

Smackdown – October 31, 2017: Rusev Day is Strangerer Than Halloween

Smackdown

Date: October 31, 2017

Location: Norfolk Scope, Norfolk, Virginia

Commentators: Tom Phillips, Corey Graves, Byron Saxton

This almost has to be better. After last night's rather lackluster Raw, we're continuing the build towards Survivor Series. This week we have a pair of Survivor Series qualifying matches as Shinsuke Nakamura faces Kevin Owens and Bobby Roode meets Dolph Ziggler in a 2/3 falls match. Let's get to it.

Opening sequence.

Here's Shane McMahon to open things up. He talks about how Smackdown has always been seen as the secondary show and the little brother to Raw. Then they went live and made the best of it with Daniel Bryan as General Manager, but they knew they had to do something to shake things up. That's what caused them to invade Raw, because Smackdown has heart.

Shane talks about how Smackdown had to work harder than anyone else and thanks the roster and fans for everything they do. That brings Shane to last night when Daniel Bryan was attacked by Kane. It was a setup and Shane blames Stephanie McMahon and Kurt Angle. Survivor Series is coming and Shane is going to be the Smackdown team captain. Let's get to some action though.

Survivor Series Qualifying Match: Bobby Roode vs. Dolph Ziggler

2/3 falls. Ziggler wastes no time in trying some rollups for two, only to have Roode take him down with a clothesline out of the corner. The Blockbuster gets two more and Roode scores with a knee to the ribs. Ziggler hits a quick superkick though and gets the first fall at 3:44.

Back from a break with the score being tied up as Roode sunset flipped him for a pin during the break at approximately 7:05.

They slug it out until Roode scores with a spinebuster for two more. The running DDT (without much contact) gives Zigler another near fall and both guys are down again. Dolph reverses the Glorious DDT into the Zig Zag for two and they hit the rollups with handfuls of tights. Roode finally reverses into the Glorious DDT for the final pin at 11:29.

Rating: C-. Ho, and may I add hum. This was every bit as uninteresting of a match as these two have had yet and that's a really bad sign. Their feud isn't interesting and the matches aren't anything special but for some reason we needed to see them fight this many times. Not terrible here, but I'm very glad Roode is moving on to anything else.

Post match Roode says he's ready to fight and the next two teammates need to have the same level of passion and competitiveness that the three of them already have.

New Day is in the back, dressed as Jimmy Hart (Woods), Akeem (Big E.) and Brother Love (Kofi) when Rusev and Aiden English come in. Woods speaks in the high pitched voice and Kofi talks about how much he LOVES candy. Rusev takes their candy bucket away and thinks the people giving them candy could be spies from Raw. Halloween is for dumb children and the only holiday that matters is Rusev Day. Rusev CRUSHES the candy and Big E. challenges him to a match later.

Becky Lynch gives Team Smackdown a pep talk and Ellsworth, still on a leash, barks like a dog. Lynch sprays him with water until Natalya comes in to say she should be the captain. They're all the weak links on the team, though Charlotte seems to be the one that worries Natalya most.

Baron Corbin vs. Sin Cara

Non-title. Corbin goes for the mask to start and throws Cara outside. Cara saves his mask again and slides back inside to kick Corbin in the face. One heck of a forearm cuts off the comeback (Is it early enough for a comeback?) though and Corbin goes for the mask a third time. Cara gets all ticked off and sends Corbin outside for a beating. A spear to the

back and more right hands to the head set up another spear over the announcers' table. The referee throws it out at 2:59.

Cara throws a chair at Corbin, who bails into the crowd.

The Usos are ready to take care of Seth Rollins/Dean Ambrose to show that they're the A team of this B show. My goodness can we please stop with the brands suddenly hating each other stuff? Chad Gable and Shelton Benjamin come in and say they get their title shot next week. Gable raps (work with me here) a bit about how they're going to win the titles.

Here are the Singh Brothers to imitate Paul Heyman and introduce Jinder Mahal. Jinder comes out and says he'll win at Survivor Series so that people will call him the Beastmaster.

AJ Styles vs. Samir Singh

Singh gets in a slap, only to be taken down and pummeled. The Styles Clash wraps it up at 36 seconds.

Post match Mahal beats AJ down by bending his back around the post, followed by some Khallases.

Kevin Owens and Sami Zayn are AGHAST at the idea of Shane McMahon being the captain. Oh and what kind of man like Randy Orton would use a low blow to win a match? Owens promises to win tonight and lead Smackdown to victory.

The Bludgeon Brothers are coming.

Here are Aiden English and Rusev with the former singing about how much he hates Halloween because IT'S RUSEV DAY!

Rusev vs. Big E.

Big E. is still dressed as Akeem and grabs an early abdominal stretch to have Rusev in trouble. Some stomping sets up the dancing but Rusev pulls E. arm first over the ropes. The same arm goes into the post (Graves: "HAPPY RUSEV DAY!") and we take a break with Graves being rather pleased.

Back with Rusev working on the arm (at least Rusev Day sees you still

being logical) until Big E. comes back with the belly to belly suplexes. The Rock Bottom out of the corner plants Rusev but English starts singing. Woods drowns him out with the trombone so Kofi chases him into the ring for a Big Ending. The distraction lets Rusev kick Big E. in the back of the head for the pin at 7:37.

Rating: D+. Just a match here though I'm glad they went with Rusev getting the win instead of going with the fun option. Throw in the fact that Big E. wrestled dressed like Akeem and things were even better. Of course ignore the fact that on HALLOWEEN, this is the only thing we're doing, despite last night seeing a Halloween street fight. You know, on the night before Halloween.

Cara says he worked hard to get his mask and he's not giving it up.

English and Rusev come into Shane's office to get Rusev a spot on Team Smackdown. Shane is willing to give him a qualifying match against AJ Styles next week. Shane sings good luck.

It's Fashion Files time and this week it's Stranger Things (I don't watch Stranger Things so I'm going to miss most of the jokes/references here). This is subtitled Chapter Twenty: The Right Side Up. The bulletin board has a variety of tag teams posted and Fandango, who is dressed as a sheriff, feeds Eggos to someone in a tent. Tyler Breeze, in a pink dress and wig, comes in with a box of Uggs, making Fandango wonder who was in the tent. Viktor comes in to say it wasn't him and the tent starts to shake. It's Tye Dillinger, also in a dress, who says he's not another eleven but rather a ten.

Konnor comes in dressed as some kind of a creature but says it's just a costume. The lights go out and some Christmas lights appear around the picture of the Bludgeon Brothers. The lights flicker back on and the briefcase from a few weeks ago is back. This time though there's a Saw like puppet, saying let the game begin.

Survivor Series Qualifying Match: Kevin Owens vs. Shinsuke Nakamura

Nakamura wastes no time in hammering away, knocking Owens to the floor with a hard shot. A whip sends Owens into the barricade and we take a

break. Back with Owens pounding him down and grabbing a chinlock. A DDT gives Owens two and we hit the chinlock sequel. This version lasts a bit longer until Nakamura fires off kicks, including a big one to the head to really stagger Owens.

The knees in the corner have Owens in trouble but here's Zayn for a distraction. It's enough for Owens to reverse a superplex into the swinging fisherman's superplex to put both guys down. The frog splash gives Owens two but here's Randy Orton (with more hair than I've seen him have in years) to drop Sami onto the announcers' table. The distraction lets Nakamura score with Kinshasa for the pin at 12:25.

Rating: C+. Like so many Nakamura matches, this was just him going through the motions and being someone who happens to be wrestling. There's no fire to him and while this is a big win for his main roster career, it's not exactly thrilling stuff. Then again, with a commercial in the middle and two people interfering, how good could it be?

Overall Rating: C. It's kind of amazing how much easier it is to sit through this show than Raw. This felt like a show where they were getting ready for a big pay per view while Raw felt like some big calamity with a bunch of stories and styles put together. It's not a great show or anything but it had a goal and moved towards it, making this FAR easier to sit through than the red counterpart.

Results

Bobby Roode b. Dolph Ziggler – Glorious DDT

Baron Corbin vs. Sin Cara went to a no contest when they both brawled on the floor

AJ Styles b. Samir Singh – Styles Clash

Rusev b. Big E. – Kick to the back of the head

Shinsuke Nakamura b. Kevin Owens – Kinshasa

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