

Smackdown – August 20, 2021: The Rehearsal

Smackdown

Date: August 20, 2021

Location: Footprint Center, Phoenix, Arizona

Commentators: Pat McAfee, Michael Cole

It's the go home show for Summerslam and for once, the show is actually tomorrow night. I wouldn't expect much in the way of wrestling tonight, but the talking should be more than enough to make something interesting. John Cena and Roman Reigns are here and that should be about all you need. Let's get to it.

[Here are last week's results if you need a recap.](#)

Here is Edge to get things going. After a video on Edge vs. Seth Rollins, Edge is sitting in a chair to talk about how Rolling teased stomping him back in 2014. Edge knows that the stomp could end his career and his way of life. It's true that Rollins is an all time talent, but Rollins has driven him to a place where his blood runs black. Edge can see clearly on this day, and he knows that he has to break and humble Rollins. At Summerslam, Edge is going to burn him down. This is where Edge shines and I bought what he was saying.

Dominik Mysterio is all fired up but Rey Mysterio wants him to calm down and stay focused. That's cool with Dominik.

Jey Uso vs. Rey Mysterio

Jimmy Uso and Dominik Mysterio are at ringside. Feeling out process to start until Rey gets him into the corner for some right hands to the face. Jey comes back with an uppercut to drop Rey and the chinlock goes on. Rey fights up and hammers away with a long string of right hands to put Jey on the floor. The dive takes both Usos out and we take a break.

Back with Jey hitting a Samoan drop for two as the pace slows down. Rey manages a quick hurricanrana for two and the springboard crossbody connects for the same. Jey drives him hard into the corner though and a pop up neckbreaker gets two more. Back up and Jey tries a powerslam but gets reversed into a tornado DDT. Rey tries a sunset flip but Jey grabs the rope, meaning Dominik tries to cheat like last week. This time he's caught for an ejection so Jey gets in a cheap shot. The Superfly Splash finishes Rey at 11:27.

Rating: C. The "a member of one team fights a member of the other team, swap and repeat next week" is one of my least favorite booking tropes as it has been done to death. The fact that there are no other teams for these four to face to set up Summerslam is rather telling, but it would be nice to have anything else. It was a good enough match, but come up with something fresh.

We look back at Baron Corbin stealing Big E.'s Money in the Bank briefcase last week.

Kevin Owens vs. Baron Corbin

Corbin still has the briefcase. It's a brawl to start with Owens punching him down and hitting the quick backsplash. That's too much being down for Corbin, who pops up with a right hand and the slide under the ropes clothesline. Owens is right back by superkicking him to the floor for the Swanton off the apron but Corbin snaps his throat across the top. The chokeslam and Stunner are both countered and here is Big E. go to after the contract. First he goes after Corbin though and that's a DQ at 4:09.

Rating: C. The Big E. interference makes sense here as it would be the logical thing for him to do. Corbin is still doing everything well and I'm curious to see where he goes from here. Owens is kind of floating around though, which has been the case for him since the feud with Sami Zayn ended.

This was little more than a way to advance Corbin stealing the case though and it worked as such.

Post match, Corbin gets away with the briefcase again.

Bianca Belair looks at a clip of last week's beatdown and is ready to beat up Carmella and Zelina Vega tonight. Sasha Banks is next.

Nox/Shotzi vs. Natalya/Tamina

It's another Champion's Contenders match because beating the champs twice in a row doesn't mean a thing without it being a designated match. Tamina knocks Shotzi into the corner to start and it's off to Natalya to hammer away. A hair takedown into a suplex gives Natalya two and we hit the chinlock. That's broken up and everything breaks down with Nox diving onto Tamina. Natalya tries the Sharpshooter but Shotzi reverses into a small package for the pin at 2:59. To recap: we are probably looking at a fourth match between these teams. How much more proof do you need that this company is creatively bankrupt?

Here is Seth Rollins, in a white suit and tie, to respond to Edge. Rollins mocks what Edge said earlier and wants Edge to listen to him: there is no shame in being a family man and there is no shame in not being able to find the darkness that once guided you. Without that darkness, Edge cannot get on Rollins' level. The lights go out...and the BROOD theme song starts playing (though it never goes beyond the intro and into the good stuff). Edge pops up on screen to say Rollins will never see it coming, followed by black goo falling from the ceiling to cover Rollins' suit. The lack of most of the Brood music holds it back.

Summerslam rundown.

Otis vs. Montez Ford

Remember when we did this two matches again??? Ford is in new gear here and looks more like a boxer. A shot to the face gets on Otis' nerves so he knocks Ford HARD to the floor to take over. Back in and Ford gets in another quick right hand and a high crossbody gets two. Otis blasts him with another clothesline and the Vader Bomb finishes Ford at 2:47.

Apollo Crews/Commander Azeez vs. Rick Boogs/King Nakamura

This is Boogs' in-ring debut. Boogs takes Crews down to start and uses his leg as a guitar. Back up and Boogs gets sent shoulder first into the post to give Crews two. It's off to Azeez (who jumps over the top) and Nakamura, who kicks him in the face. A side slam drops Nakamura though and it's back to Crews. That's a kick to Crews' head and it's Boogs coming back in for pumphandle slam and the pin at 3:42.

Rating: C-. This was certainly a thing that happened and Azeez would make for an interesting first challenger for Nakamura. I'd say it's pretty clear that the Crews deal is done for the moment as he's losing to Nakamura's guitar guy, so at least we're on to something fresh. The monster getting the upper hand is nothing new so let's see what he can do here.

Bianca Belair vs. Zelina Vega

Non-title and Carmella is at ringside. Belair runs through her to start but a quick backslide gives Vega two. You don't do that as Belair muscles her up and then drops her, setting up the KOD for the pin at 1:26.

Post match Carmella superkicks Belair, setting up their scheduled match.

Bianca Belair vs. Carmella

Non-title. Carmella goes after the downed Belair and talks a lot of trash. The abdominal stretch goes on...until Belair powers her way out and muscles her up into the delayed

vertical suplex (geez) for two. The standing moonsault gets two more and it's a spinebuster into the KOD to finish Carmella at 3:55.

Rating: D+. This was Belair being in a bit of trouble, shrugging it off and running through Carmella like she wasn't even there. That's why you have lackeys and the match went fine with both of them offering Belair next to no challenge. I'm not sure where Banks was, but hopefully she is cleared after missing last weekend's shows.

Here are John Cena and Roman Reigns, with Paul Heyman, for the big ending. The place goes coconuts for Cena and Reigns says he knows the fans care. Reigns: "Go ahead, pop." Reigns can't believe that Cena believes he can beat him 1-2-3. Heyman says that no one has ever beaten this version of Reigns and Reigns says Cena isn't doing it either. Cena isn't letting it go this way and grabs the mic, saying that a month ago, everyone said Cena is going to make a movie after Reigns beats him.

The movie is real but Cena losing isn't. It's the Summer of Cena and he is here to demote Reigns. Everyone wants Cena to acknowledge him but it's been the same for twenty years: Never Give Up. All it takes is Reigns to make a mistake and it's 1-2-3. If Reigns isn't perfect it's 1-2-3 and that means #17 for Cena. Tomorrow the impossible becomes possible thanks to Roman Reigns and all it takes is 1-2-3.

Reigns thinks Cena doesn't get it because he should have smartened himself up. When people get in the ring with Reigns, he smashes them so hard that they can't do it again. Reigns can go to Hollywood and do the whole nine out there. It's getting a bit too emotional for Reigns though and says we should raise the stakes: either Reigns leaves the stadium as Universal Champion or he's leaving WWE. The handshake...allows Reigns to lift him up for an AA but Cena reverses into a rollup for the 1-2-3 to end the show.

Overall Rating: C-. This was a letdown, but it was an understandable letdown. You're only going to be able to do so much with the bigger names with 24 hours to go before one of the biggest shows of the year. That left us with a bunch of quick matches to serve as commercials for tomorrow, plus low level tag stuff. Not terrible, but it was a pretty skippable two hours.

Results

Jey Uso b. Rey Mysterio – Superfly Splash

Baron Corbin b. Kevin Owens via DQ when Big E. interfered

Nox/Shotzi b. Natalya/Tamina – Small package to Natalya

Otis b. Montez Ford – Vader Bomb

Rick Boogs/Shinsuke Nakamura b. Apollo Crews/Commander Azeez – Pumphandle slam to Crews

Bianca Belair b. Zelina Vega – KOD

Bianca Belair b. Carmella – KOD

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