

Live Thoughts From Smackdown

And that takes care of that. Tonight was my last night in New Orleans and that means Smackdown is all that's left. This is the other version of the post Wrestlemania show and that means a lot could be happening in a very short amount of time. I had a few ideas of what to expect and for the most part, absolutely none of them wound up happening. Let's get to it.

The dark match saw Becky Lynch beat Ruby Riott in a pretty nice match in about six minutes. The Riott Squad interfered and got sent into each other, setting up the Disarm-Her for the tap. Snappy little match here.

The opening with Shane introducing Paige was nice...if you ignore the fact that SHANE DOESN'T HAVE POWER RIGHT NOW. Unless this was addressed on commentary, Shane has no business accepting Daniel Bryan's resignation or naming Paige as the new General Manager. Now that being said, Paige was a genuine shock and I think I like the idea. It's cool to have a woman in the job and, in theory at least, as the ONLY authority figure on the show. She got a great reaction and really, that's all you can ask for in something like this. Oh and she gave us AJ vs. Bryan, because that's what a good boss does.

The Usos beat the New Day in a very good match with both teams working well together. They've always had chemistry so this wasn't exactly a shock. The win gives the Usos a title shot, presumably at the Greatest Royal Rumble. Smackdown is going to need some fresh teams in the Shakeup though as these two have fought way too often lately. Still though, very good match.

Naomi beat Natalya after getting into a stupid argument with her. There's not much else to say on this one, as is the case with most Natalya matches.

Shinsuke Nakamura was asked why he attacked AJ Styles. Nakamura blamed it on being overly emotional and then suddenly

couldn't speak English when he was pressed on the answer. This was hilarious and some of the best talking Nakamura has done since coming to WWE.

Then we had the big segment of the night with Charlotte coming out to praise Asuka for a great match and wondering who she would make magic with next. This brought out the Iconics (formerly the Iconic Duo) of Peyton Royce and Billie Kay to a very strong reaction. They made fun of Charlotte's speech with Royce getting in some hilarious jokes about Charlotte thanking everyone and then the beatdown was on. Charlotte was thrown over the announcers' table both ways and powerbombed on the floor...so Carmella FINALLY cashed in the Money in the Bank briefcase to win the Women's Title.

This took the better part of forever to get to and I'm just glad the stupid thing is finally gone. I get sick of having it hanging over everything and wasting time, especially when it's almost deflating having Carmella get it after the big match with Asuka. At least it's gone now though and that means some peace of mind for a few months.

The main event was really all you could expect it to be. They were starting to cook and Nakamura interfered for the DQ. I don't think anyone was really expecting AJ Styles vs. Daniel Bryan to go to an important conclusion on a Smackdown in Bryan's first singles match so what we got was more than good enough for the time being. Nakamura kneed Bryan in the head and abused Styles' testicles after the match. Of note, during a commercial, Bryan missed a Swan Dive. I'm rather stunned that he's allowed to even think about that move anymore.

And again, so much for Rusev. It's just not happening and that's very clear at this point. There aren't many more over on the roster than he is right now and that means we get Randy Orton vs. Jinder Mahal in ANOTHER match (because the previous ones have worked oh so well) for the US Title. I don't know what WWE is thinking with this stuff but my goodness it's

annoying to sit through, especially when Rusev has gotten himself over like this.

The post show dark match saw Shinsuke Nakamura defeat Dolph Ziggler. This is the fourth time I've seen those two in a post Smackdown dark match, including last year's post Wrestlemania Smackdown. Nakamura won in about seven minutes with Kinshasa. If he was supposed to wrestle differently after his heel turn, he didn't show it here.

Overall, it was a good night and felt like the opposite of last night's Raw. While Monday was seeing a return every ten minutes, this had the Iconics debuting and Paige being announced as the new GM. That was it for the fresh names appearing and I think I'm ok with that. While Zelina Vega/Andrade Cien Almas and Sanity would have been nice, I can both understand and wait for what might happen in the Superstar Shakeup (though I could also see none of them coming up). All in all, a strong wrestling show and fairly in line with what this Smackdown does every year.

Remember to follow me on Twitter @kbreviews and pick up the paperback edition of the WWE Grab Bag (also available as an e-book) from Amazon. Check out the information here:

<http://kbwrestlingreviews.com/2018/03/23/new-paperback-kbs-grab-bag/>

And check out my Amazon author page with cheap wrestling books at:

<http://www.amazon.com/Thomas-Hall/e/B00E6282W6>