

Backlash 2017 Preview

It's nice to have Backlash back where it belongs as the whole September slot didn't feel right last year. I'm not sure if the show is going to be that much better as historically it's more a show of Wrestlemania rematches, but why do that when you can do a mostly new card? This show doesn't have the most hype coming in and after "Takeover: Chicago", they have quite the hill to climb. Let's get to it.

Kickoff Show: Tye Dillinger vs. Aiden English

Having one guy win two matches and then doing a third match worked for Steve Austin and the Rock so it can work here too right? Dillinger debuted on the main roster about a month and a half ago and has kind of toiled around the lower midcard since. Fighting English over and over again hasn't done much for him but it's gotten English more TV time than he's had in months.

Of course I'm going with Dillinger, unless they want to kill one of the hottest crowds they're going to have all year right off the bat. English is going to need some changes if he's going to survive but I don't think that's going to happen here. To be fair though, it's not like a win in a glorified dark match is going to do him a lot of good. Just give this seven minutes or so though and let Dillinger get a win.

Baron Corbin vs. Sami Zayn

I might have overreacted to Corbin losing to Randy Orton the other night but he should be fine coming into this match. Their reason for fighting isn't all that great but it's a good way to get both of them on pay per view, where they belong. Corbin has cooled off considerably since losing at "Wrestlemania XXXIII" (not that it matters though as the Kickoff Show matches aren't on the DVD/Blu-Ray) but this could help him get back.

As much as I want to go with Zayn here, Corbin makes more sense. Just give him the win and let him start getting back on his feet.

Orton vs. Corbin would work fine for a major match, as would Corbin winning Money in the Bank. As much as Zayn needs a win as a member of the "Smackdown Live" roster, Corbin needs it more at the moment. Unfortunately that's the case far more often than not for Zayn and it's going to become a problem one day.

Luke Harper vs. Eric Rowan

Speaking of things that are going to get tiresome if they happen too much. These two have been fighting or at least associated with each other for years now and I really don't have much interest in watching them have another match. Rowan really isn't all that interesting but he's big and that earns him a push.

I'll take Harper winning here as it gives them a reason for another match down the line because WWE likes trilogies. I'm not sure what we're supposed to get out of this match, especially after they had a boring TV match a few weeks back. At least the match should be a good food break moment as this just isn't the kind of match that a lot of fans are going to care about.

Naomi/Charlotte/Becky Lynch vs. Welcoming Committee

I get why the match exists (they want to save Charlotte's big matches with the top "Smackdown Live" women) but that doesn't mean the Welcoming Committee is a good idea. It's basically three women and James Ellsworth banding together because they're scared of Charlotte but none of them have an interesting personality between them, making the whole thing all the more annoying.

That being said, I'll take the Welcoming Committee to win here so Charlotte can yell at Naomi or Lynch for the loss. My initial thought was Carmella takes the loss as she seems to be the potential star of the team but hopefully the trio's plug is pulled in the near future. It's not likely to be all that entertaining but that's par for the course on a lot of these matches.

Tag Team Titles: Usos vs. Breezango

What the heck happened to American Alpha? They lost the titles and I don't remember seeing them again since. Maybe we could have more

time for them if we didn't need the Welcoming Committee or Rowan vs. Harper in a hoss battle that people don't care about. Maybe we could have some time to build them up and give them some personality (you know, the thing that GOT THEM OVER IN NXT) to go with the wrestling ability. Oh yeah this match.

The Usos retain of course because WWE freaking loves these guys, even though they really only appear to speak in that weird promo style of theirs for about thirty seconds a week. I've been loving the Fashion Files vignettes but I have a bad feeling this is it for Breezango and they'll just fade away as a result. At least it's been a fun time getting here.

Shinsuke Nakamura vs. Dolph Ziggler

I've seen this match twice now as post-show dark matches and I have a feeling that's not going to be the best indicator of what we'll see here. WWE is pushing the heck out of Nakamura as we come into this show and that makes for some lofty expectations. That being said, if Nakamura showed me one thing in Dallas, it's that he knows how to make a good first impression.

Of course I'm taking Nakamura as there's no reason to believe that Ziggler will or should win here. Nakamura is going to be a major star on the show and I could easily see him going after a title as soon as "Summerslam 2017". There's not much of a point in waiting with him so having him beat the heck out of Ziggler in a star making performance is a great place to start.

US Title: AJ Styles vs. Kevin Owens

This match hasn't had the strongest build in the world and I'm starting to get worried about it. If nothing else, they're running a really strong chance of underwhelming due to the incredibly high expectations. I'm just hoping we don't get a match where the prevailing wisdom is "eh it's Styles vs. Owens" and it's just phoned in.

I'll take Styles to win here as it seems there's more interest in Owens doing the chasing than actually holding the title, or at least

that's been the case for most of his title reigns. There are a lot more options to go after champion Styles than Owens, who could easily move up to going after Orton, assuming he retains the title.

Smackdown World Title: Randy Orton vs. Jinder Mahal

And then there's this, which really does seem to be a way to boost the Indian markets (and possibly screw with TNA before they head over there for some live events). That also explains why we've got the Singh Brothers in Mahal's corner instead of, you know, someone actually intimidating (like the Authors of Pain for example). This is the definition of throwing together a challenger, though to be fair this is what we always ask for: a fresh opponent we haven't seen before. Now we get it and despite the building him up well, people aren't interested in Mahal.

Unfortunately I think we're going to keep going with this story as Mahal wins by DQ or countout and we get a rematch at "Money in the Bank 2017" in Orton hometown of St. Louis. As usual, WWE sacrifices their core audience for the sake of whatever their long term planning is, as people are really bored with Mahal but that's what we're getting no matter how many people change the channel.

Overall, this feels exactly like a filler pay per view, which is one of the worst things you can have if it goes badly. Having low expectations coming in can help a lot but at the same time, you run the risk of having a horrible show that feels more like torture than something entertaining. Maybe the show will be good but there seems to be very little that has my interest. If Orton vs. Mahal goes to a DQ to end the show, Chicago isn't going to react well and that's a very risky move.

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