

Smackdown – September 27, 2016: NXT Style(s)

Smackdown

Date: September 27, 2016

Location: Quicken Loans Arena, Cleveland, Ohio

Commentators: John Bradshaw Layfield, Mauro Ranallo, David Otunga

It's a big night for Smackdown as we have a rare World Title match on free TV with AJ Styles defending against Dean Ambrose. We're less than two weeks away from No Mercy and it should be interesting to see where things go as we get ready for the triple threat and whatever else is announced before the show. Let's get to it.

Opening sequence.

Here's Randy Orton to open the show. He's heard about Bray Wyatt talking about fear but thinks it's because Bray is scared himself. Bray comes on screen to talk about Hansel and Gretel. Bray has left his own trail of breadcrumbs that will lead Randy through the prison of his own mind. He holds up an hourglass and sings He's Got The Whole World In His Hands. Orton leaves to go after Bray.

Dean Ambrose says he's ready to fight AJ Styles tonight.

Usos/Ascension vs. American Alpha/Heath Slater/Rhyno

Alpha works on Jimmy's arm to start before a double monkey flip sends this Usos flying. Jey tries to go after Gable but gets pulled down into an armbar over the ropes. Jimmy offers a distraction and Jey chop blocks Gable again to take us to a break. Back with Gable still in trouble and Konor getting two. Gable tries to break free for the tag but everything breaks down and everyone not named Slater is knocked off the apron.

The hot tag brings in Heath for a big reaction, followed by some knees and a leg lariat to the bad guys. A neckbreaker gets two on Jey with Konor diving in for the save. Jordan Cactus Clotheslines Viktor to the

floor but the Usos make a blind tag, allowing Jimmy to kick Heath in the face. The jumping kick to the back of the knee sets up a Tequila Sunrise to make Heath tap at 10:00.

Rating: C. This was a fine way to set up the title match without having the champs lose in a regular tag match. I can't imagine anything other than the Usos taking the belts at No Mercy and that's all it should be. Slater and Rhyno have reached heights they have no right to be near so it's hard to call them anything other than a success. Another few weeks as champions would be fine but you have to take the belts off them and let us get to the Usos vs. Alpha for the real feud.

John Cena will be at ringside to scout the main event.

Miz has a Lebron James poster covered with one of his own.

Orton goes to what looks like the boiler room and sees an arrow left by Bray. For some reason he turns it around and goes the other way. When the camera pans back, the arrow has been turned around again and Erick Rowan is standing there in his mask.

Back from a break with Bray saying Orton might find out the meaning of the abyss tonight. The hourglass is almost out of sand.

Carmella/Natalya vs. Nikki Bella/Naomi

Naomi and Carmella get things going with the latter dangling instead of fighting. That earns her a quick spank and now it's Naomi's turn to moon walk. It's off to Nikki, who scares Carmella to the floor for a breather. Back with Naomi in trouble on the floor and Natalya putting on a chinlock. Carmella gets in a Bronco Buster, followed by Natalya's basement dropkick (which missed) for two. It was enough of a miss that the tag brings in Nikki a few seconds later and it's time for the showdown with Carmella (which seems to happen every week). Natalya offers a distraction though and Carmella gets the rollup pin on Nikki at 10:05.

Rating: D+. This small division is working at the moment, mainly because they've split it up into two distinct stories. Unfortunately one of those is about how we're all supposed to love Nikki Bella, who still isn't all

that interesting. Carmella is fine for a first victim for Nikki but hopefully it doesn't lead to yet another Nikki title reign.

Orton finds a message saying there's one way out. He opens a closet to find a cardboard cutout of himself with the eyes missing. Another message on another door asks Predator or Prey reveals....Rowan a few feet away but Orton doesn't open the door wide enough to see him. Good thing there was a camera waiting there right then.

Here are Miz and Maryse for his homecoming celebration. Maryse introduces a video package on Miz's career, including Real World clips, his time as a Tag Team and US Champion, his World Title win (still the only possible call) and capped off by the promo on Bryan from Talking Smack. Miz talks about the Cleveland Cavaliers winning the NBA Title and wonders why his celebration isn't as big. Mr. and Mrs. Miz are in the front row, as are Dolph Ziggler's parents.

Cue Ziggler because of course it's still Ziggler to go after Miz. Ziggler doesn't like Miz talking about his parents and goes to leave almost immediately but Miz laughs at Ziggler for failing again. Dolph brings up Miz cheating, which Miz interprets as yet another excuse. Miz says Ziggler has nothing left to offer for another shot and leaves but Ziggler calls for Mike to come back. All Ziggler has left is his career so he'll put that on the line. Miz agrees and the match is made for No Mercy. Uh...yay. Like really, yay.

Bray says when one door closes, another opens but he's watching Randy wander around like a mouse in a maze.

Becky Lynch comes out for a match but Alexa Bliss attacks her from behind and takes off her belt.

Curt Hawkins says gravity has to obey his laws. He's making a big announcement next week.

Bray wants to know where Orton is. As in any horror movie, he's right behind Bray and beats the heck out of him. Wyatt runs off so Orton puts on the sheep mask for a little singing. I think the video breaks up as the voice starts distorting and it turns into Bray. It's not clear if

that was intentional.

AJ Styles recaps his rise to the championship and says he'll still have the title after tonight.

Smackdown World Title: Dean Ambrose vs. AJ Styles

Ambrose is defending and Cena is on commentary. Dean chops away in the corner as JBL asks if Cena really is a part timer or still a full time performer. Cena says nothing as Ambrose takes AJ onto the announcers' table for some right hands to the head. Back from a break with Ambrose hitting a running clothesline to put both guys down. A backbreaker gets two on the champ and we hit a cloverleaf.

Styles gets to the ropes so Dean gets in a suicide dive because every match needs a suicide dive. Back with AJ cranking on a Calf Crusher until Dean grabs his head to slam it onto the mat for the break. They slug it out until Dean gets two off a double chickenwing facebuster for two of his own.

AJ's torture rack powerbomb gets two more and a Pele puts Dean down again. He misses the springboard 450 though as Dean rolls away (it would have missed by a mile anyway) and they head outside where AJ hits Cena in the face. The distraction makes the referee miss a rollup, meaning Dean goes outside to hit Cena as well. The distraction lets AJ grab a rollup with tights for the pin to retain at 21:17.

Rating: B. Another good match here and they did a good job of setting up the triple threat. It's fairly certain that Cena isn't getting the title this soon and since there's almost no one around to face Dean, AJ retaining makes the most sense. That's not a bad thing though and the build has been strong, which is the best thing you can ask for in this sort of feud.

Cena AA's both guys to end the show.

Overall Rating: B-. This was a very NXT style show and that's the best thing you can say about wrestling these days. The Orton vs. Wyatt stuff was an interesting idea to tie things together, though the ending wasn't

all that great. Rowan wasn't a factor and Orton just finds Wyatt to beat him up? That's it? Other than that though this was all about setting up a big match to end the show and move us closer to the pay per view in a few weeks. Just a fun wrestling show here, as Smackdown often is.

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