

Smackdown – September 6, 2016: This One Is A Little Different

Smackdown

Date: September 6, 2016

Location: Pinnacle Bank Arena, Lincoln, Nebraska

Commentators: Mauro Ranallo, John Bradshaw Layfield, David Otunga

I'm not sure how but we're already at the go home show for Backlash. At this point there are five announced matches (assuming you count a tournament final as an announced match) which means we're going to get a lot more stuff announced tonight or Sunday's matches are going to be very long. Let's get to it.

Opening sequence.

Daniel Bryan is in the ring with the Smackdown Women's Title. Sunday's Six Pack Challenge will be an elimination match (there's how they fill in some time) but before we get there, we'll be having a six women tag match. First though, we're going to have a forum with all six getting some time to talk. We'll start with Becky Lynch but before she can say anything, Daniel has to plug Total Bellas.

The fans clearly aren't interested so Bryan lets Becky talk about being the #1 female Smackdown draft pick. Her journey has brought her here but Natalya cuts her off. Natalya says the Draft was the worst night of her career because Smackdown was supposed to be her kingdom but now she has to put up with Becky and the unnatural hair.

Cue Alexa Bliss to say they're both whiners and calls Bryan a Bella trophy husband. Now it's Carmella cutting them because women in WWE can't let anyone else get more than a few words out. Everyone gets catty about nicknames and the villains accuse Becky of turning them all against each other. Naomi and Nikki run out for the save and the villains leave. This was fine for a quick build but as usual, the women almost all have

characters that can be summed up in six words or less and you have to stretch to get that far. If you want the division to go anywhere, give us some development and a reason to care about them.

Dean Ambrose pours most of a bottle of sugar into his coffee.

The bosses are talking about the women's match when Miz comes in. He's not happy about having to defend the Intercontinental Title against Dolph Ziggler at Backlash and thinks it's because of what he said to Bryan a few weeks ago. Bryan says Miz can either fight Ziggler or just hand over the title right now. Miz walks away with the title intact. So much for Bryan and Miz not being on screen at the same time, which is a good thing.

The Miz vs. Apollo Crews

Non-title with Ziggler on commentary. What does it say that I knew this was going to be Crews because he's the designated midcard jobber? Crews runs him over to start and blocks a headlock with raw power. A shot to the face puts Miz on the floor and Crews moonsaults onto him as we go to a break.

Back with Miz choking in the corner as Ziggler keeps talking about how winning and losing doesn't matter as long as he tries his best. You know, two weeks after talking about how winning was all that mattered. No wait, it was winning the title and then defending it which mattered because that's the story they were going with this week. Miz's running corner clothesline has Crews in trouble but he sends Miz outside. That means it's time to get in Dolph's face and slap him in the jaw, only to have Miz shove Crews into him. A quick posting stuns Crews and the Skull Crushing Finale ends Apollo at 10:12.

Rating: D+. I have no idea what they're trying for with Miz and Ziggler at this point but it seems to be YET ANOTHER attempt to make Ziggler seem important after years of failing to live up to expectations. I'll be very, very disappointed if they put the title on him Sunday as Miz vs. Bryan still has a lot of potential as they're trying to make Miz look like something special for a change. Ziggler would be the same nothing champion who would likely lose every non-title match but it doesn't

matter because he tried his best.

Post match Ziggler chases Miz off and has the title in front of him. Ziggler invites Miz in to get the belt but he sends Maryse in instead. See, that's the kind of thing that shows character rather than "well golly I didn't win the match that I said I absolutely had to win but I sure tried and that's what matters" before saying that he has to win the big one (because winning the Intercontinental Title, a title he's held four times already, now counts as the big one).

AJ Styles is livid about video of him getting crotched last week. He yells at the production assistant who provided the video and that's about it.

American Alpha video.

The Usos say they still run this tag team division. The division has been around for about three weeks and they've already had to affirm their dominance? That's not a good sign.

Bray Wyatt talks about men having to fight to survive. They had to learn to deal with predators, who only knew how to hunt and kill. The predator didn't know how to create and one day they became a play thing. History repeats itself and Orton is no longer the predator he once was. Bray is the evolution of man and at Backlash, predator becomes prey.

Nikki Bella/Becky Lynch/Naomi vs. Alexa Bliss/Natalya/Carmella

Nikki makes her entrance before a break so we come back with.....the other five entrances. Bliss and Naomi start things off and it's time for the dancing kicks, which still look horrible. As a bonus this time, Naomi's kick to the head completely misses but it's off to Carmella (now in tights instead of the shorts in a smart move for the heel turn) vs. Becky anyway. A backslide gets two on Carmella, who didn't seem like she kicked out in time. Nikki comes in and again the fans seem to care for reasons that I don't understand. The villains are chased to the floor and we take a break.

Back with Becky in trouble as Natalya sends her into the apron and grabs

a chinlock. Bliss comes in and grabs a chinlock of her own before Natalya hits a Michinoku Driver for two. Becky finally dives over for the hot tag to Nikki and a Disaster kick gets two on Bliss. The TKO gets two on Carmella with Bliss making the save as everything breaks down. Bliss misses her moonsault knees to the ribs and Carmella's Code of Silence makes Nikki tap at 12:53.

Rating: D. This was bad and there's really no way around it. Between Naomi focusing on looking athletic without having the ability to pull it off, Carmella having all of one good looking move, Bliss not being able to take a move or hit one of her own and Nikki being in the match for two minutes because they're trying to keep her safe, there's only so much Natalya and Becky can do. This division just does not have the depth to work right now and it's showing more and more when there's so little to praise in a match with the whole division.

Tag Team Title Tournament Semifinals: Usos vs. American Alpha

We get a handshake to start but the Usos jump Alpha from behind in what feels like a heel turn. Not that it matters as Alpha comes right back and the Grand Amplitude ends Jimmy at 27 seconds.

Post match (with the replay clipping the thing) the Usos beat Alpha down by sending Jordan shoulder first into the post and superkicking Gable in the knee. Jey puts on a Tequila Sunrise and Jimmy adds a Superfly splash to Gable's other leg for a good looking beatdown. The heel turn is a really good idea for the Usos as they've been the exact same team for years now. At least this gives them a little freshening up.

Orton tells a story about a dying man killing a rabbit but getting caught by a snake who wanted the rabbit for himself. The snake didn't attack until after the man had picked up the rabbit because he knew he could have them both. At Backlash, Bray won't know what hit him.

Here's Fandango to say that Tyler Breeze is out finding fabric for their upcoming fashion line. Instead he's found a woman to tango with Fandango but she's a bit too wild for him and he throws her out. Fandango asks for anyone else so here's Kane to chokeslam him. Fans: "GO BIG RED!" (University of Nebraska football chant).

AJ breaks a guy's phone for not showing him enough respect.

Children with cancer awareness video.

Curt Hawkins video. He's here next week.

Tag Team Title Tournament Semifinals: Hype Bros vs. Heath Slater/Rhyno

The Slater Family is in the front row as Slater and Ryder start things off. Zack's middle rope dropkick gets an early two and it's off to Rawley to send Heath outside. Rawley runs Rhyno down and we take an early break. Back with Slater avoiding a splash in the corner but the fans want Rhyno. The hot tag brings in Ryder and Rhyno but Slater tags himself in and gets rolled up for two. Rhyno saves Heath from the Broski Boot and a Gore ends Ryder at 7:18.

Rating: D+. This was an interesting one as Rhyno was WAY over and the fans are already into Slater but Ryder and Rawley are popular enough that it's hard to have them be heels. Either way, Slater and Rhyno were the best possible option and could get the belts, especially given Gable's knee injury.

We look at the knee injury earlier.

Renee Young doesn't have much of an update on Gable's condition but the Usos come in to say they were letting out their bottled up aggression. They've been putting their bodies on the line for years and the fans turned on them but love American Alpha the second they saw them.

Here are Dean Ambrose and AJ Styles for a face to face meeting to end the show. Dean has a gift for AJ: a bowling trophy for participation, which is the only trophy Dean will ever give him. We see clips of AJ getting crotched last week and AJ isn't happy. Styles talks about how he beat John Cena but Dean points out that this Sunday, AJ isn't fighting Cena. On top of that, AJ beat Cena in a wrestling match and Sunday it's going to be a fight. They don't give out trophies for second place so AJ kicks Dean low and breaks the trophy to end the show. They kept this short and that's probably best given how the feud has gone so far.

Overall Rating: C. This show was very different than usual and that's a

good thing as they head into a rather weak pay per view. There are only five matches for the show and tonight focused on the matches to crown new champions. The wrestling really wasn't the focus here and it's a good idea to spend this show focusing on everything other than the main event, which has gotten a lot of time already. I really don't see a three hour pay per view based on this card but they've stretched stuff out in other ways before.

Results

The Miz b. Apollo Crews – Skull Crushing Finale

Alexa Bliss/Natalya/Carmella b. Nikki Bella/Naomi/Becky Lynch – Code of Silence to Bella

American Alpha b. Usos – Grand Amplitude to Jimmy

Heath Slater/Rhyno b. Hype Bros – Gore to Ryder

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