves as Chris Jericho is coming out for the main event, giving us a staredown.

Goldust is pitching Shattered Dreams Productions II when R-Truth comes in with a camera to be the director. Apparently there's going to be a top Hollywood producer at Raw this Monday and Truth can get him an audition. For some reason Goldust goes along with this.

Cesaro/AJ Styles vs. Chris Jericho/Kevin Owens

Cesaro still has that awesome tear away suit. Jericho and Styles get things going with Chris eating an early dropkick. Cesaro comes in and scares Jericho to the floor as we take a break. Back with Styles knocking Jericho into the wrong corner before it's off to Cesaro vs. Owens for some hard shouts to the face. Both heels have to avoid the Cesaro Swing and Jericho is able to get in a shot to the back for his first advantage.

Owens teases the Cannonball but opts for a clothesline instead before tagging Jericho in (Owens: "High five!"). The already slow paced match slows down even more with Jericho cranking on Cesaro's arms. Back up and Cesaro throws him to the floor, only to have Jericho pull AJ off the apron to break up the hot tag. Owens comes in and misses the Cannonball and NOW it's the hot tag to AJ as everything breaks down.

AJ cleans house but Owens quickly takes over, only to eat a Pele. Jericho breaks up the Phenomenal Forearm and the package side slam gets two on AJ. Cesaro beats on Jericho outside as Sami Zayn comes out to go after Owens. The distraction lets AJ roll Owens up for the pin at 13:03.

Rating: C-. I really didn't care for this one as they were just going through the motions for a bit until the ending. The wrestling was fine but I never felt like this match mattered. Unfortunately that's most Smackdown main events in a nutshell: watchable but completely inconsequential more often than not.

Owens and Zayn (whose arm is heavily taped) brawl post match with security breaking it up but accidentally allowing Owens to get in a clean shot to the jaw. Zayn is sent into the steps to end the show.

Overall Rating: D+. Oh yeah Wrestlemania week has wrapped up and you can feel the energy going down. This was a slightly hotter than usual Smackdown though the quality really wasn't there. It was a bunch of Wrestlemania fallout stuff but since this isn't Raw, almost nothing happened and you could skip a lot of this without missing a single thing.

Results

Vaudevillains b. Lucha Dragons – Whirling Dervish to Kalisto

Natalya b. Summer Rae – Sharpshooter

Miz b. Zack Ryder – Skull Crushing Finale

Apollo Crews b. Curtis Axel – Lifting sitout powerbomb

Dean Ambrose b. Tyler Breeze – Dirty Deeds

AJ Styles/Cesaro b. Kevin Owens/Chris Jericho – Rollup to Owens

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