

Fastlane 2018 Preview



IMG Credit: WWE

It's almost the middle of March and for some reason we're talking about a pay per view that isn't Wrestlemania. Due to the calendar going the way it's set up, we have a "Smackdown Live" pay per view to get through, leaving us four weeks to get ready for "Wrestlemania XXXIV". WWE hasn't exactly done much to make this show look good, but of course we have to deal with it as well. Therefore, "Fastlane 2018" comes off more as something that we have to do rather than something I'm likely to enjoy. Let's get to it.

[Here's last week's Smackdown if you need a recap.](#)

Tag Team Titles: Usos(c) vs. New Day

I know this seems like little more than a way to fill in time before the Bludgeon Brothers take the titles but at least we should be having a great match on the way in. These teams have some of the best chemistry in WWE today and their previous matches have been nothing short of outstanding. I could go for watching these teams for days and thankfully they've taken some time off so the feud doesn't get stale.

I'm going to take the Usos to win here, as the New Day just doesn't need to win the titles. Above all else though, they're

better opponents for the Bludgeon Brothers down the line. They're tailor made to get in the Brothers' faces and then get beaten later on. New Day would make the team too much of a joke and that's not the way you want to go with a team like the Bludgeon Brothers. Either way, great match, which is exactly why you put these four together.

Becky Lynch/Naomi vs. Carmella/Natalya

This is a match that was tacked on to the card earlier this week and I'm really not sure what the purpose is, aside from reminding us that Carmella and her Money in the Bank briefcase exist. Carmella hasn't been much of a factor in recent weeks and this match doesn't feel like the biggest deal in the world. At least it's going to fill in some time though and we're at a point where you can trust these four to give you ten minutes of good to quite good action.

I'll take Lynch and Naomi for the win here as there's not much of a point to the match. Odds are this goes on after Usos vs. New Day for the sake of letting the fans cool down a bit before the main event. Natalya is going to be fine for a spot here and Lynch/Naomi are both great at firing up the crowd. Carmella is a good character and passable in the ring so the match should be fine, albeit nothing worth remembering.

Shinsuke Nakamura vs. Rusev

Here's the second match that was added to the pay per view on this week's "Smackdown Live" and that's not the best thing in the world. Nakamura is coming up on a Smackdown World Title match at "Wrestlemania XXXIV" and for some reason this is his highest profile match since winning the Royal Rumble over a month ago. It's like they've forgotten about him for some reason. Speaking of forgotten about, I won't even bother getting into the rant about how Rusev has been treated like an afterthought since striking gold with Rusev Day.

Of course Nakamura wins here and there's not much of a doubt

about that whatsoever. Nakamura is just a bigger deal and Rusev is glorified cannon fodder for him at the moment. Let Nakamura get a big win (well, biggish) under his belt before he goes after AJ Styles and the title. He should be against a bigger name but take what he can get here, which is a sad thing to say about the #1 contender.

US Title: Bobby Roode(c) vs. Randy Orton

Now this one I'm not sure about. In theory this is designed to set up another match down the line with Jinder Mahal added to the mix (save us now) but at the moment, it's just a solo effort. Roode is starting to find his groove as the champion but at the end of the day, Orton is Orton. They're playing up the idea that Orton has never won the title, though the question is whether that's enough to change things here.

I'm thinking no, as I'm expecting Mahal to interfere and cost Orton the match. Orton complains and a triple threat rematch is made for "Wrestlemania". This isn't exactly thrilling stuff as there's little reason for Roode to want to face Orton, though at least Orton has a reason to go after the title. This could be a pleasant surprise, but it completely depends on which Orton shows up.

Women's Title: Charlotte(c) vs. Ruby Riott

While I don't see the ending as being in doubt, this one intrigues me quite a bit. This match is going to be a way to test Riott's abilities in a big match and that could open some doors for her in the future. Charlotte is capable of having some of the best matches with anyone and it would be nice to see what she can get out of Riott.

Of course I'm going with Charlotte to retain here as most signs seem to point towards her defending against Asuka at "Wrestlemania". This can be a nice tuneup for the champ before she heads to New Orleans, but again I'm more interested in Riott here. She's done well on the mic and her matches have

been better, so it should be interesting to give her a shot on a much bigger stage against a better opponent. Maybe she can make something of it and if that's the case, well done.

Smackdown World Title: AJ Styles(c) vs. Sami Zayn vs. Kevin Owens vs. Baron Corbin vs. Dolph Ziggler vs. John Cena

If one match sums up every problem that I have with WWE's booking in one long list of names, this is it. Instead of writing up a more interesting story or having two of these people in a singles match with a feud of their own or even having one of them face Nakamura, everyone is thrown into one mess of a match. Why have creative be creative when you can have them be, well, not creative?

Styles retains here, but the more interesting question is what happens to everyone else. You can almost guarantee Owens and Zayn having issues that are going to lead to something between the two of them, but the others are all just kind of there. Cena won't be going to "Wrestlemania" because this is his LAST option (until a gong sounds of course) and that really leaves Styles as the best option (Ziggler and Corbin winning is laughable). This is all about Styles winning and a lack of effort otherwise, but that's a rant for another time.

Overall Thoughts

I think I've made my take on this show pretty clear already. A week or so ago I dubbed this show Speed Bump because it's slowing things down instead of moving us forward to something actually worthwhile. There's some stuff on this show that interests me but at the same time, the show feels like something we're getting through rather than something worth watching. I just want to get it done and move on to something actually worthwhile, like Wrestlemania for example.

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