

# Smackdown – February 28, 2017: That Was....A Lot

## Smackdown

Date: February 28, 2017

Location: Xcel Energy Center, St. Paul Minnesota

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Tom Phillips

It's a stacked card tonight and I assure you that has nothing to do with the President giving a speech to a joint session of Congress at the halfway point of the show. Tonight we have the fallout from AJ Styles and Luke Harper tying in a battle royal, a two out of three falls match between Becky Lynch and Mickie James and Dolph Ziggler vs. Apollo Crews in a chairs match. Let's get to it.

The bosses are in the back watching a clip of the ending of last week's battle royal. AJ comes in and laughs off the idea of having to face Harper tonight because Harper looks like the hair that clogs the shower. Of course Harper is behind him so AJ bails, leaving Harper to thank the bosses.

Opening sequence.

Here are Miz and Maryse to open things up with MizTV. Miz gets right to the point and brings out his guest: John Cena. However he also cuts Cena's mic and rants about how Cena has cost him ten years of misery. Cena spends all his time manipulating everyone he can find and Miz is sick and tired of it. A brief Cena chant cuts things off before Miz says he isn't just the other guy.

Two weeks ago, Miz was primed to main event Wrestlemania but Cena manipulated him out of the spot. The reason being: Cena is jealous of him. A few years back Cena went toe to toe with the Rock and went off about how Rock had gone Hollywood but now with all the movies and TV shows, we can't see Cena. The fans get in a quick YOU SOLD OUT chant as Miz talks about how Cena is a parody of himself. Miz: "You're not Super Cena anymore. You're barely decent Cena!"

Miz is the one that's here doing the media and making sure Smackdown is must see. Then Cena just comes back and gets a title shot at the Royal Rumble for a spot in the history books. Cena took the glory

away from Ric Flair (I'm still waiting on anyone to talk about Flair taking away Harley Race's glory by doubling the amount of title reigns he had. I doubt we'll be getting that though because NO ONE THINKS FLAIR TOOK ANYTHING AWAY FROM RACE, just like Cena took nothing from Flair.) and now it's time for Cena to talk.

John makes the jokes about how he's heard all of this before and held everyone back. Now it's time to prove Miz wrong though. If Cena was really this black arts manipulator, he would be standing toe to toe with the Undertaker. The fans really seem to like that idea but Cena talks about how half of this crowd, and sometimes more than half, is going to be chanting CENA SUCKS.

No matter what they chant though, everyone knows who Cena is. Miz is someone named Mike who shortened his name on the Real World because he thought it would steal Rock's electricity. Then he stole Chris Jericho's gimmick, Ric Flair's Figure Four Leglock (That was a gift!), Daniel Bryan's offense and the same thing that AJ Styles has been saying for the last six months. Miz is just someone playing someone playing someone playing someone else. If you ask any of the greats, they're just themselves with the volume turned WAY up.

That's why so many believe that Miz is where he is: he's a trend hopping shell of a WWE superstar. Cena says the next time they talk, don't bring a knife to a gun fight because Miz isn't the Undertaker. If he presses Cena again though, he's a dead man. Cena goes to leave but Maryse cuts him off and gets in a slap. Cena starts laughing and says that was the biggest mistake of her life. Cue Nikki Bella to chase Miz and Maryse off. Cena kisses Nikki, which I believe is the first time he's ever acknowledged their relationship on TV.

That's the easy frontrunner for promo of the year and is likely going to be one of the favorites in December. However, odds are this ends with Nikki hitting whatever her finish is on Maryse and Cena hitting an AA on Miz for the stereo pins so Nikki can have her big moment, which is the whole point of this nonsense. With Cena going away again, Miz should get his big moment but no, because we need a Total Divas highlight. At least this was great though and more proof that Miz is one of the most underrated talkers ever.

#### Becky Lynch vs. Mickie James

2/3 falls. They trade arm work to start until Mickie is sent outside and into the barricade as we go to a break. Back with Mickie in

control until she misses a legdrop. Not that it matters as the MickieDT gives James the first fall at 7:28. We take a second break and come back with Mickie getting two but missing something off the top, allowing Becky to roll her up and tie the score at 12:50 total.

The Bexploder has Mickie in more trouble but here's Alexa Bliss to watch at ringside. Mickie misses her spinning kick and gets slammed for no count as Alexa has the referee. Bliss gets kicked off the apron and Mickie grabs a rollup, only to be reversed into the Disarm-Her to give Becky the pin at 14:14.

**Rating:** C. I appreciated the idea of making this 2/3 falls but it really could have been any regular match. It also doesn't help that about half of the match was lost in the commercials, at least one of which could have been cut. Bliss vs. Lynch in the final blowoff could be a great Wrestlemania match but I can't imagine those two getting the spot on their own.

Harper is around the light bulbs and says after tonight, Bray is going to be very afraid.

Bray says may the best man win tonight. Later this evening, the whole world will hear what he has to say but they'll also hear from Randy Orton. Bray is the keeper of the Holy Grail, meaning the championship.

Alexa is in the back and doesn't want to be asked about Becky because she just became the first two time Women's Champion. After some Oscar references, Natalya comes in and says she's taking the title. Bliss' laughing face is rather amusing.

AJ says he'll win.

#### AJ Styles vs. Luke Harper

The winner goes to the main event of Wrestlemania. AJ speeds things up to start but eats a running dropkick (not a great one but it was fine for Harper) to put him outside. Harper goes after him and gets caught with a Pele, allowing Styles to start in on the knee. That goes nowhere though as Luke elbows him in the jaw and scores with a slingshot hilo of all things. Styles is sent outside for a suicide shove and the Phenomenal Blitz is broken up with a half dragon suplex.

Back from a break with Harper getting two off a sitout powerbomb. AJ pops right back up and hits the Phenomenal Forearm for the pin at

10:50....but here's Shane McMahon to say not so fast because Harper's foot was on the rope (it clearly was). Harper grabs a rollup for two and they head outside with Harper accidentally superkicking Shane. Back in and the springboard 450 ends Harper at 12:55.

**Rating:** B. Good match but we were all waiting for the angle stuff which is fine. It's pretty clear that they're going to change something later but I'm not sure if they have time to get everywhere they want to go in four and a half Smackdowns (remember that the go home show is likely to be from Axxess). The story could be interesting and if they manage to avoid AJ vs. Shane, things can get much better.

The decision seems to stand.

Nikki and Cena are in the back when Carmella and James Ellsworth come up. Carmella: "Are you going to let him talk to me like that?" Ellsworth: "Well he's standing right there." Carmella thinks the show should be called Total Phonies so a mixed tag is set for next week.

#### Dean Ambrose vs. Curt Hawkins

Ambrose charges to the ring and hits Dirty Deeds with no bell. No match of course.

Dean talks about rollerblading during happy hour and learning how burrito bowls and roller coasters don't mix. The most important lesson he's learned is that when you're pushed, you have to push back. That's why he wants to fight Baron Corbin right now. Corbin pops up on screen and says he's not going to do that right now. Dean wants him to hurry up because he only has fifteen minutes left on the parking meter. Baron talks about how Dean is just a speed bump and they'll fight soon.

#### Apollo Crews vs. Dolph Ziggler

Chairs match so there are a bunch of chairs at ringside. Crews jumps him from behind and takes over to start, followed by a moonsault off the apron. We take a break and come back with Crews hitting a clothesline and enziguri. A standing moonsault onto a chair onto Dolph gets two and Ziggler is sent into a chair in the corner. That's fine with Ziggler who gets in a chair shot to the throat, followed by a crotching onto the chair for the pin at 8:53.

**Rating:** D. Holy sweet giggling carrots no one cares about this feud

and Ziggler doesn't really get anything out of this. Ziggler isn't anything interesting as a heel and I have no idea why I'm supposed to be impressed by a win over a guy like Crews. Apollo is fine enough but it's not like he's won anything of note. Nothing match and hopefully the end to a bad feud.

Here's Wyatt to talk about the title match. He really didn't care who it was because Wyatt is bringing the evil to Wrestlemania. Wyatt comes from a world of evil and that's where Randy Orton is right now. Orton pops up on screen to say he's been given the keys to the kingdom and that's where is is now.

A few months ago, he said he was going to join the Wyatts but now that he's closer to them, it's time to screw the Family. Orton is in Bray's barn and says Sister Abigail is buried underneath this floor. That means we see a bunch of worms and dirt and Orton is holding a pickaxe. Orton promises to burn Abigail's spirit and take away Bray's power.

The rocking chair next to Orton is swaying with no one in it until he grabs its back...and pulls out a can of gasoline. Orton covers everything with gas and says he's coming for the title at Wrestlemania. He pours more gas into the hold (presumably Abigail's grave) as Bray seems to be near tears. Even more gas is poured out and Orton lights the house on fire. Bray freaks out and breaks down as Orton stares at the camera to end the show.

**Overall Rating:** B. That ending was a lot and I'm going to need some time to process things. Orton destroying Wyatt like that is certainly interesting and could make for a big Wrestlemania match but I'm not sure if it's the right idea to have Wyatt weakened so much before the biggest match of his life. AJ is of course the wildcard in the whole thing and I'm really, really hoping that the Shane match doesn't happen.

The rest of the show was great and I absolutely loved the opening promo. I know I'm one of its more vocal critics but if Cena and Miz are bringing the talking like that, I can live with hearing Nikki running her mouth about how she's worked SO hard and come SO far to finally make it. The wrestling wasn't the point tonight but you can tell they're setting up everything big for Wrestlemania and that's the most important thing they can do now. Good show, but not for the wrestling.

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