

Stomping Grounds 2019 Preview



IMG Credit: WWE

I know I say this a lot, but who in the world is actually looking forward to this show? It's little more than a mixture of Super ShowDown and Money in the Bank rematches and that's not exactly the kind of show I'm interested in seeing. Throw in what is likely to be a bunch more rematches next month at Extreme Rules and we could be in for a bad one. Let's get to it.

Cruiserweight Title: Tony Nese(c) vs. Akira Tozawa vs. Drew Gulak

I know it's not on the Kickoff Show yet but are you really expecting anything else? 205 Live has turned from an afterthought/joke into one of the most entertaining hours of TV you get from WWE every week. Nese hasn't been the best champion, but it's clear that he's trying and is caught in a bad situation with all of the promotions to the main roster (all of which were COMPLETELY necessary).

I think they'll go with Nese retaining here as it seems that they're interested in making him feel like a big time champion. Winning against the odds is a great way to go about doing that and he could pin Tozawa without hurting the new version of Gulak. I'm not sure who takes the title off of Nese, but he's completely outperformed my expectations for his

reign so far. Nese wins in a pretty good match.

SmackDown Women's Title: Bayley(c) vs. Alexa Bliss

This one scares me for multiple reasons. I like Bliss more than most but I feel so sorry for Bayley. They've made her more serious this time around and while it's rehabbing her image, you can feel WWE's itch to knock her down again because there's nothing they love more than sabotaging their own work. You know, like a few weeks ago when they had Bayley get pinned in her hometown because that needed to happen.

I'm going with the hope spot here and say that Bayley retains, finally exorcising the demons of that kendo stick match from a few years ago. Bliss has been something close to Bayley's Kryptonite so a win here would mean a lot more for her. That and with Bliss' history of concussions, do you really want to see her have to get in the ring that often? Bayley should win here, and for once she actually might.

SmackDown Tag Team Titles: Daniel Bryan/Rowan(c) vs. Heavy Machinery

These titles are the latest victims of the lack of time on the main shows as Bryan and Rowan not only barely have anyone to face but they're almost never on television in the first place. Heavy Machinery has at least won a few squash matches to help get them here, but that doesn't make this an interesting match. I'm sure it will be fine based on who is in there, though that's about the extent of the positives here.

I'll go with the champions retaining and then going into a deep freeze for at least another month before we get to some more challengers. The tag division on SmackDown could be fine but instead we get this one off (likely) match because the titles just aren't important enough to put on the show for more than a few minutes a week. It's still better than the Intercontinental Title though, which might as well not exist these days.

United States Title: Samoa Joe(c) vs. Ricochet

I don't think it's any secret that things have not been going well for WWE as of late from a creative standpoint. The fans haven't been interested in the stories and everything seems like it's a mess. Then you get something like this though and it shows that WWE knows what they're doing. Ricochet won a series of matches and then won a #1 contenders match to set up a match that sounds rather good, at least on paper.

I'll take Samoa Joe to retain here, but in what is probably the most interesting match of the night. There's something about this match that sounds good, though I'm worried about WWE not giving it the time that it needs for a good performance. Ricochet fighting from underneath and eventually getting caught in the Koquina Clutch can make for a great underdog story, which is where Ricochet excels. Please don't screw this up as it's about all we have.

Roman Reigns vs. Drew McIntyre

And now we get to the point where Extreme Rules messes with things. This is going to be more about Shane McMahon, because that's what the promotion is focused on at the moment. Reigns doesn't really have any need to fight McIntyre again after beating him at WrestleMania, but at least McIntyre hasn't been shunted down the card since the initial loss.

That's why I'm thinking McIntyre goes over here, albeit with help from McMahon. That allows Reigns to say he wants to get his hands on McMahon, who can then make it a handicap match next month at Extreme Rules. Yeah are you really expecting anything else? Then McMahon can pin Reigns (again) and probably set himself up as #1 contender for Summerslam, because that's the world we might live in later this year. At least this should be hard hitting and physical, but McMahon is going to wind up with the focus.

SmackDown World Title: Kofi Kingston(c) vs. Dolph Ziggler

Ok let's get through this before Ziggler makes me fall asleep again. I have no idea why we're seeing this instead of something fresh/interesting like Shinsuke Nakamura or Rusev (yes I know he asked for time off) but hey, take whatever bad you can get I guess. I keep forgetting that this is inside a cage, at least partially because we had a cage match at Money in the Bank and that's quite the turnaround for the same gimmick.

Kingston retains here, likely to set up ANOTHER match between these two, though possibly with Kevin Owens/Sami Zayn involved at Extreme Rules. This feud has had a lot to do with Kingston not being so well received as champion and a lot of that is due to how lame of a challenger Ziggler is. Just saying IT SHOULD HAVE BEEN ME over and over doesn't make him interesting and it's not going to get him over his eternal plateau in main event matches here either. Kingston wins and I continue to wish for Ziggler to get lost on an endless quest for salsa from the local PDQ.

Raw Women's Title: Becky Lynch(c) vs. Lacey Evans

Hey another rematch. The more I see of Evans, the more fascinated I am by her. It's not so much that she's some kind of incredible performer, but you don't get actual gimmicks very often these days and it's rather refreshing to see one. Evans plays it well and her matches have been fine, but there's not much you can do when you're going up against Lynch these days without being named Charlotte.

Lynch retains here as they continue to set up something for her to do at one of the bigger shows (hint: expect it to be Charlotte at Summerslam). We're experiencing the downside to Lynch main eventing WrestleMania at the moment as there is no one in her league and that's very clear. Unfortunately that means a lot of waiting around for her to get a new arch nemesis and Evans isn't going to fill that role. Lynch wins here and does so without breaking much of a sweat.

New Day vs. Sami Zayn/Kevin Owens

I like Owens and Zayn quite a bit, but why in the world do they suddenly have to be together on EVERY show? Zayn's critiques of the audience were one of the best things about WWE and now they're barely ever mentioned for the sake of Owens and Zayn teaming together again. It would be nice to see them apart for longer than a month but that's how WWE sees them. It's certainly still effective, but I could go for trying something else.

Give me Owens and Zayn here, as they have to win something at some point. I'm still holding out hope for New Day turning on Kingston to end his reign as the moment itself could be one of the most epic things WWE has done in a long time. The frustration needs to set in here though and Owens and Zayn beating them would go a long way towards that. Or New Day can win again as WWE wonders why their villains are seen as weak.

Raw World Title: Seth Rollins(c) vs. Baron Corbin

Oh I don't care. I'm not even going to bother trying with this one because there is no reason to care. We're likely getting a third match between these two next month and the apathy will be even higher. These two don't have chemistry together and it doesn't feel like an important feud because the winner gets to look over his shoulder for Brock Lesnar for the next nine months.

Rollins retains as the guest referee, likely Lesnar himself, is unveiled at the end of the match. Shenanigans allow Rollins to escape and he used the chair again to survive a cash-in attempt, assuming Lesnar doesn't change his mind again. Either way, Corbin doesn't win the title (yet) and the fans get to groan again when he weasels his way into a third title match in a row next week on Monday Night Raw.

Overall Thoughts

The interesting thing here is that the undercard actually isn't that bad. The problem is the complete apathy towards the main events, which feel as tacked on and uninteresting as you can get. Neither match feels important and the mystery of the guest referee isn't enough to make me care about seeing Corbin vs. Rollins. Next month likely being even more between these four isn't making things any better either. Overall Stomping Grounds is a show coming in colder than ice cold and while some of the stuff could be good, it's a show that was put on for the sake of having a pay per view in June and that's almost never a good idea.

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