

Smackdown – June 2, 2016: Hope For The Future

Smackdown

Date: June 2, 2016

Location: BMO Harris Bank Center, Rockford, Illinois

Commentators: Jerry Lawler, Mauro Ranallo, Byron Saxton

Things are rapidly changing around here as we have the new Brand Split in less than two months. More importantly for now however is the freshly heel AJ Styles who has set his sights on the returning John Cena, likely setting up a huge showdown at Money in the Bank. This show will likely focus on the build towards the ladder match so let's get to it.

The opening recap focuses on AJ Styles and the Band reuniting on Monday and Styles turning full heel.

Opening sequence.

Here's the New Day to open the show. Woods mentions Smackdown going live on July 19 and then it's time to talk about the Club. Yeah they're big and tough but they'll never be your WWE World Tag Team Champions. This brings out Gallows and Anderson with New Day asking what kind of club they are exactly. Do they meet in a tree house? Do you have to pay dues?

New Day wants a fight but the Club says no. Woods: "They don't want none." Cue AJ to say the WWE belongs to the Club but Kofi doesn't seem to get that. Kofi lists off all their accomplishments and laughs that AJ took ten years to get here. AJ talks about what he did to Cena but gets a NEW DAY ROCKS chant.

Becky Lynch vs. Charlotte

Non-title. Becky sends her into the ropes to start before Charlotte reverses in the corner and grabs a neckbreaker. Dana offers a distraction and Charlotte kicks Becky in the face to put her on the floor as we take an early break. Back with Becky hitting a running forearm in the corner

and getting two off the exploder suplex.

Becky misses a knee though and hurts her leg (Did the Flair family find a lucky charm a long time ago or something? It's uncanny how many in match knee injuries their opponents have.) but it doesn't seem to bother her that much. Instead Becky grabs a triangle choke but gets lifted into a Batista Bomb for two. Charlotte misses the moonsault but lands on her feet anyway, only to have the Figure Eight countered into the Disarm-Her, drawing in Dana for the DQ at 8:45.

Rating: C+. It's nice to have Becky not lose a match for a change though at some point she needs to actually win something of note. I'm assuming they're gearing up for a four way or something like it at Money in the Bank though I can't imagine they'll take the title off Charlotte this soon. Good match here though.

Post match Natalya comes out but Charlotte and Dana get away before they can be put in submissions.

Dean Ambrose and Sami Zayn are having a friendly argument in the back when Kevin Owens and Alberto Del Rio come up with Owens saying Sami is trying to manipulate Ambrose. Owens: "He's Canadian remember? You can't trust him." More trash is talked and Dean wants to fight now instead of waiting for their scheduled tag match later.

Golden Truth vs. Dudley Boyz

Breezango is in the VIP area. The Goldust music hits and the Golden Truth graphics come on but the Dudley Boyz video is still playing. Truth's remix now has the lyrics on screen with a bouncing Goldust head telling you what to say. Also it's apparently "Goldentruth".

Truth drives Bubba into the corner to start and a double suplex puts the big man down. The Dudleyz take over and D-Von's spinning elbow to the jaw gets two. Everything breaks down and Goldust catches D-Von with a spinebuster, only to have Tyler get on the apron for a distraction. Goldust goes to deal with him but gets rolled up by D-Von for the pin at 4:04.

Rating: D. I hate to admit it but I'm digging this story more and more every week. It's a naturally developing story and it's actually entertaining me every time they go out and do something else. I'm not sure where this ends but it's been FAR more entertaining than it had any right to be the whole way through.

Post match Breezango laughs at Golden Truth. Fandango: "Just like a game of shooty hoops, three strikes and you're out!"

Recap of Baron Corbin vs. Dolph Ziggler.

Corbin is standing outside because he won't grace the fans with his presence after they cheered what happened on Monday. The next time he comes into a WWE arena, it's to end Dolph Ziggler. Or on Raw next week.

Dean Ambrose/Sami Zayn vs. Alberto Del Rio/Kevin Owens

Owens goes after Sami to start before it's quickly off to Del Rio, who is rolled up for two. Dean comes in for a shot to the ribs and it's right back to Sami but he walks into a Backstabber for another two. Owens is happy to come in and pick Sami's bones but quickly hands it back to Del Rio for a kick to the ribs. The fast tags continue as Dean is brought back in to dive on Del Rio as we take a break.

Back with Alberto stomping on Dean's chest in the corner before the heels take Ambrose outside for a beating. Unfortunately it's in front of the announcers' table so Sami flip dives onto both of them. Sami gets pulled off the apron though and the beatdown continues on Dean, only to have him escape the armbreaker. The Dirty Deeds attempt is broken up though and the running enziguri hits Owens instead. Sami gets the tag and scores with the Helluva Kick to put Del Rio away at 9:24.

Rating: B. Nice fast paced tag match here with both teams working well together and doing some things you don't normally get in the tag team formula. I'm not wild on having these tags where the good guys always team with the bad guys leading up to the ladder match but at least it was an entertaining match this week.

Post match Owens grabs a headset and says he's tired of his partners

screwing things up. He goes under the ring and finds a ladder so he can climb up and pull down the briefcase, only to have Cesaro run down and hit the spinning uppercut while still wearing his suit. Cesaro climbs the ladder and pulls down the briefcase instead.

Jack Swagger vs. Rusev

Non-title and Rusev attacks before Jack can get in the ring. Swagger says ring the bell and has the Patriot Lock on about two seconds in. Rusev bails to the floor and eats a hard clothesline but Jack's shoulder is banged up from the attack. Back in and Swagger makes a quick comeback but misses the running Vader Bomb. Instead he clotheslines Rusev again with the shoulder mostly fine. Rusev escapes another Patriot Lock attempt and sends Swagger outside for a whip into the steps. The Accolade is countered into the Patriot Lock but Rusev gets the rope and puts on the Accolade so Jack can pass out at 4:43.

Rating: C. I know it's been a long time since this happened but it's still not something I'm going to get into. They've had the same match over and over and it's really kind of hard to care about when there's no way Swagger is going to do anything noteworthy. Swagger really needs a change and jobbing to Rusev again isn't a good sign.

Rusev won't let go until Titus O'Neil runs out for the save.

Bob Backlund asks Darren Young for a training update. Young says his running has been great so far but Backlund only wants him running in case he misses the bus. Apparently Backlund has stolen Young's car keys and Young can walk to the next town in eight hours. Backlund: "And if you get there any faster, I'll know you ran!" I freaking love these things.

We look at Rollins and Reigns not fighting on Raw.

AJ Styles vs. Kofi Kingston

Kofi flips him away to start but AJ snaps off some armdrags and poses a bit. The announcers speculate that the Club's breakup was staged to set Cena up, which is a better explanation than I would give it. Kofi takes him into the corner for a basement dropkick and that means it's time for

a musical interlude. All six guys get in and it's a standoff until we take a break.

Back with Kofi elbowing Styles in the jaw and putting on an armbar. Styles is sent to the floor and it's a standoff between New Day and the Club, allowing AJ to post Kofi to take over. Woods starts running his mouth and apparently motivates Kofi to get in a jawbreaker, only to have Styles hit that strike rush of his to drop Kingston again. Kofi grabs a monkey flip of all things to put Styles down.

The Boom Drop makes a rare appearance and something like a knee drop to a standing AJ gets two. Styles is sent to the apron and Woods starts playing some trombone, causing AJ to miss the Phenomenal Forearm. The SOS gives Kofi two but the Club and New Day get into it at ringside. Kofi dives over the top to take out Gallows, only to have AJ score with the Pele coming back in. The Styles Clash gives AJ the pin at 13:35.

Rating: B+. For all his goofiness, I think it's often forgotten just how good Kofi can be in the ring. No he's not likely to ever become a World Champion but he's definitely someone who can wrestle a good to very good match against almost anyone. I miss watching Kofi in singles stuff and I'd love to see him as more of the solo act on the team.

Overall Rating: B-. This was a stronger show than usual as it feels like Smackdown is starting to mean something again heading into the Brand Split. There was enough good wrestling here and Club vs. New Day got a strong focus to start what could be an entertaining feud going forward. I liked this show for a change and that's not something I can often say these days.

Results

Becky Lynch b. Charlotte via DQ when Dana Brooke interfered

Dudley Boyz b. Golden Truth – Rollup to Goldust

Sami Zayn/Dean Ambrose b. Kevin Owens/Alberto Del Rio – Helluva Kick to Del Rio

Rusev b. Jack Swagger – Accolade

AJ Styles b. Kofi Kingston – Styles Clash

Remember to follow me on Twitter @kbreviews and pick up my new book on NXT: The Full Sail Years Volume II at Amazon for just \$3.99 at:

<https://www.amazon.com/dp/B01FWZZ2UA>

And check out my Amazon author page with cheap wrestling books at:

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