

Smackdown – July 11, 2017: Wake Me When The Battle Is On

First off, Happy Anniversary Becca. Thanks for the first two of many.

Smackdown

Date: July 11, 2017

Location: AT&T Center, San Antonio, Texas

Commentators: Tom Phillips, Byron Saxton, John Bradshaw Layfield

We're less than two weeks away from Battleground and we don't know much about the card yet. The big story so far is the Punjabi Prison match with Smackdown World Champion Jinder Mahal defending against Randy Orton, but Orton is off filming a movie. With that feud temporarily on the shelf, we'll look at AJ Styles, who won the US Title over the weekend in a big surprise. Let's get to it.

We open with a look at last week's battle royal with AJ winning a shot at Kevin Owens and the US Title. Styles then won the title at Madison Square Garden at a house show over the weekend.

Opening sequence.

Here's AJ to open things up, saying his face is an upgrade for the Face of America. Styles talks about the Open Challenge that Owens used to issue and thinks he should have one of his own. The Challenge is on and.....here's John Cena. John wants the shot right now and AJ is more than game. We hit the Big Match Intros but cue Owens to interrupt before the bell.

Owens says no one wants Cena around here anymore because his time is over. John says the usual: if you want him gone, get rid of him. Rusev runs in from behind and takes Cena down, leaving Owens to powerbomb AJ. Cena gets caught in the Accolade and the villains stand tall.

The obvious tag match is set.

Jinder Mahal vs. Tye Dillinger

Non-title. Tye starts fast and sends Mahal into the corner, setting up a springboard high crossbody, only to get caught with a clothesline. Jinder hammers him down and chokes on the ropes a bit as we take an early break. Back with Tye shoving him away and firing off his left hands in the corner, only to eat a running knee to the face. The Khallas gives Mahal the pin at 6:40.

Rating: D. And so much for Dillinger. You had a nice moment with the debut and the TEN chants but now you're getting squashed by the guy who was the squashee until a few months back. There really didn't need to be a break in the middle of this as it merely showed how lame most of Mahal's offense is. As usual, that's the big problem with Mahal: he's nothing beyond average and there's not much away around it.

Mahal talks about bringing diversity and having 1.3 billion people behind him. He'll take care of Orton next week when he brings the Punjabi Prison.

Jey Uso vs. Xavier Woods

Woods hits a few forearms to the back but gets sent into the corner early on. New Day protests and it's a triple ejection with Kofi, Big E. and Jimmy being tossed. A quick superkick gets two on Woods but the Superfly Splash hits knees. Woods comes right back with the really long top rope elbow for the pin at 2:18.

The women's division is in the locker room trying to find out who is getting the next title shot. Charlotte threatens a ruckus if it's Lana so Shane McMahon makes a five way elimination match for Battleground. Hostilities seem imminent so he makes Charlotte/Becky Lynch vs. Tamina/Natalya. The rest of the women leave so Carmella comes in and demands that James Ellsworth be reinstated as per orders from her attorney. Shane rips up her request.

Baron Corbin isn't worried about Shinsuke Nakamura and says it's going to be sayonara tonight.

Baron Corbin vs. Shinsuke Nakamura

Nakamura jumps him in the aisle and since this is an angle, referees break it up instead of letting the match happen. Odds are we'll see this at Battleground.

Cena comes up to Styles in the back to talk about the US Open Challenge. Styles wants some payback from the Royal Rumble but they'll have each others back tonight.

Cedric Alexander tells us to watch his I Quit match against Noam Dar on 205 Live.

Becky Lynch/Charlotte vs. Tamina/Natalya

Becky trips Tamina up and drops a spinning leg before handing it off to Charlotte. That doesn't go as well as Charlotte gets taken into the corner for a stomping, only to nip up and chop away. The Bexploder sends Natalya to the floor but she sends Becky into the steps as we take a break.

Back with Becky fighting out of a chinlock but not being able to get over to Charlotte. Becky kicks away from the Sharpshooter and now it's off to Charlotte for the chops. House is quickly cleaned but Lana pops up onto the apron for a distraction. Natalya uses the distraction to make a blind tag, allowing Tamina to get in the superkick for the pin on Charlotte at 8:40.

Rating: D+. Just a standard tag match here as Lana and Tamina get some momentum. The Smackdown women's division is suddenly feeling rather inferior to the Raw counterpart as they seem to be trying to make new stars instead of running with what they have. It doesn't help that two of the heels, Natalya and Tamina in this case, are black holes of charisma.

Maria Kanellis looks for Sami Zayn for the sake of an apology but no one has seen him.

Post break Sami interrupts Mike and Maria and says he won't be apologizing. He's been busy trying to have wrestling matches but keeps having to skirt around the two of them. Sami asks which one of them is

the fighter so Maria slaps him in the face. Mike busts a vase over Sami's head.

It's time for Runway Walker: Texas Rangers, meaning a new version of the Fashion Files, complete with Chuck Norris clips from Survivor Series 1994. They're in cowboy gear this year with Tyler wanting to lasso someone so they have to tell the truth like Wonder Woman. Fandango distracts Zack Ryder but Breeze lassos himself by mistake.

This makes him tell the truth, including that he wears a bra while going undercover because he's no hippie. Mojo Rawley comes up and asks what he just stumbled into. Fandango suggests that the Hype Bros jumped them but Mojo says they wouldn't do something shady like that.

Ryder calls Mojo eliminating him last week shady but Mojo says it was a battle royal. Ryder thinks it's time to get back to reality and seems to suggest that Breezango does the same. In the melee, someone has stolen Fandango's (stick) horse but they can't decide if it was ghosts or aliens. Together: "GHOST ALIENS!" Next week: The Fashion X Files. Seriously.

Rusev/Kevin Owens vs. John Cena/AJ Styles

Rusev headlocks Cena to start and drops him without much effort, meaning it's time to wave the Bulgarian flag. It's off to Owens for some choking before Rusev punches Cena in the face. Back with Rusev spinwheel kicking Cena down but missing the middle rope headbutt. The hot tag brings in Styles for a quick Calf Crusher, only to have Rusev take him down again.

Owens comes in to stomp away and we hit the chinlock. The limping Rusev comes back in with the bearhug, which JBL says won Bruno Sammartino the World Title in 35 seconds in 1963 (it was a backbreaker in 48 seconds but the year is right). Styles escapes and comes in with the usual, including the Shuffle to Owens. Rusev eats the Phenomenal Forearm and it's the AA to pin Owens at 13:09.

Rating: C. Just a main event tag here but good enough while it lasted. For the sake of the ending here, I'm glad Owens lost the title so having him take the fall isn't the worst thing in the world. The match was

perfectly fine and a good way to have two feuds together in one, though I'm only somewhat interested in Cena vs. Rusev at the pay per view.

Cena and Styles celebrate but have a staredown with Cena looking at the US Title. Cena holds up AJ's hand to end the show.

Overall Rating: C-. Pretty much a skippable show here as there were a few things added to the pay per view card but it doesn't feel like much of an event. Then again, given some of the stuff we might be seeing at Summerslam, I could easily live with watching a lackluster show like Battleground to get there. Nothing special this week, but there are far worse ways to spend two hours.

Results

Jinder Mahal b. Tye Dillinger – Khallas

Xavier Woods b. Jey Uso – Top rope elbow

Tamina/Natalya b. Becky Lynch/Charlotte – Superkick to Charlotte

John Cena/AJ Styles b. Rusev/Kevin Owens – AA to Owens

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