

Smackdown – December 27, 2016: Outstanding

Smackdown

Date: December 27, 2016

Location: Allstate Arena, Chicago, Illinois

Commentators: Mauro Ranallo, Tom Phillips, John Bradshaw Layfield, David Otunga

As usual, Smackdown has a stacked show with three title matches to close out the year, putting it a bit ahead of the World Champion losing to the midcard champion in a combination rematch/preview of the upcoming title match. On top of that, some guy named Cena is back tonight and probably opening the show. Let's get to it.

Here's Cena to get things going and the booing is so loud that Cena says he can't even understand what they're chanting. Fans: "CM Punk!" Cena: "CENA SUCKS???" After getting the fans to argue with themselves about which Chicago baseball team is better, Cena talks about all the titles on the line tonight. The fans are WAY behind AJ for the main event and Cena says he's right there with them as a Styles fan.

With all the title matches tonight, what exactly is Cena doing here? The fans chant for Undertaker but Cena says that's why he's here: he's heard a lot of people trying to set up his career for him, including saying he's got one foot out the door and is on his way to Hollywood. The truth is he's still here and he's got a lot left to do. This is the MY TIME IS NOW Era and his name is John Cena.

Miz comes out of his own dressing room and says he'll only answer questions asked by Renee Young.

Tag Team Titles: Wyatt Family vs. Heath Slater/Rhyno vs. Usos vs. American Alpha

Elimination Rules with the Wyatts defending. Gable suplexes Rhyno to start with Jey tagging himself in to grab the cover. The Wyatts head

to the floor and it's off to Slater to clean house. A top rope forearm has Jey staggered and a running neckbreaker gets two. Slater goes up top but slips off, leaving Jey to hit a quick superkick for the elimination at 4:17.

That was a pretty bad looking botch but really Slater just slipped off instead of diving into the superkick. It happens to everyone though and it was hardly the worst thing I've ever seen. Back with Harper and Orton on the apron for the first time and Gable coming in off the hot tag, meaning stereo belly to belly suplexes send the Usos flying. Gable rolls Jimmy up for the pin and an elimination at 10:12, leaving us with two teams.

The Usos decks Alpha before leaving to give the Wyatts an even bigger advantage. Orton takes over on Jordan with a hard whip into the corner and the snap powerslam for two. A dropkick allows the hot tag to Gable, who German suplexes Harper for a near fall of his own. Back with Harper holding Gable in a headlock because Heaven forbid Alpha gets to show off. Orton takes Chad outside and throws him into the barricade and gets two off the slingshot suplex.

A Harper side slam gets two but the hot tag brings in Jordan to clean house. The shoulders in the corner and the rapid fire suplexes have the Wyatts in trouble with Harper and Orton colliding in the corner. Jason adds another shoulder and it's Grand Amplitude to Orton for the pin and the titles at 23:21.

Rating: B. They legitimately surprised me here as I would have bet on Bray coming in for the save at the end. I'm really glad they gave Alpha the belts and it's even better that they did it with the Wyatts basically coming in fresh for the final part of the match. This was a really nice surprise and a great way to make this show actually feel important. Good stuff here and I'm really pleased.

Bray breaks up a fight between Harper and Orton after the match.

We recap the end of last week's show with Corbin being added to the main event.

Dolph Ziggler is ready for the triple threat because it's finally

his time.

James Ellsworth is all banged up but Carmella cuts off the interview to say she finds him attractive.

Women's Title: Becky Lynch vs. Alexa Bliss

Becky is challenging in her rematch and goes for the leg early on. We get a nice pinfall reversal sequence with both getting some near falls, capped off with Becky grabbing a cross armbreaker. The champ takes her down though and steps on Becky's back before hammering away with some forearms. More forearms and a posting on the floor have Becky reeling as we take a break.

Back with Becky getting in some uppercuts and clotheslines to take over before blocking a DDT. In shades of Pentagon Dark from Lucha Underground, Becky snaps the arm back and sends Bliss shoulder first into the post. A top rope dropkick knocks Bliss silly and here's La Luchadora (Becky's disguise from last week), allowing Bliss to get a rollup for two.

Luchadora takes the turnbuckle pad off but Twisted Bliss only gets two. The Disarm-Her doesn't work either as Bliss gets her foot in the ropes. Bliss' elbow appears to be COMPLETELY DISLOCATED but Luchadora slams Becky's head into the post. Alexa pops the arm back into socket and grabs a DDT to retain at 14:00.

Rating: B-. I love a good masked man (or woman in this case) angle and this one might have some legs. Maybe La Luchadora is working with Bliss and maybe she's not, but either way there's something interesting there because it makes you want to come back for more. I don't remember the last time I've felt that way about something on Raw but it happens multiple times a week around here.

We look at Renee slapping Miz last week.

Miz allows Renee to ask him some questions but tells security to leave. They do, but Dean Ambrose replaces one of them. We get the beating that should have happened last week until Dean beats up a guard and says all clear.

We look at Carmella saying Natalya attacked Nikki Bella.

We get the standard “I’m Nikki Bella and I’m AMAZING because I keep fighting against everything handed to me” speech. She’ll say something to Natalya’s face.

Corbin says the pressure is on the little guys in the match with him.

Smackdown World Title: Baron Corbin vs. Dolph Ziggler vs. AJ Styles

Styles is defending. Baron cleans a lot of house to start with some hard right hands to knock both smaller guys out to the floor. We take an early break and come back with Corbin shrugging off a fireman’s carry attempt and blasting both guys with clotheslines. Styles has to break up End of Days on Ziggler but Baron gets in a hard clothesline on Dolph instead.

We take a break with Baron in full control and come back with Ziggler and Styles double teaming Corbin and clotheslining him outside in a smart move. They’re not done yet though and take him outside, only to have Corbin shrug them off and load up the announcers’ table. That earns him a Phenomenal Forearm from the steps and a superkick onto the table.

Styles and Ziggler dive off the barricade to take Corbin out for good but all three are down. Ziggler Rock Bottoms AJ onto the apron and gets two off the jumping DDT back inside. The Styles Clash is broken up and Ziggler superkicks AJ out of the air to block the Phenomenal Forearm. One heck of a superkick gets two on AJ with Corbin almost getting back in to pull the referee away.

Deep Six gets two on Ziggler with AJ making a diving save. AJ’s strike rush is broken up and it’s the End of Days for AJ with Ziggler adding a Zig Zag on Corbin for a really close two. Another End of Days plants Ziggler but the Phenomenal Forearm knocks Corbin to the floor, allowing AJ to pin Ziggler to retain at 23:16.

Rating: A-. A few blown spots aside, this was a heck of a match and an awesome way to wrap up the year. It’s also a star making performance from Corbin, who looked like a star the whole way through. The fact that it was his move that put Ziggler away is very

important and should be brought up in the future. I dug the heck out of this match and it worked very well.

Cena comes out to offer Styles a handshake and Styles finally gives him one.

Neville tells us to watch 205 Live to end the show.

Overall Rating: A. I had a blast with this show and it shows you that quality is more important than quantity. Last night's Raw had three times the matches and almost none of them were all that interesting. This show had three distinct stories being told, all of which offer a reason to come back for more. That's in addition to the other stories and the angle advancement throughout the show. In other words, Smackdown knows how to treat its audience to a good show while Raw knows how to exist while its fans watch.

Results

American Alpha b. Usos, Heath Slater/Rhyno and Wyatt Family – Grand Amplitude to Orton

Alexa Bliss b. Becky Lynch – DDT

AJ Styles b. Baron Corbin and Dolph Ziggler – End of Days to Ziggler

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