

Smackdown – April 18, 2017: It Didn't Make Any More Sense Live

Smackdown

Date: April 18, 2017

Location: KFC Yum! Center, Louisville, Kentucky

Commentators: Tom Phillips, Byron Saxton, John Bradshaw Layfield

Smackdown is in a weird place and is basically at the mercy of the upcoming Raw pay per view until we can settle things down. Randy Orton is the World Champion and has a lame duck challenger in the form of Bray Wyatt, who is now on Raw. Tonight we'll have a Six Pack Challenge to crown a new Smackdown #1 contender. Let's get to it.

I was in the arena for this show so I'll have a bit of a different perspective.

In Memory of Rosey who passed away earlier in the day.

We open with a long recap of the Superstar Shakeup.

Here's Charlotte for an opening chat. She's been on Smackdown Live for seven days now and for some reason she hasn't received her shot at the Smackdown Women's Title. Maybe Shane McMahon and Daniel Bryan have been watching Fast and the Furious but she's getting furious very fast. She wants her title shot now so here's Naomi to interrupt.

Naomi doesn't think we have queens on this show and she's never scared (I feel a Nikki Bella appearance coming, perhaps in the form of talking to a camera and a stupid, forced argument with Brie). The fight is on but here's Shane McMahon to say not so fast. They'll have a match tonight and if Charlotte wins, she gets a title match next week. The brawl is on again and Naomi clears the ring.

Natalya is in Shane's office and says she deserves the title match. Shane brings up the loss at Wrestlemania and says all she had to do was ask for

a one on one match. Cue Carmella and James Ellsworth to say Carmela should get the shot. Tamina comes in to ask about her shot. An argument ensues because that's what WWE thinks women do until Natalya says they should band together against Charlotte.

Dolph Ziggler vs. Sami Zayn vs. Jinder Mahal vs. Erick Rowan vs. Luke Harper vs. Mojo Rawley

One fall to a finish and the winner gets a shot at the Smackdown World Title. Everyone pairs off to start with Harper and Rowan being the only two to stay in the ring. Sami replaces Rowan but charges into a Falcon's Arrow for two as we take a break. Back with Rowan, Ziggler and Zayn all about to be superplexed.

Dolph and Rowan crash to the mat but Sami sunset bombs Mahal for two. Ziggler superkicks Zayn but Harper blasts him with the discus lariat for a near fall of his own. Almost everyone winds up on the floor (Complete with those still stupid crowd shots, because we're not smart enough to know that something is exciting on our own. No, we NEED to see what some average fans think of a clothesline to really get the full feeling.) with Harper hitting a big dive.

Rowan's spinning kick gets two on Ziggler in a good false finish before Ziggler gets powerbombed onto the pile at ringside. We take a second break and come back with Rawley cleaning house and hitting the running punch to knock Ziggler out. Mahal dumps Rawley and steals a VERY close two, followed by Ziggler running back in for two off a Zig Zag on Rowan.

Harper's Batista Bomb gets two on Dolph but Mahal sends him into the steps. For some reason Sami dives onto Harper instead of going for a cover, followed by the springboard moonsault to Rawley. Back in and Sami hits the exploder on Mahal but two men (the Bollywood Boyz, though not announced by name) grab his feet, allowing Jinder to grab a cobra clutch slam for the pin and the title shot at 18:42.

Rating: B. Choice of a winner aside, this was a heck of a match with some outstanding false finishes. There were multiple possible winners here and one major surprise ending, which is always going to help something like this. I had a lot of fun with the match, though I could go with a regular

match for a title shot instead of some multi-person circus, even an entertaining one like this.

As for Mahal.....yeah I'm not sure on this one. I get the idea of trying something fresh but is Jinder Mahal really the kind of guy you want to make the focal point when you're in a new era? Odds are Orton destroys him but that's going to make for a long four weeks as we get to Backlash. I'm sure Mahal looking like he swallowed a few boxes of IC0-PR0 products has nothing to do with his push either.

Post match Mahal says people boo him because he's not your typical All-American and comes from a wealthy family. Americans don't accept diversity but they'll have to accept Jinder Mahal. Cue Randy Orton to say Mahal won the Jackpot with a prize of an RK0. First though, Orton has to burn down the House of Horrors (whatever that is).

Bray Wyatt pops up on screen to talk about torturing Randy and showing him what fear means. The show went to a break here, during which Rowan tried to sneak in and attack Orton, only to take the RK0. During the entire post match promo exchange, Zayn sat at ringside staring at the announcers, completely distraught.

New Day is coming, likely as soon as Kofi's ankle is healed up.

Video on Shinsuke Nakamura.

AJ Styles is ready to win the US Title when Baron Corbin interrupts. Corbin says AJ didn't pin him last week so none of it matters. Styles is more than willing to face Corbin tonight so the match is made.

Charlotte runs into Natalya, Tamina and Carmella, who completely fail to intimidate her.

Naomi vs. Charlotte

Non-title but if Charlotte wins, she gets a title shot next week. The Glow entrance is still insane and really cool in person. Charlotte sends her into the corner and grabs an early chinlock to slow Naomi down. The Figure Four necklock with the faceplants and front flips keep Naomi in trouble and it's right back to the chinlock. Naomi pops up for a slugout

and hits those dancing kicks, capped off by a big one to the head for two.

Back from a break with Charlotte grabbing a dragon sleeper of all things and getting two off a neckbreaker. A knee to the back of the head gets the same as this has been almost all Charlotte so far. She's just a few steps ahead of Naomi and there's no much the champ can do about it. Naomi makes her comeback with a clothesline and what looked like a sitout Stunner for two. The Rear View is easily blocked though as Charlotte kicks her in the back. Natural Selection gives Charlotte the pin at 12:51.

Rating: C+. This was an odd one as they could only do so much with the booking. The problem is Charlotte is so far above every active woman on the Smackdown roster that there's almost no point in having her beat anyone up. I'm not wild on the champion losing clean but in this case it was the only real option.

Charlotte W00s at her detractors.

Colons vs. American Alpha

They're Primo and Epico again, which is probably better for everyone involved. This is the result of the Colons attacking Alpha last week as they debuted on Smackdown. Chad takes Epico down with ease and it's time to work on the arm. A Primo distraction allows Epico to send him into the post though and things slow down. Epico gets two off a double underhook gutbuster, only to have Chad grab the armbar over the ropes. Jordan comes in off the hot tag but Primo kicks him in the face, sending Jordan into a rollup for the pin at 3:15.

Rating: D+. The time killed them here but the bigger issue is how far American Alpha has fallen. It seems that they received the WWE death sentence a few months back: they were declared bulletproof. If you're branded as such, you can forget about winning almost anything significant most of the time as WWE would rather have you put everyone over than keep you strong, which is about as bad as things can get. It also doesn't help that American Alpha hasn't been allowed to do any of the stuff that got them over in NXT but that's a very common problem in WWE.

Video on Lana, who likes to dance on chairs.

Video on Tye Dillinger.

Kevin Owens vs. Gary Gandy

Non-title. This is a Face of America Open Challenge and Gandy is from Louisville. Pop Up Powerbomb ends Gandy at 34 seconds.

Post match Owens says he's the Face of America as long as he's the US Champion. No one can take that away from him and now he's going to sit in on commentary for the main event.

AJ Styles vs. Baron Corbin

Corbin shoves him down as Kevin talks about AJ stealing his moniker from John Cena. Owens: "The only way he's taking this title from me is by stealing it too." AJ gets tossed outside and dropped face first onto the apron as we take a break. Back with Corbin holding a chinlock before sending him ribs first into the post.

Baron tries his slide under the ropes into the clothesline but gets sent into the post instead. A chokebreaker gives Baron two more but there's the Calf Crusher for the submission attempt that isn't going anywhere. One heck of a Deep Six gives Corbin a close near fall, only to have AJ hit him in the head a few times. They head outside again with AJ loading up the Clash but Corbin backdrops him onto Owens. One more forearm off the steps drops Corbin long enough for Styles to beat the count at 13:12.

Rating: C+. Not bad here but the time caught up to them again with the quick ending being designed to take care of Corbin while also advancing Styles vs. Owens. That's a pretty impressive list of things to accomplish in one match and they pulled it off well enough. They were really smart to keep Corbin from getting pinned though, which makes me think he might be next in line after Mahal.

Overall Rating: C. This was a good show with one MAJOR issue holding the rest of it back. As good as the rest of the show was, I don't think anyone is going to care about anything on here aside from Mahal becoming #1 contender. Honestly, is there anything else to talk about on here?

Charlotte gets a title shot and has three pests to deal with, the Colons are getting a push and we still have Styles vs. Owens to look forward to. Overall the show is going to be looked at for Mahal alone and that's not the best thing in the world.

Results

Jinder Mahal b. Sami Zayn, Erick Rowan, Luke Harper, Dolph Ziggler and Mojo Rawley – Cobra clutch slam to Zayn

Charlotte b. Naomi – Natural Selection

Colons b. American Alpha – Rollup to Jordan

Kevin Owens b. Gary Gandy – Pop Up Powerbomb

AJ Styles b. Baron Corbin via countout

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