

Smackdown – May 21, 2021: Black In

Smackdown

Date: May 21, 2021

Location: Yuengling Center, Tampa, Florida

Commentators: Michael Cole, Pat McAfee

We're done with Wrestlemania Backlash and it is time to start getting ready for the Cell next month. I'm not sure what is next up for some of the people on this show, but the ending to Backlash would suggest more of Cesaro vs. Seth Rollins. Other than that, we have a four way for the Intercontinental Title this week. Let's get to it.

[Here is Wrestlemania Backlash if you need a recap.](#)

All of the champions, sans Roman Reigns, are on the stage and here is Sonya Deville in the ring. As you might have heard, WWE is going back on the road in front of the fans in July, starting with Smackdown on July 16. Deville introduces all of the champions on stage, with Apollo Crews promising to destroy everyone tonight to retain his title. With that out of the way, Sonya introduces Reigns, to his old music for some reason.

Instead she gets Paul Heyman, who says this isn't a parade of champions, because it's just a parade of title holders. Later tonight, at his leisure, Reigns will be here for the parade of champion, because there is no one on his level. Reigns is the reason that the people are going to buy tickets to those live events because he is the only real champion here.

Sonya tries to wrap it up but here is Bayley to interrupt. She wants to know why she isn't being acknowledged and mentions everyone champion (Bayley: "Apollo and Azeez, what's up?") before getting to Bianca Belair. Bayley insults the hair so

Belair comes down...and gets jumped by Nia Jax and Shayna Baszler. Tamina and Natalya run in and it's six woman tag time.

Tamina/Natalya/Bianca Belair vs. Bayley/Nia Jax/Shayna Baszler

Joined in progress with Shayna knocking Tamina down and choking on the ropes as Cole explains the Brand to Brand Invitational again. Bayley comes in to take Tamina into the corner but gets dropped with a suplex. The tag brings in Natalya to kick away until Bayley takes her down by the hair. Shayna cranks on the arm and Jax comes back in to put on a chinlock.

That's broken up with a jawbreaker though and the hot tag brings in Belair to really clean house. A spinebusters puts Bayley down so Belair can go up. The big dive to the floor takes everyone down (thankfully they were nice enough to stand there forever) but Belair grabs her knee as we take a break.

Back with Bayley working on Belair's knee but missing an elbow drop. A rolling tag brings in Tamina to clean house and it's Natalya coming in to do the same. The discus clothesline misses Bayley though and a blind tag brings Baszler back in. Everything breaks down and Bayley breaks up Belair's handspring moonsault. Baszler grabs the Kirifuda Clutch to make Natalya tap at 10:20.

Rating: C. The action was good here, though it seems we're getting ANOTHER Tamina/Natalya vs. Nia Jax/Shayna Baszler Tag Team Title match. You would think there would be more options than those two, but that's not how this division works. Bayley getting another shot against Belair is a little bit better, though another rematch isn't the most thrilling.

Big E. is ready to face the biggest names around and get back his title. It's time to prove that he is the real Intercontinental Champion.

We get another Aleister Black lesson, as he talks about the Beautiful Plan. This one seems to be about his tattoos, which he uses to hide his deepest and darkest sins. His father always said that there this world is full of cruel thoughts. The people will live proudly in their cesspool of sins because it is all they are. That has become their identity, to become lonesome and blind. They are sick and dying animals and it is time to separate the weak from the strong and cull the herd.

Here is King Corbin for a match, but first we see Shinsuke Nakamura steal his crown last week. Nakamura has been carrying it around with him over the last week, which Corbin says is the most disrespectful thing he has ever seen. Nakamura is no king because a real king drives a Ferrari and has the dogs of war behind him. So now, Nakamura needs to get out here and take his beating from the real King of Smackdown. Instead, here is the debuting Rick Boogs (and yes he spells it) to play the REAL king to the ring. The guitar shredding is on and McAfee jumps out of his chair to jam with him, with Cole looking disturbed.

King Corbin vs. Shinsuke Nakamura

Boogs is at ringside and we're joined in progress with Nakamura kneeling away. A big kick is countered into a powerbomb for two as the frustration is already high. Choking on the ropes ensues as Boogs is trying to lead the cheers on the floor. Nakamura fights out of a chinlock but runs into a hard elbow for one.

The real comeback is on with the run of the strikes and an STO to give Nakamura two. Kinshasa misses though and Corbin hits a heck of a German suplex for two. Nakamura knees his way out of a chokeslam attempt though and Deep Six plants him for two more. Then Boogs starts playing Nakamura's theme on the guitar for a distraction, allowing Nakamura to grab a small package for the pin at 5:18.

Rating: C-. This was pretty much Kofi Kingston vs. Bobby Lashley from Raw, with the power guy dominating until a musical instrument sets up the fluke pin. That being said, I can go for Boogs, as he is a fun guitar guy, as opposed to the rather dull Elias. I'm sure we'll get some blowoff match soon, though at least now Nakamura has beaten Corbin to validate taking the crown.

Jimmy Uso comes in to see Sonya Deville and wants a match with the Street Profits. Deville asks if Jey Uso is on board but Jimmy knows he's good. The match is made for next week.

Kevin Owens talks about being the prizefighter a few years ago and tonight he is winning another prize. He will powerbomb Sami Zayn until he can't remember what conspiracy means, he'll hand Big E. a big L and he'll Stun Apollo Crews as many times as it takes. Either way, he's walking out as Intercontinental Champion.

We see a clip from the Backlash main event, with Roman Reigns beating Cesaro to retain, followed by Seth Rollins attacking Cesaro again.

Here are Roman Reigns, Jey Uso and Paul Heyman for a chat. Reigns considers himself humble and teaches his kids about it every chance he can. Since he is humble though, he needs Paul Heyman to brag about him instead. Heyman goes over Reigns' time as Universal Champion, including sending Daniel Bryan into Bella retirement. He asks if he can do anything for Reigns, who wants his cousin out here. Heyman: "JIMMY USO! JIMMY USO! PLAY JIMMY USO'S MUSIC!"

Instead he gets Cesaro, who talks about the annoying yapping that he has been hearing. Cesaro says he can fight with one arm (because it's just a flesh wound) and wants to fight Reigns at Hell in a Cell. Cue Seth Rollins to jump Cesaro from behind and send the arm into the steps. Rollins is sent to the back but comes back to beat on Cesaro again. Referees get him

away again but this time Rollins jumps over the barricade and hits a Stomp. Cue the stretcher to get Cesaro out of here.

Post break, Rollins jumps Cesaro on the stretch. They're hammering this one home.

We look at the Mysterios winning the Tag Team Titles at Backlash.

Here are the Mysterios but Dolph Ziggler and Robert Roode cut them off in a hurry. Roode says tonight, bring your son to work day is over.

Robert Roode vs. Dominik Mysterio

Roode suplexes him down to start and then takes him down again without much effort. Dominik fights his way out of a superplex attempt and shoves Roode down again, setting up a high crossbody for two. Dominik's sunset flip gets two more and Roode is sent post first into the shoulder (as Cole put it). The frog splash finishes Roode at 2:41.

Jimmy Uso comes up to Jey Uso in the back and is excited about next week's tag match. Jey isn't happy so Jimmy talks about their success without Reigns. That's not enough to convince Jey, who walks off.

Post break, Jey Uso comes in to see Roman Reigns and apologizes for the tag match next week. Reigns tells him to take care of it and gives him a hug.

The Street Profits are ready for next week, because they aren't paranoia. They want the smoke.

Sami Zayn accuses Kayla Braxton of messing with his mind by calling him a former Intercontinental Champion. Zayn isn't having that and promises to show his documentary soon. Tonight though, he's getting the title back.

Intercontinental Title: Sami Zayn vs. Kevin Owens vs. Big E.

vs. Apollo Crews

Crews, with Commander Azeez, is defending and this is one fall to a finish. Owens charges at Sami to start and they fight out to the floor in a hurry. That leaves Crews to punch and forearm Big E. in various places but Big E. gets in his own elbow. Big E. comes back in but gets enziguried, allowing Sami to get back in and stomp on Owens. Sami is sent outside so Big E. can hammer away, setting up the apron splash onto Sami and Crews at the same time.

Owens hits the big flip dive onto Big E. though and we take a break. Back with Crews hitting a big standing dropkick to send Big E. outside. Crews moonsaults off the apron onto Big E. but Sami hits a dive off the barricade. That means some Sami gloating but here is Big E. to drop Owens again. Owens gets two off the Swanton back inside with Big E. having to make a save.

Back in and Big E. hits three German suplexes for two on Big E. Sami's exploder suplex sends Owens into the corner and a Michinoku Driver gets two. Everything breaks down for a series of knockdowns, including Big E. spearing Crews through the ropes to the floor as we take a break.

Back again with Big E. suplexing everyone else until Sami kicks him in the face to break up the Warrior splash. Owens hits his fisherman's brainbuster onto the knee but Crews catches him on top. Big E. suplexes Crews as he suplexes Sami, leaving Owens to hit the frog splash on Big E. for the near falls. Owens starts rolling the Cannonballs but walks into the Blue Thunder Bomb from Sami.

Some superkicks put everyone else down and Owens hits the Pop Up Powerbomb for two on Crews. Owens sends Sami into the timekeeper's area but Sami is right back with a half and half suplex on the floor. Back in and the Big Ending hits Crews but Commander Azeez breaks up the pin. Big E. posts Azeez....and the

lights go very bright. Cue Aleister Black for Black Mass on Big E., giving Crews the pin (seemingly as a side effect rather than Black intentionally helping him) to retain at 21:52.

Rating: B. They went with the all action formula here and that worked out rather well. The match certainly didn't feel like it was nearly twenty two minutes and it was something that kept my attention. Crews retaining works and it also wraps up Big E. vs. Crews as Black can be the new villain. Good main event here, but more importantly it felt big, which is a lot more important.

Overall Rating: C+. The main event carried this show, but the rest of it was mostly positive as well. Above all else, it felt like things happened to move stories forward here, including having some people debut and give us at least one new story. Smackdown knows how to keep you wanting to come back next week, which is a trick Raw really needs to learn. Back on track this week, as last week's mess feels like a small slip.

Results

Nia Jax/Shayna Baszler/Bayley b. Tamina/Natalya/Bianca Belair – Kirifuda Clutch to Natalya

Shinsuke Nakamura b. King Corbin – Small package

Dominik Mysterio b. Robert Roode – Frog splash

Apollo Crews b. Big E., Kevin Owens and Sami Zayn – Black Mass to Big E.

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