

Smackdown – February 27, 2018: It Should Be Called Speed Bump



IMG Credit: WWE

Smackdown

Date: February 27, 2018

Location: Staples Center, Los Angeles, California

Commentators: Tom Phillips, Corey Graves, Byron Saxton

It's time for some crossover appeal as John Cena is making his return to the show in an attempt to find a way to get to Wrestlemania. You know, because that's just so hard otherwise. Other than that we have to get ready for Fastlane because it's cool to have a pay per view four weeks before Wrestlemania. Let's get to it.

[Here's last week's show.](#)

[And here's how Cena got here tonight.](#)

Here's John Cena to open things up. He makes no bones about it: he wants in on the Fatal Five Way for the #1 contendership at Fastlane so let's find out what he has to do to get there. Fans: "NO! NO! NO!" Cue Commissioner Shane McMahon to summarize everything, only to be cut off by a LET'S GO CENA/CENA SUCKS chant.

Cena says half the people want him in the match so he should go in. The

fans switch to RUSEV DAY and it seems that Cena will be having a shot. This brings out Daniel Bryan, to say he agrees with Shane. They're willing to put Cena in the main event and if he wins, he's in the Fastlane title match. His opponent tonight: AJ Styles. The DQ finish seems obvious and that would make the most sense at this point.

Baron Corbin vs. Sami Zayn

Kevin Owens is on commentary. Byron: "Well let me ask you this Kevin." Kevin: "No." Corbin sends Sami outside to start as Owens makes bald jokes. Sami gets in a shot on the announcers' table and a backdrop sends Corbin over the barricade. We cut to the back where Shane and Daniel are arguing over Owens being allowed to do commentary as Shane thinks he'll interfere. Bryan thinks he's entertaining and we take a break.

Back with another RUSEV DAY chant and let's cut to Shane eating popcorn while Bryan continues to defend Owens being on commentary. Sami dives into a chokebreaker and Corbin's slide under the ropes into the clothesline gets two. They head outside with Sami getting dropped but Corbin stops to yell at Owens. The distraction lets Sami hit a DDT back inside as Dolph Ziggler comes in through the crowd for a superkick to Owens. Sami glares at Ziggler and walks into the End of Days for the pin at 9:41.

Rating: C+. The fact that they're now having these battling bosses arguing over actual matches is not a good sign, nor is it a sign that these things are ending anytime soon. I have a feeling we'll be seeing a lot of that in the coming weeks, plus at least another week of random singles matches to set up the five way, because that's all WWE knows how to do for something like this.

Ziggler gives Corbin the Zig Zag.

Bryan says that was fun and takes off for the night with Shane's blessing.

Post break Sami and Kevin are furious and don't get any better when Shane (and his box of popcorn) doesn't seem to think much of their complaint. Geez END THIS STORY ALREADY!

Naomi vs. Ruby Riott

Of course the other four are at ringside because having this be a singles match might involve developing more than one person and that's too much to ask from the precious writers. They go to the floor for the big staredown to start and it's an early break. Back with Riott holding a seated full nelson as we cut to Carmella answering fan questions in the back. Naomi fights up and it's a double kick to the head for a knockdown. A shot off the top misses so Naomi goes with a scorpion kick instead. Ruby sends her into the corner though and the Riott Kick is good for the pin at 6:50.

Rating: D+. Not enough time to mean much but Riott winning to further her chance against Charlotte makes sense. Riott isn't going to win the title but it's a good idea to push someone before we get to Wrestlemania and what is likely Asuka vs. Charlotte. I mean, we of course can't announce anything like that yet because the world needs Fastlane but I'm sure four weeks for Wrestlemania is fine.

Charlotte and Becky run the Squad off.

We go to the Fashion Police's office where Breezango runs into the star of the new USA series Unsolved. The series is about the unsolved murders of Biggie Smalls and Tupac so we get a Biggie/Big E. joke/cameo. The actor says he's just an actor and not a real detective, making Fandango sad. This was a rather unfunny cross promotional ad.

Here's New Day (with the words on the screen because NEW DAY'S entrance isn't easy to remember) for a chat about renewing their rivalry with the Usos. Big E. says it's as hot as his inner thighs in the summer. Or winter. Or anytime. He has Kofi spritz his thighs with a bit of water so Woods can talk about how they're ready to go to New Orleans and party on Bourbon Street as the new champions.

Cue the Usos to say they used to be the New Day with the bright colors looking like a box of Skittles. That didn't get them to the top because they ground their way up. They've been here nine years and have been left on the sideline of EVERY Wrestlemania (so Kickoff Show matches don't count).

Big E. gets right back in their faces and says they've taken the ball and rushed the field. They hosted Wrestlemania while the Usos were sitting in the back eating catering. New Day didn't get here because of their daddies and they'll take the titles for the fifth time. This brings out the Bludgeon Brothers, who bring the hammers into the ring. That's enough for the Usos and the New Day, who bail in short order. Very strong segment here with Big E. showing some great fire before the big title match.

Earlier today, Rusev Day came in to see Shane and get a match tonight. Shane, in song, made Aiden English vs. Shinsuke Nakamura.

Ziggler says he's not back to get lost in the shuffle and deserves to main event Wrestlemania.

Bobby Roode is glad to be fighting Randy Orton because the US Title means a lot. Maybe Orton is just jealous over the top ten list. Orton comes in to say it's because the US Title is the only title he's never won, which is as good of a motivation as any.

Aiden English comes to the ring for his song but the fans cut him off with the Rusev Day chants. Eventually he sings Shinsuke is an artist but not the real artiste.

Shinsuke Nakamura vs. Aiden English

Nakamura wastes no time in firing off the kicks, followed by COME ON. More kicks have English in trouble and we take a break. Back with English getting knocked off the corner but a Rusev distraction lets English hit a reverse fireman's carry slam for two. The running knees in the corner miss but Aiden's high crossbody just seems to fire Nakamura up. Good Vibrations into the running knee has English in trouble and the Kinshasa is good for the pin at 6:22.

Rating: C-. This was just a step above a squash with Nakamura never feeling like he was in any real danger. Nakamura needs some bigger wins than this though as just fighting various low level people (and by various I mean this one as he hasn't had a match in nearly a month) like English isn't the best way to set up Wrestlemania.

Cena comes out for a quick staredown before his match.

AJ Styles vs. John Cena

Non-title. Feeling out process to start with Cena hitting an early shoulder block for two. A chickening/half nelson has AJ in trouble but he fights out with some chops for a breather. The tornado DDT out of the corner lands awkwardly and gives Cena two as we take a break. Back with Cena hitting the ProtoBomb and Five Knuckle Shuffle but AJ comes back with the fireman's carry neckbreaker for a near fall of his own.

A TKO of all things gives Cena the same and Baron Corbin is watching in the back. AJ's torture rack neckbreaker and Cena's hard running clothesline get two each but Cena charges into an enziguri as we take another break. Back again with AJ getting two off a clothesline of his own but a Lionsault misses. Cena grabs a Code Red for two more and floats over from the near fall into the STF.

That's reversed as well and the Phenomenal Forearm gets two. The springboard 450 hits knees though and the AA connects. Cena tries another though and winds up on the floor where a missed charge sends him into the steps. AJ won't take the countout though and gets AA'd through the announcers' table for a knockout. Cena rolls back in as the referee checks on AJ, meaning Styles can dive back in to beat the ten count. There's the Calf Crusher but Cena powers to his feet for another AA and the pin at 22:00.

Rating: B+. These two could have a good match in their sleep so this is no surprise. It's also not a surprise that Cena is going to the pay per view where he can have another shot at Wrestlemania, which means he's likely losing at Fastlane so we can set up Cena vs. Undertaker in less than a month. Still though, as good as you would have expected here.

Post match Corbin, Owens and Zayn come down to beat on Cena and Styles. Zigler runs in for the save but decks AJ. That earns him an AA to end the show.

Overall Rating: C+. You know, last week I said maybe we could add the rest of the roster to the Fastlane match to save some time. At the time,

I wasn't serious but now, we're a step closer to that actually happening. Assuming this is just a big way to set up Cena vs. Undertaker, we're looking at less than four weeks to build it up, because of Fastlane (and Nikki Bella last year).

I'm starting to think Fastlane should just be called Speed Bump. It slows you down on the way to where you want to go, can cause damage to what's working just fine, and it's better if you just can just pull to the side and avoid it altogether. The show won't be bad, but they REALLY shouldn't be building to another pay per view when Wrestlemania is in forty days. Good show this week, but it's building to the wrong pay per view.

Results

Baron Corbin b. Sami Zayn – End of Days

Ruby Riott b. Naomi – Riott Kick

Shinsuke Nakamura b. Aiden English – Kinshasa

John Cena b. AJ Styles – Attitude Adjustment

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