

Wrestlemania XXXVII Night One: Home Again

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Date: April 10, 2021

Location: Raymond James Stadium, Tampa, Florida

Commentators: Michael Cole, Corey Graves, Tom Phillips, Samoa Joe, Byron Saxton

America the Beautiful: Bebe Rexha

We're finally back with fans for the first time in over a year. That's hard to fathom but for the first time in forever it feels like a WWE show. The card is stacked, but really what matters most is being back to normal, because it has taken a long time to get here. I know it is just for the weekend, but after such a long wait, I'll take whatever I can get. Let's get to it.

Vince McMahon welcomes us to the show and, with the roster behind him, thanks the fans for sticking with them throughout the pandemic. For tonight though, WELCOME TO WRESTLEMANIA!

The set is awesome, with the pirate ship decorated in WWE flags and sails. I'm a big pirate fan so that's very cool to see.

Bebe Rexha, with a woman playing guitar, sings America the Beautiful.

The opening video is actually a sequel to last year's, as we have the traditional opening statement about it being the start of a great voyage but the Jack Sparrow impersonator takes over to talk about how we need to correct course after last year. He also thanks the fans for coming out and we get a more traditional finish for the big grand finale. The original narrator approves.

We go to the stadium, which looks great...and there is a weather delay due to lightning. The commentary team says it is just going to be a little bit longer and recaps Drew McIntyre vs. Bobby Lashley.

Shane McMahon is ready to finish things with Braun Strowman and is ready to be back in front of fans.

MVP talks about how ready Bobby Lashley is and promises to end Drew McIntyre tonight. Drew McIntyre comes in and tells MVP to do it to his face. McIntyre says Mother Nature can't save him and we'll do it right here if we have to. Agents and referees break it up. MVP and Lashley leave and McIntyre talks about how he can't wait to finally get his hands on Lashley after such a long wait.

The Kickoff Show hosts talk about McIntyre vs. Lashley.

New Day is ready for AJ Styles and Omos and are glad they registered as a new team. Big E. comes in and talks about how blessed we are to see these two do work.

Commentary dubs the show Wrestlerainia.

Braun Strowman says he is going to beat up Shane McMahon for everyone who has ever been called stupid.

The Kickoff Show panel talks about Vince McMahon opening the show.

Kevin Owens talks about meeting Sami Zayn in 2002. They did not know anyone more passionate about wrestling than the two of them and have wrestled each other around the world, from Canada to America to Peru to Germany and everywhere else. Throughout those twenty years, no two people were talked down to like they were. Tomorrow night (we get a weird buzzing sound over the audio here), they are going to get to do this on the biggest stage of them all, but it is not the Sami Zayn Owens has known for years.

Cole and Samoa Joe are in ponchos and say we are five minutes away. Byron Saxton is off to get another microphone after his died.

Bianca Belair is ready and knows that this is the biggest night of her life.

Seth Rollins, who thinks Kevin Patrick is named Mike, is ready for "Zazzaro" and promises the performance of a lifetime when he gets to trounce him once and for all.

Miz and John Morrison are ready for Bad Bunny and Damian Priest because they will never be as wet as Johnny Drip Drip.

Long video on Bobby Lashley vs. Drew McIntyre. Lashley won the WWE Title from the Miz, who cashed in Money in the Bank on McIntyre following a Lashley beatdown at Elimination Chamber. McIntyre is now getting his one on one rematch for the title. Commentary was bleeding over during the video.

Here are Titus O'Neil and Hulk Hogan to welcome us to the show, and to O'Neil's city. They hype up the show, with Hogan talking about how amazing the Hurt Lock and Claymore are. You can see the rain dripping off of Titus as they hit the catchphrases to wrap it up.

WWE Title: Drew McIntyre vs. Bobby Lashley

Lashley is defending and has MVP with him. Cole says to be a legend of Hall of Famer, you have to have held the title. We'll ignore how ridiculous that is as they lock up to no avail. A hard shoulder puts McIntyre down but he's right back up with the belly to belly. Lashley drives him up against the rope but McIntyre clotheslines him to the floor. They fight outside with Lashley sending him into the barricade as you can see all the water on the mats.

Back in and Lashley grabs a swinging neckbreaker for two but the running shoulder only hits post (that is WAY too popular

of a spot these days). A cross armbreaker doesn't work very well for McIntyre but a clothesline and elbow to the face do a bit better. There's another belly to belly and a third sends Lashley flying again. A bridging northern lights suplex gives McIntyre two but Lashley plants him with the big spinebuster for the same.

McIntyre is right back with the reverse Alabama Slam out of the corner and it's time to head up. Lashley crotches his way out of a superplex attempt so McIntyre grabs a quickly broken Kimura. Instead McIntyre does his situp out of the Tree of Woe to send Lashley flying again. Another spinebuster cuts McIntyre off again....and he pops right back up to stun Lashley. McIntyre channels his inner Scott Steiner with another belly to belly, followed by three straight Futureshocks for two.

The Claymore is loaded up but Lashley bails to the floor, only to have McIntyre bust out the big no hands flip dive to take out both Lashley and MVP. Back in and McIntyre misses coming off the top, meaning he gets caught in the Hurt Lock. That's reversed with a ram into the corner and McIntyre grabs a Kimura. That's broken up as well so McIntyre loads up the Claymore but MVP offers a distraction, allowing Lashley to grab the Hurt Lock. McIntyre tries to flip around but can't even get out using the turnbuckle climb and Lashley retains at 18:24.

Rating: B-. This started slowly and then picked up a lot of steam near the end. Lashley retaining is absolutely the right call as there is no need for McIntyre to win the title again after most of a year of holding the thing. It would have been ridiculous to have Lashley lost the title after about five weeks so it was nice to see them do the right thing after a pretty hard hitting fight.

Bayley comes up to Hulk Hogan, Titus O'Neil and the NWO in the back but they aren't interested in her offers of Too Sweet.

Tag Team Turmoil

Five teams and the winners get a Women's Tag Team Title shot on night two. Naomi/Lana are in at #1 and Carmella/Billie Kay are in at #2 with Carmella hammering on Lana to start. Lana avoids a charge and gets over for the quick tag to Naomi to clean house. Everything breaks down and Billie gets a sunset flip on Naomi with an assist from Carmella for the pin.

The Riott Squad is in at #3 and Billie suplexes Morgan into a low superkick from Carmella for two. They try the same assisted sunset flip but this time Carmella gets caught (Carmella: "I DIDN'T DO ANYTHING!!!"). A Codebreaker into a top rope backsplash finishes Kay but Carmella drops Riott after the fall.

Mandy Rose and Dana Brooke are in at #4 with Mandy falling down on the ramp. An early Blockbuster gets two on Riott, who has to fight out of the corner and brings in Morgan. A Codebreaker into the Riott Kick (which seemed to miss) gets two on Mandy with Brooke making the save. It's off to Brooke for a Swanton and a small package but Liv reverses it into one of own for the pin. After the ring announcer says the wrong team name, Natalya and Tamina are in at #5 to complete the field.

The Sharpshooter attempt is countered into a small package to give Liv two so Natalya plants her with a powerbomb. Tamina comes in and gets sent into the corner with Riott sending Morgan into her ribs. Back up and Tamina superkicks the heck out of Morgan and the Hart Attack to Riott set up the Superfly Splash to give Natalya and Tamina the pin at 14:05.

Rating: D. Of course they won. Of course they won. I still have no idea what the heck WWE sees in Natalya and Tamina but I'm sure a goat and a lot of drugs are involved. Now we get to see them again tomorrow for reasons I don't want to understand. The match itself was nothing due to how fast they

had to go and then we have a terrible result. Happy Wrestlemania everyone.

We recap Seth Rollins vs. Cesaro in the form of a political ad against Cesaro, as paid for by Friends of Seth Rollins. Basically Cesaro has never done anything and Rollins is the kind of a leader we need. Also Rollins is mad because Cesaro Swung him 22 times a few months ago.

Seth Rollins vs. Cesaro

Cesaro jumps him fast to start and hammers away. Rollins tries to get up top but is caught with an uppercut but a gutwrench superplex is countered into a buckle bomb for two. Cesaro is sent to the apron so he goes up (while shaking off his right arm) but gets superplexed into a Falcon Arrow for two more. The uppercuts send Rollins into the corner where more uppercutting ensues.

A clothesline turns Rollins inside out for two and the threat of a Swing sends him to the ropes. Rollins is back up with an enziguri but the Stomp is countered into the Swing, with the crowd counting along. Cesaro stops at nine to put on the Sharpshooter but Rollins is right next to the rope. The Sling Blade sets up a spinning frog splash for two and Rollins can't believe the knockout.

Cesaro is back up with the Neutralizer for two but a second is countered into the Pedigree for the same. Rollins hits a running kick to the back of the neck but Cesaro counters the Stomp into an uppercut. The no hands torture rack spin sets up the Swing for twenty three swings (or however these people count). The Neutralizer finishes Rollins at 11:23.

Rating: C+. Good stuff here but above all else, the right result, which you never know about with some of these matches. Rollins absolutely did not need to win here while it is a huge moment for Cesaro. I'm not sure I believe that this is the start of a big push for him, but at least he won here and got

the big moment for a change.

Cesaro is VERY happy with the win.

We recap Smackdown.

Bobby Roode and Robert Roode are very proud with their win on Smackdown.

Raw Tag Team Titles: New Day vs. AJ Styles/Omos

New Day is defending and has Big E. with them, at least for their entrance. Omos is about to start but New Day talks AJ into starting instead. Kofi gets a quick rollup for one and it's time to hit that trombone solo. Woods comes in for a chinlock and explains that AJ is not a tag team wrestler because they are effectively cutting the ring in half. The Unicorn Stampede (not Stomp Cole) has Woods in trouble, followed by a headlock takeover from Woods.

A double bulldog gets two on Styles and Woods sends him outside for a dropkick through the ropes. AJ tries to dive over for the tag but gets planted face first by Kofi for two instead. Woods goes up and AJ uses the delay to get over to Omos for the tag to a heck of a response. Kofi: "YOU GOT THIS WOODS!"

A dropkick has no effect on Omos and a crossbody bounces off of him. Kofi gets caught coming off the top and thrown down as New Day realizes they're in big trouble. Some running elbows in the corner crush New Day and there's a backbreaker to Woods, with Omos bending him over the knee. Kofi gets a backbreaker of his own and AJ hits a Phenomenal Forearm off of Omos' shoulders to drop Woods. A release Sky High and the one foot on the chest finishes Kofi at 9:54.

Rating: C+. Yeah that worked. They didn't try to do anything ridiculous here as Omos did all kinds of basic big man stuff, which mainly involved him standing still or moving minimally.

The size and power are enough to make him look devastating and that's all you need to do. It's a classic formula and I liked it quite a bit. Good stuff here and it couldn't have been put together much better.

We recap Shane McMahon vs. Braun Strowman. Shane has called Strowman stupid time after time so Strowman wants to stand up for everyone who has been bullied over the years. McMahon also allowed Strowman to pick the stipulation for the match, with Strowman making it a cage match.

Jerry Lawler joins commentary.

Braun Strowman vs. Shane McMahon

Inside a cage but here are Elias and Jaxson Ryker to attack Strowman with a chair, including various shots to the leg. Shane gets the chair inside and unloads on Strowman even more but it is way too early to escape. Strowman catches Shane going up so Shane pulls off a piece of sheet metal to hammer him down again. That's good for two so Strowman, with a mouse under his eye, gets up and crushes Shane against the cage.

The big forearm to the chest drops Shane again but the leg gives out on the running powerslam attempt. Shane sends him into the cage a few times and hits the floatover DDT. The Coast To Coast connects for a rather close two so here are Elias and Ryker on the cage. Strowman knocks them both down so he and Shane go up, with Shane finding a tool box to hit him in the head. Shane goes up and over but takes WAY too long, allowing Strowman to grab him.

With nothing else available, Strowman rips the cage wall apart and drags Shane back in (that's a new one). They both wind up on top of the cage and Strowman tosses him back to the mat (Strowman: "WHO'S STUPID NOW???"). That's enough for Strowman to climb down...but he climbs back inside instead and shouts about how this is for everyone who has ever been called stupid. The running powerslam finishes Shane at 11:26.

Rating: D. Well thank goodness the former World Champion and professional strong man beat up a 50+ year old executive who doesn't wrestle more than 3-4 times a year. That's how you step up to someone. This was the story that wasn't going to be good no matter how they presented it because Shane has completely outlived his usefulness, especially in a role like this one. At least they kept it relatively short and Strowman won, so it could have been a lot worse.

Bayley interrupts the announcement of the Hall of Fame video package and throws us to the Hall of Fame video package.

Most of the Hall of Fame class is presented:

Titus O'Neil

JBL

NWO (Hogan/Hall/Nash/Waltman)

Bella Twins

Wrestlemania XXXVIII is in Dallas, with Steve Austin making the announcement.

Booker T. joins commentary.

And now, we have an army of bunnies, one of whom loses an ear. Cue Miz and John Morrison for a "live" performance of Hey Hey Hop Hop, which is an improvement over seeing the bunnies holding their heads on.

We recap Miz/John Morrison vs. Bad Bunny/Damian Priest. Bunny is a huge rap star and a die hard wrestling fan who showed up at the Royal Rumble to perform his song about Booker T. Miz and Morrison didn't like him, so Bunny started hanging out with Priest. They tormented each other for weeks until a match between Bunny and Morrison was set up for Wrestlemania. Miz and Morrison then painted Bunny's multi million dollar car, which drew in Morrison and Priest to make it a tag match.

Miz/John Morrison vs. Damian Priest/Bad Bunny

Bunny gets a huge entrance of his own, coming into the stadium on a semi truck. Miz and Priest start but Miz wants Bunny instead. That's exactly what Miz gets and Bunny looks a bit nervous. Bunny drops him with a right hand so Morrison has to remind Miz that bunnies are lucky. Another right hand sends Miz into the ropes again so he takes Bunny into the corner for a change.

A kick to the ribs puts Bunny down but he's right back with with La Majistral for two. Morrison freaks out, saying Miz needs to start thinking like one of the best of all time. Back up and Bunny slides through Miz's legs and snaps off a fairly long headscissors. There's a headbutt to Morrison but he catches Bunny with an elbow. Miz comes back in with a chinlock but Bunny is back up with more right hands. A sunset flip gets two so Miz kicks him in the face to cut off another comeback.

Miz knocks him into the corner again as the fans try to get behind Bunny again. Bunny manages to get a boot up in the corner though and a tornado DDT plants Miz. The diving tag brings in Priest to clean house in a hurry, including tossing Miz at Morrison. The South of Heaven chokeslam gets two on Miz and Bunny comes back in for stereo Broken Arrows for a double near fall.

Bunny goes up top and hits a big dive to take out Miz/Morrison (Saxton: "I knew bunnies could hop but I didn't know they could fly!"). Miz is right back in for the Skull Crushing Finale for two on Priest with Bunny making the save. Bunny hits a Canadian Destroyer on Morrison on the floor and a high crossbody finishes Miz at 15:01.

Rating: C. Yeah Bunny got in a lot of stuff here, but are you going to tell the biggest star willing to do something with WWE that he can't do something? Bunny probably got in more offense than any other celebrity in recent memory and he

looked fine enough doing it. Miz and Morrison have been treated as clueless putzes for years now so it isn't that much of a stretch to see them lose here. Priest got in some points by association here so this went about as well as it could have, with Bunny being FAR better than I would have bet on.

Here's the Sunday rundown.

We recap Sasha Banks vs. Bianca Belair for the Smackdown Women's Title. Belair won the Royal Rumble and is ready to claim her destiny but Banks doesn't want to give up the spot. Yeah it isn't much of a story but that's what you get when you have two pay per view matches going for the Women's Tag Team Titles.

Smackdown Women's Title: Sasha Banks vs. Bianca Belair

Banks is defending and they both look to be near tears to start. Feeling out process to start with Banks having to slip out of something close to a torture rack but getting caught in a double chickenwing. Banks manages to send her outside but the suicide dive is caught, allowing Belair to gorilla press her and walk up the steps for a toss over the top. Back in and Belair picks her up, does some squats, and slams her but Banks nails a running knee to take over.

The double arm crank goes on but Belair gets up and powers her into the corner. Banks is sent to the floor where she tries to pull Belair's braid. That's fine with Belair, who uses it to pull Banks into the post. Banks misses running double knees into the barricade and the both beat the count. Back in again and Belair muscles her up for a suplex, bounces her off the top, leans Banks forward, and then drops her back for two.

Belair shoulders her down again and then drives in some shoulders in the corner. The 450 hits knees though and Banks tries a hurricanrana, which is countered into back to back powerbombs. Banks sends her into the corner though and it's a kick to Belair's face, setting up a double springboard tornado

DDT for two. With Belair down, Banks goes up and starts with the Meteora but changes into a splash halfway down.

Belair tries to get up so Banks uses the braid to pull her down into the Bank Statement for a rather clever setup. That's broken up with a roll into the ropes so Banks hammers away in said ropes. Banks goes up so Belair tries a running hurricanrana, only to get tied in the Tree of Woe.

The top rope double stomp misses and so do the running knees, which go into the buckle. Now the 450 connects for two and Belair screams a lot on the kickout. The KOD is countered and Banks grabs the braid, which is used for a heck of a whip. Now the KOD can connect for the pin and the title at 17:20. Cole shouts about a kickout before switching to Belair winning.

Rating: B. I saw someone give the perfect description of this as brains vs. brawn, which is exactly what it was. Belair is an athletic freak and someone who can do almost everything you ask of her in the ring while Banks is the seasoned veteran who knows how to take on anyone. Banks couldn't hang with Belair physically so she had to fight smart, but eventually you just can't get around that kind of power and athleticism. Very good match and an awesome story to wrap things up.

There is a HUGE welt on Banks' side from the hair whip. Belair celebrates to end the show.

Overall Rating: B-. All things considered, including the rain, this was a pretty good show with only the cage match being bad. It wasn't a classic, but after being away from everything for a year, I'll certainly take what I can get. Above all else it felt like a Wrestlemania and that is what you need after such a long absence. The action was mostly good and they went with the right choices in the winners, so there wasn't much to complain about here. Good show, and dang is it nice to have Wrestlemania, or at least the fans and the atmosphere, back.

Results

Bobby Lashley b. Drew McIntyre – Hurt Lock

Natalya/Tamina won Tag Team Turmoil last eliminating

Cesaro b. Seth Rollins – Neutralizer

AJ Styles/Omos b. New Day – Release Sky High to Kingston

Braun Strowman b. Shane McMahon – Running powerslam

Damian Priest/Bad Bunny b. Miz/John Morrison – High crossbody to Miz

Bianca Belair b. Sasha Banks – KOD

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