

Elimination Chamber 2020: They Can Only Go So Far



IMG Credit: WWE

Elimination Chamber 2020

Date: March 8, 2020

Location: Wells Fargo Center, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Commentators: Michael Cole, Corey Graves, Jerry Lawler, Byron Saxton, Tom Phillips

It's time for the show the company mostly forgot until the last second. Thanks to being sandwiched between Super ShowDown and Wrestlemania, this is a show that has received very little attention and the build has suffered as a result. Neither World Champion is involved here and the likely main event is a #1 contenders match to the Raw Women's Title. Let's get to it.

Kickoff Show: Viking Raiders vs. Zack Ryder/Curt Hawkins

It's like a rejected Main Event match. Ryder and Ivar start things off and it's an early power display from Ivar, who throws Ryder all over the place. Hawkins comes in and gets the same treatment but a cheap shot from the apron lets Hawkins grab a suplex for two. Hawkins' neckbreaker gets the same and we hit the chinlock.

That doesn't last long so Erik gets sent outside for a clothesline from the apron and we take a break. Back with Erik fighting out of a chinlock

and hitting Hawkins in the face, allowing the hot tag to Ivar. Everything breaks down and the Rough Ryder hits Hawkins by mistake, setting up the Viking Experience to finish Ryder at 4:49.

Rating: D+. So they're turning Hawkins and Ryder heel and then have them get beaten by the Raiders in a short match? Good, as that's exactly how it should have gone, heel turn or no heel turn. You can't have a team like Ryder and Hawkins beating the Raiders no matter what they do because it would be beyond reasonable, as Hawkins and Ryder have been nothing for so long. I could go for the two of them as heels, but at least let them do something else before getting this high.

The opening video talks about the Road to Wrestlemania but to get there, you have to go through the Chamber. Shayna Baszler promises to have some horrible things planned.

Daniel Bryan vs. Drew Gulak

Gulak is the hometown boy. Feeling out process to start and a shoulder puts Bryan down in the corner, leaving him a bit surprised. Gulak goes with a headscissors on the mat so Bryan headstands his way out and they tie their legs together. An exchange of kicks on the mat puts them both in the ropes and Bryan needs another breather on the floor. Back in and Bryan ties Gulak's legs up and pulls on his face but Gulak slips out of the surfboard attempt.

Gulak reverses into one of his own as he continues to know a counter for everything Bryan throws at him. Bryan slips out and hits him in the face so they go into the corner for the chop off. Gulak gets in a dragon screw legwhip (remember that he told Heath Slater to work the knee a few weeks ago) and it's back to the headscissors on the mat again. This time Bryan tries to spin out but gets dropped on his head (from about four inches) to put him down again.

Gulak grabs him by the neck and puts Bryan over his back for a spinning neckbreaker and another near fall. Back up and they suplex each other over the top for the big crash to the floor, leaving Bryan with his back banged up. They head back inside for a Saito suplex to drop Bryan, leaving him favoring his arm, possibly due to the neck. A seated full

nelson stays on the neck until Bryan fights up for two off a dragon suplex.

Gulak suplexes him again for another two (with Bryan landing HARD on the back of his head) to send Bryan outside. He has to dive back in to beat the count and the running clothesline takes Gulak down. What looked to be a belly to back superplex is broken up so Gulak hits a reverse superplex into the Gulock. Bryan flips out though and pulls Gulak into the YES Lock for the knockout win at 14:19.

Rating: B+. I dug the heck out of this as it was a rather well done story, even tying into the stuff that Gulak had been saying for weeks. It was giving me a Bret Hart vs. 1-2-3 Kid vibe from about 25 years ago with Bryan not taking his opponent all that seriously at first before realizing he was in a real fight. The neck stuff made sense and it was as solid of a put together match with no stakes that I've seen in a very long time. Good stuff with the psychology and storytelling both shining brightly.

Dolph Ziggler and Robert Roode don't need luck to win the Tag Team Titles tonight, with Ziggler dedicating the win to Mandy Rose. The ring of lights popped up on the screen behind them, with no one noticing it again.

US Title: Andrade vs. Humberto Carrillo

Andrade is defending and has Zelina Vega with him. A spinning back elbow to the face gets an early two on Carrillo but he's back up with a dropkick. Carrillo clotheslines him to the floor and scores with a very high angle spinning crossbody for two back inside. Andrade gets in a shot to the face for a breather though and it's time to start in on the arm. The armbar goes on as Cole lists off some great United States Champions. Lawler: "You want to list Humberto Carrero with those stars?"

They head outside with Carrillo being sent into the barricade, giving Lawler a chance to praise countout victories. Carrillo dives back in to beat the count at nine (twice in two matches) and the armbar goes on again. That's broken up and Andrade is kicked outside for a breather, followed by a tilt-a-whirl backbreaker back inside. They go to the top

where Carrillo can't hit a superplex, but he can hit a super hurricanrana for the delayed two.

Andrade is right back with the running knees in the corner for two so Zelina pulls back the ring mats. The hammerlock DDT is countered with a backdrop and Carrillo flip dives over the referee to take Andrade down. Back in and Andrade rolls through a high crossbody for two and it's off to a pinfall reversal sequence. Carrillo grabs a victory roll but Andrade reverses into a rollup with tights to retain at 12:30.

Rating: C+. The spots are good and the action was there but the lack of caring about Carrillo could not be any more clear. The fans just are not interested in him and while they may react to his spots, they don't seem to care about him in the slightest. I don't see that changing, and the fact that he lost again here should seal his fate for the future. It won't because of the cheating, but it should.

AJ Styles doesn't think much of Aleister Black's music and tattoos but it doesn't matter because Black isn't a challenge. The Good Brothers are going to be in his corner and no it's not going to be a fair match. How could it be a fair match when Black is facing AJ Styles?

The Chamber is lowered.

Smackdown Tag Team Titles: Usos vs. New Day vs. Lucha House Party vs. Robert Roode/Dolph Ziggler vs. Heavy Machinery vs. John Morrison/The Miz

Miz and Morrison are defending and it's Gran Metalik/Lince Dorado for the House Party. New Day (with white paint by numbers gear) is in at #1 and the Usos are in at #2. Some quick trash talk sets up the fight with Kofi dropkicking Jimmy, only to get punched down by Jey. Kofi slips off a springboard and falls onto Jey for two but goes up again anyway. This time Big E. has to break up a double superplex and it's a standoff until Lucha House Party in at #3 (after about three and a half minutes instead of the announced five).

The Luchas pick up the pace, including the Golden Rewind and the missile dropkick into three straight moonsaults for two on Jimmy. Big E. throws Dorado and Metalik over the top for back to back crashes, followed by

launching Kofi onto both of them. Back in and Kofi jumps over Big E. but misses a double elbow, leaving Big E. to go outside. Dorado tries a springboard onto the Chamber wall but slips, with his foot going through the chain.

Thankfully he doesn't break his leg and is fine enough to climb on top of a pod. Kofi follows him for the slugout with Metalik joining him to knock Kofi down. The Luchas hit big flip dives and Miz and Morrison are in at #4 (as the time continues to be WAY off). Dorado gets double spinebusted down and Morrison's standing shooting star press gets two, with Metalik making the save. Miz and Morrison tie Metalik in the Tree of Woe and kick away, followed by a double DDT for two on Jimmy.

Jey gets caught in a neckbreaker/springboard double stomp combination for two more, followed by a spinning Razor's Edge slam for the same on Dorado. Metalik goes on top of a pod and snaps off a great looking hurricanrana to Morrison for another near fall. Kofi is back in with the Boom Drop to Miz but Trouble in Paradise misses. That means the spinebuster/Flying Chuck combination for two more but Big E. is back up for a powerbomb/top rope knee to the chest combination for two on Miz.

Heavy Machinery is in at #5 and starts wrecking things before stopping cold in a weird moment (someone might have missed a cue). Big E. gets crushed by Tucker and Otis and the Caterpillar gets two...as Dorado is hanging from the top of the Chamber. He pulls himself up for a shooting star onto everyone but Heavy Machinery for the spot of the night. The Compactor finishes Metalik at 17:14 and it's Zigler and Roode in at #6 to complete the field.

Miz and Morrison help them beat down Heavy Machinery and the fans start cheering for Otis again. Tucker fights back so Otis goes after Dolph, sending him up to the top of a pod. That means Tucker follows him up and throws him onto Otis, who drops him throat first onto the top rope. Tucker flip dives onto New Day and the Usos, leaving Roode and Zigler to jump Otis.

The Glorious DDT on the outside is broken up but Otis misses a charge into the pod...and crashes all the way out to the floor. The arena goes

QUIET as Tucker checks on Otis before turning back to Roode and Ziggler. That just earns him a superkick into the Glorious DDT to get rid of Heavy Machinery at 23:43. Roode and Ziggler mock Otis as he is carried out but it's Trouble in Paradise and the Big Ending to set up Superfly Splashes off the pods to get rid of Roode and Ziggler at 25:12.

The fans are glad to see them leave and it's down to New Day, the Usos and Miz/Morrison. The champs get stared down by all four of them and the beatdown is on in a hurry. Miz and Morrison are sent over the top and it's a superkick to Big E., followed by a pop up Samoan drop for two on Kofi. Big E. comes back to clean house so Kofi can go on top of the pod, only to miss a high crossbody. Miz and Morrison come back in to steal the pin at 29:04, leaving us with the Usos vs. the champs. Double superkicks give the Usos two but only one Superfly Splash connects, with the other hitting knees.

That means a double near fall as they thankfully didn't manage to screw up the Elimination Chamber as well. Miz sends the Usos into each other and hits the Skull Crushing Finale for two on Jimmy. The Figure Four goes on and Morrison takes care of Jey, setting up Starship Pain at the same time. Jey breaks up the cover with a rollup for his own two but it's a Miz rolling Jey up with feet on the ropes and Morrison grabbing the legs (totally legal) to retain at 32:53.

Rating: B. This was a weird match as the fans were into the big spots (which were awesome) and they REALLY cared about Otis vs. Dolph but the crowd just gave up after that part of the match was over. It's a strange situation to have the titles mean almost nothing by comparison to the story but I get why they booked it the way they do. Now they have two stories in this division, though the fans don't care whatsoever about one of them. It was a good match, but the build was so lame that it isn't likely to leave much of an impact. Heavy Machinery vs. Roode/Ziggler at Wrestlemania should be awesome though, if it's done right.

Natalya is disgusted by Randy Orton and promises that Beth Phoenix will survive this so she can see Edge destroy Orton. Oh and she'll win the Chamber match tonight.

Aleister Black vs. AJ Styles

No DQ and the Good Brothers are at ringside. Feeling out process to start with AJ bailing to the ropes early on before striking away to slow Black down a bit. Black kicks him in the chest as the UNDERTAKER chant starts up. A Gallows distraction lets AJ get in a dragon screw legwhip though and he crushes it in the corner to make things even worse. It's kendo stick time with a few shots keeping Black in trouble until he gets in a shot to the face for a breather.

A dropkick puts Black on the floor though as the fans want tables. AJ dives into a knee and Black makes the fans happy with a table. That takes too long though as AJ is back with some chair shots. The chair is wedged in the corner and the fans want Undertaker again. A kick to the head drops Black again and we hit the leglock. That's broken up as well so Black can start striking away, only to get pulled into the Calf Crusher.

Since the ropes aren't an option, Black crawls over to the stick and crushes it against AJ's face for the break. The stick shots have AJ in trouble so he Peles his way out, leaving them both down. AJ gets in the Phenomenal Forearm to a kneeling Black and a brainbuster gets two more. Black starts striking away again and the middle rope moonsault connects for another near fall.

The bridging German suplex gets the same but AJ is back with a fireman's carry backbreaker. Another moonsault from Black is countered into an attempted Tombstone but Black rolls through into a rollup for two. Black kicks him into the chair in the corner and it's time to go outside again. This time AJ sends him over the announcers' table but Black kicks him onto the table. The Meteora drives AJ through the table and they're both down again, with Black holding his leg.

Black Mass is loaded up inside but Black has to kick the Good Brothers down. All three jump him though and there's the Magic Killer to drop Black. The Phenomenal Forearm is loaded up...and there's the gong so the fans can explode like they've been wanting to all match. AJ gets chokeslammed and the lights go out again so Undertaker can disappear. And Black Mass gives Black the pin at 23:14.

Rating: B-. I know I'm going to get some glares for liking this show so much but it's another good match in a string of them tonight. Black gets his big win that he's been needing and it's another completely legal win. It was an even match and he almost had it won until the Good Brothers got involved so there isn't even an asterisk on the thing. A handicap match (or a tag match if Kane is there too) could be a better way to go at Wrestlemania but what matters here is Black getting a big boost. Good match too, though it took its time to get going.

We look at the Street Profits winning the Tag Team Titles on Raw.

The Street Profits want the smoke.

Raw Tag Team Titles: Street Profits vs. Seth Rollins/Murphy

The Profits are defending and the AOP are in the challengers' corner. Dawkins works on Murphy's arm to start and it's Ford coming in to do more of the same. The fans want the smoke but have to settle for more of the Profits working on the arm. Rollins comes in and gets in a shot to the face before handing it back to Murphy in a hurry. Dawkins comes back in with a dropkick and back to back double Japanese armdrags put the challengers on the floor.

Back in and Rollins takes over on Dawkins' leg but Murphy gets kicked over the top. The hot (Already?) tag brings Ford back in for the house cleaning, even though he slips when trying to stick the landing on a backdrop. The big flip dive hits Murphy but the AOP grabs Ford. Cue the Viking Raiders to fight them to the back and we settle down to Murphy chinlocking Ford to take over. Another Meteora gets another two but Ford is back up and tags Dawkins in.

That means dropkicks a go-go as everything breaks down, including Ford splashing Rollins for two. Rollins Sling Blades Dawkins and a double superkick gets two. Murphy tries a Pedigree but gets catapulted into the corner, setting up a right hand to Rollins. Ford's frog splash hits knees so Rollins can get two and it's the buckle bomb/enziguri combination to drop Ford again. Dawkins makes the save and suplexes Rollins on the floor, leaving Murphy to get loaded up in a double superplex.

Rollins is back in though and turns it into a Tower of Doom to put everyone down. Cue Kevin Owens through the crowd with a bucket of popcorn but instead of having a ticket, he hops over the barricade and sits on the announcers' table. That distracts Rollins but Owens points at Dawkins, who drives Rollins into the barricade. A double powerbomb puts Murphy against the barricade as well, setting up the Cash Out to finish Rollins and retain at 18:14.

Rating: C+. The match was ok but there was too much going on and it got a bit too messy. What matters is the Profits retaining though and the match with Owens seems all but a lock for Wrestlemania in one form or another. It's the big feud on Raw outside of the World Title scene and the match makes sense, though I'm curious if they'll do anything other than just a straight singles match.

Post match it's a Stunner for Rollins, plus a popcorn shower.

We recap the Kickoff Show match.

We recap Braun Strowman vs. Sami Zayn/Cesaro/Shinsuke Nakamura. Strowman beat Nakamura to win the Intercontinental Title and is fighting all three of them to up the ante a bit.

Sami knows that the fans want to see Strowman wreck people but in all the months they have been dealing with Strowman, Sami has avoided him every time. Tonight, Sami is going to face him one on one and he wants Cesaro and Nakamura to stay on the apron because he needs to do this.

Intercontinental Title: Sami Zayn/Cesaro/Shinsuke Nakamura vs. Braun Strowman

Strowman is defending and Sami starts for the team but tags Nakamura in after about ten seconds of staring. Nakamura's headlock is shoved away and his running clothesline has even less effect. A running splash in the corner crushes Nakamura but Sami distracts Strowman, allowing Nakamura to kick the knee out. The trio starts taking over on Strowman with Sami being willing to stay in and jab away at a downed champ.

Nakamura grabs a sleeper but Strowman fights up and tosses Cesaro from

corner to corner. Sami runs away from Strowman, who runs over Cesaro and Nakamura as Sami hides underneath the ring. The other two catch Strowman and a missed charge sends him shoulder first into the post. Kinshasa into the post knocks Strowman cold and Sami adds the Helluva Kick for the pin and the title at 8:24.

Rating: D+. The big idea here is that Strowman can't get his hands on Sami, which works fine when you're a manager but not so much when it's a former NXT Champion who has beaten big names. Odds are this sets up a squash to give Strowman the title back at Wrestlemania, which makes you wonder why they needed to give Strowman the title in the first place. Anyway, it could lead to a nice payoff and that's what matters at the end.

We run down the Wrestlemania card.

We recap the women's Elimination Chamber, which is not a total lock for Shayna Baszler. Nope not at all.

Shayna Baszler vs. Asuka vs. Liv Morgan vs. Ruby Riott vs. Sarah Logan vs. Natalya

The winner faces Becky Lynch at Wrestlemania and it's Riott at #1 and Natalya in at #2. Ruby goes straight at her to start but gets taken outside for some kicks from the chatty Natalya. The Sharpshooter goes on outside with Natalya shouting TAP until it's broken up. Some shots to the ribs put Natalya in trouble and she gets bounced off the cage to make it worse. More cage shots keep Natalya down and it's Sarah Logan in at #3 as Natalya is double kneed into a pod.

Logan climbs onto a pod as Natalya manages to powerbomb Riott off the Chamber. That means a big dive off the pod, with Logan seeming to kick Natalya in the face on the way down. Back in and it's a Tower of Doom to put everyone down until Shayna Baszler in at #4. A faceplant sets up the Kirifuda Clutch to eliminate Logan at 7:45. Baszler knees Riott in the face and Clutches her out at 8:13, leaving her alone with Natalya. That means several rams against the pod and the Clutch makes Natalya tap at 9:24, leaving Baszler alone for a bit.

Baszler poses a lot as Liv shouts that she's going to Wrestlemania. It's Morgan in at #5 and she manages a kick to the face, only to get swung into the Chamber wall. Another swing sends her into the pod and Baszler chokes her in front of Asuka, as the crowd (and commentary) goes silent for a bit. Another Clutch knocks Morgan out at 13:58, leaving Baszler to wait on Asuka. The pod finally opens and Asuka hits the hip attack, only to have Shayna kick and knee her down.

A quick Asuka Lock attempt is countered but so is the Kirifuda Clutch, with Asuka getting the Lock on the second try. They roll outside to break it up and Asuka gets rammed hard into the wall. Back in and the Clutch has Asuka in trouble but she rolls into a cover to force the break. Another spinning faceplant sets up another knee to the face and Asuka is in trouble. The Clutch sends Baszler to Wrestlemania at 21:00.

Rating: D+. So you know how WWE made it clear that Shayna was going to face Becky at Wrestlemania? Well we just saw Shayna run through four jobbers and Asuka to guarantee the match. It couldn't have been booked much better, but it also couldn't have been much less interesting. Baszler looked like a monster, but how impressive is it to have her squash Liv Morgan and Sarah Logan? It was logical and told the right story, but that doesn't mean it was fun to watch for the most part.

Overall Rating: C+. It was better than it had any right to be but man alive did this show die near the end. There comes a point where hard work isn't going to be enough to overcome such a weak card and that point came right at the end of Black vs. Styles. The first four matches are all quite good, but everything after that is ok at best. This wasn't a good looking show coming in and some people managed to overcome it, but there was too much weak/predictable booking weighing it down.

Results

Daniel Bryan b. Drew Gulak – YES Lock

Andrade b. Humberto Carrillo – Rollup with a handful of tights

Miz/John Morrison won an Elimination Chamber match last eliminating the Usos

Aleister Black b. AJ Styles – Black Mass

Street Profits b. Seth Rollins/Murphy – Cash Out to Rollins

Sami Zayn/Cesaro/Shinsuke Nakamura b. Braun Strowman – Helluva Kick

Shayna Baszler won an Elimination Chamber match last eliminating Asuka

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