

Crown Jewel 2021: Happy And Peppy And Bursting With Good

Crown Jewel 2021

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Location: Mohammed Abdu Arena On The Boulevard, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia

Commentators: Byron Saxton, Corey Graves, Michael Cole

After a year and a half away, WWE is returning to Saudi Arabia and the show is actually looking huge. For the first time in a very long while, we are seeing what looks to be a massive show with a lot going on. The main event is Roman Reigns defending the Universal Title against Brock Lesnar and that should be enough to carry just about anything. Let's get to it.

Kickoff Show: Usos vs. Shelton Benjamin/Cedric Alexander

Non-title and the fans are WAY behind the Usos to start. Jey and Alexander start things off with Jey grabbing a belly to back suplex for two. It's off to Shelton, who powers Jey into the corner and then hands it straight back to Alexander for a knee to the face. The arm work begins, including a shoulder breaker on Jey, setting up an armbar. A superplex sends Jey crashing down for two and it's back to Alexander for a Tequila Sunrise.

With that broken up, the cross armbreaker goes back to the arm but Jey slips out. Jey gets in a shot of his own and gets over to Jimmy for the hot tag to clean house. What looked to be a mistimed Samoan drop gets two on Alexander, who is right back with a neckbreaker for the same. Benjamin is back in with a running knee in the corner as everything breaks down. The Angle Slam gives Benjamin two and Paydirt connects for the same. Jey is back up though and it's a series of superkicks to send Benjamin outside. More superkicks set up the Superfly

Splash to finish Alexander at 10:40.

Rating: C. Totally fine tag match here, which shouldn't be a surprise given who was involved. The Usos are one of the best tag teams the company has ever seen and Benjamin/Alexander work well together. The fans were WAY into the Usos too, making this a nice mixture. Good start to the night here, with the match being exactly what it needed to be.

The opening video talks about how huge this show is and goes into the standard look at the major matches.

There are camels by the stage.

We recap Edge vs. Seth Rollins inside the Cell. Rollins attacked Edge, who referred to Rollins as Edge-Lite. This set up a series of back and forth mental games between the two until Edge beat him at Summerslam. Then Rollins broke into Edge's house (which was unlocked, so it wasn't hard) and beat him in the rematch, attacking Edge's neck in the process. Now it's time for the big finale, inside the Cell, as Edge wants a lot of revenge.

The Cell is lowered.

Edge vs. Seth Rollins

Inside the Cell to start big. Edge slugs away in the corner to start as the fans declare this awesome in a hurry. Rollins gets kicked in the face to send him outside but comes back in with the springboard knee to the face to take over. A suicide dive only hits Cell though and Edge sends him hard into the steps. Edge throws in the steps and hits the Edgecution for two but already seems to be limping a bit. It's already time to go for the chair bar but Rollins is back up with the Sling Blade.

They head outside again with Edge sending him into the Cell to regain control. Edge tries the Crossface but Rollins grabs the

chair bar to hit him in the eye and escape. Rollins knocks the chair into Edge's face and hits a frog splash for two. It's already time for the table at ringside but first Rollins has to plant Edge with the Unprettier (which is suddenly Edge's move) for two more.

Rollins takes his sweet time going up top, allowing Edge to shove him into the Cell and through the table for the big crash to the floor. The steps are thrown in, with Edge busting on the Edge-0-Matic to plant Rollins again. Edge leaves Rollins on the steps and goes up top to drive a chair into him for the big crash and a delayed near fall. Rollins is back up with a superkick into the Pedigree for two of his own and they're both down. The Stomp is loaded up but Edge counters into a Buckle Bomb to set up the spear for the VERY near fall.

With nothing else working, it's time for a ladder, which knocks Rollins right back down. Rollins is able to whip Edge into the ladder in the corner and let's get another table for a bonus. The ladder is set up as well but Edge fights up to meet him on top. That's not the best idea though as Rollins busts out a sunset bomb through the table for another near fall. Some superkicks drop Edge to his knees and a basement superkick puts him down.

Since that isn't enough, Rollins wraps a chain around his boot for another low superkick. The Stomp onto the chair is countered with a crotching using the chair, allowing Edge to kick him down for a change. There's a low superkick to Rollins and Edge grabs a Crossface, complete with a wrench in Rollins' mouth. That's not enough either though as Edge puts Rollins' head onto the chair, setting up the Stomp for the pin at 27:40.

Rating: B. It was a heck of a fight and they beat each other up rather well, but this is what modern Cell matches have become: TLC matches with a big cage on top, which can leave things feeling a little cramped. There's so much stuff around

and inside of the ring that it almost feels messy, which isn't what I would like to see in a Cell match. Going back and forth with the moves and spots that brought them here (including what is apparently now Edge's Unprettier) worked, though it never hit that next level. In other words, most modern Cell matches.

Video on Bianca Belair.

We recap Mustafa Ali vs. Mansoor. Ali mentored Mansoor but then turned on him when the team didn't work. It's time for revenge.

Mansoor vs. Mustafa Ali

Ali is in his hometown and gets a huge reaction. They fight over wrist control to start with Mansoor grabbing a quickly broken armbar. Back up and a dropkick puts Ali on the floor as Cole mocks Ali for setting up a hashtag about himself. Mansoor dropkicks him to the floor but Ali sweeps the leg to drop him back first onto the apron. Back in and Ali grabs a camel clutch, followed by a tornado DDT for two.

Some trash talk lets Mansoor fight back up and an atomic drop has Ali begging off. Ali is sent outside but comes back with a kick to the face. The 450 misses though and Mansoor suplexes him into the corner. A moonsault gives Mansoor a delayed near fall (with the camera on a young girl in the crowd) due to a banged up neck, allowing Ali to grab a Koji Clutch. The rope gets Mansoor out of trouble and he avoids another 450 attempt. Mansoor hits the slingshot neckbreaker for the pin at 10:00.

Rating: C. This was exactly what you would have expected and that means it worked out just fine. They had a simple feud and Mansoor gets his revenge in front of his hometown/country fans. It was a good example of a match where they didn't make things too complicated and it was a success as a result.

Post match Ali jumps Mansoor but here is a man with a his face

and head covered to slowly walk down the ramp. The covering comes off to reveal...a silver medalist in karate from Saudi Arabia ("a karate player" according to Cole, making me want to bust out some Karate Fighters). Ali gets kicked in the head and posing with Mansoor ensues. Nice moment for the live crowd there.

Some women who have beaten breast cancer are given WWE Title belts with Natalya and Titus O'Neil talking about how great they are. Nothing wrong with that.

Raw Tag Team Titles: RKBro vs. AJ Styles/Omos

RKBro is defending, but hang on as Riddle goes backstage during the entrance. As you might have guessed, Riddle comes out on a camel to head to the ring (Orton's stunned look is great). Styles and Riddle start things off and the fans are rather into this. Riddle scores with an early kick to the chest and it's off to Orton, to a heck of an RK0 chant. Orton sends Styles into the corner and it's right back to Riddle for the gutwrench spin into the suplex.

The problem is Riddle suplexes Styles into the corner so Omos can come in. Riddle tags Orton in almost immediately and the beating is on in a hurry, with Omos dragging Orton over to the corner. Styles comes in to stomp away and hit the dropkick, but Styles wants Omos to finish him off. That means a nerve hold (which looks like Omos is just putting his hand on Orton's shoulder) but Orton is up in a hurry, allowing the tag back to Riddle.

Styles scores with the Phenomenal Blitz, only to get caught with a Pele. Orton comes in again and hits a powerslam but Omos' distraction breaks up the hanging DDT. Orton snaps Omos' throat across the top and then counters the Phenomenal Forearm into the RK0. The Floating Bro retains the titles at 8:43.

Rating: C. Total Raw level match here with a cool looking spot with the RK0. I get why the feud continued here but it feels

like they have just run out of things to do in the ring or to build towards a match. RKBro needs some new competition because we have been doing this for several months now and it isn't interesting anymore.

Becky Lynch isn't happy with Kevin Patrick asking her about momentum (Becky: "We go all the way back to the old country!"). She isn't worried about being in a triple threat match, which she explains in a hurry.

Video on Charlotte, who isn't on this show.

Queen's Crown: Doudrop vs. Zelina Vega

Vega gets powered around to start but a neck snap across the top gets her out of trouble. For some reason Vega tries a sunset flip and is quickly pulled up. Doudrop hits some ax handles to the chest and drops an elbow but gets pulled off the ropes. A tornado DDT gives Vega two and she sends Doudrop into the corner for a running shot to the face. Doudrop is back to her feet for a swinging side slam for two, setting up a running backsplash for the same. Back up and Vega avoids a splash, setting up a Code Red to give Vega the crown at 5:50.

Rating: C-. The match was about as good as you were going to get given the size difference and by comparison, this actually got time. The fact that a match which wasn't even six minutes long was nearly double the second longest match in the tournament is not a good sign, but at least they went with someone who could use the push. All in all, the tournament felt thrown together, but I'll take Vega finally winning something.

We recap Bobby Lashley vs. Goldberg. Lashley beat him via referee stoppage at Summerslam but then accidentally (perhaps) beat up Goldberg's son after the match. Goldberg wants revenge and it's falls count anywhere and no holds barred.

Goldberg vs. Bobby Lashley

No holds barred and falls count anywhere. Lashley wraps a chain around his fist and hammers Goldberg down to start before sending him shoulder first into the post. Since Lashley can't find a table, he beats Goldberg up with a chair and sends him into the corner again. Now the table is slid inside and Lashley stomps him down in the corner. The table is set up in the corner and Lashley takes out the leg (which caused the stoppage at Summerslam).

A chair is wrapped around the leg and a bottom rope Pillmanizing has Goldberg...well just kind of laying there. The leg is fine enough for Goldberg to get up and avoid the spear, sending Lashley through the table in the corner. Goldberg hits a spear into the Jackhammer but doesn't cover. Instead, Goldberg takes his gloves off and throws Lashley outside for the spear into the timekeeper's area.

Goldberg loads up the steps and then sends Lashley into various objects at ringside. Lashley is put on the steps but avoids being crushed by the rest of the steps. They go up the ramp and here are Shelton Benjamin and Cedric Alexander, armed with kendo sticks. Goldberg beats the two of them up in a hurry and takes away Lashley's kendo stick. Said stick is broken over Goldberg's knee and a spear off the ramp through some tables finishes Lashley at 11:27.

Rating: C+. That could have been a lot worse. I still have absolutely no interest in seeing Goldberg and I do not care about his bored kid, but that could have been a lot worse. They used all of the smoke and mirrors here and that is the best idea. Goldberg was never exactly versatile to start and now he's twenty years past his prime, so this is about as good as it was going to be.

King of the Ring: Finn Balor vs. Xavier Woods

Of note: there was a Survivor Series ad before the match, hyping it up as the only night of the year where Raw and

Smackdown go head to head. This is the seventh match of the night and the third Raw vs. Smackdown match. They go with the technical stuff to start with Woods rolling his way out of a headlock. An armbars has Balor in some trouble for all of about five seconds before he takes Woods down. The basement dropkick gives Balor two and we're off to the chinlock.

Woods tries to fight up but gets taken down for the double stomp. A Nightmare on Helm Street gives Balor two but he charges into a superkick to give Woods the same. They strike it out for a bit until Woods grabs a small package for two. Balor goes up but gets superplexed back down, allowing Woods to load up the Limit Breaker. That only hits knees though and Balor hits the shotgun dropkick in the corner. The Coup de Grace misses though and Woods la majistrals him for two. Woods hits a gordbuster into double knees to the chest and now the Limit Breaker is enough to give Woods the pin and the crown at 9:37.

Rating: C+. What matters the most here is that it was a nice moment. WWE set up a story here and then paid it off, with Woods talking about always wanting to be king and the fans getting behind him. It's an underdog story and WWE actually went the right way with the whole thing, which is not something you ever see around here. Nice job for once.

We recap Drew McIntyre vs. Big E. for the WWE Title. Big E. cashed in Money in the Bank to win the title last month and that means McIntyre is allowed to challenge for the title again. They don't seem to get along and are both hyped up for this match.

WWE Title: Drew McIntyre vs. Big E.

McIntyre is challenging and is told to hit the ropes to start. Big E. isn't going anywhere off the shoulder but McIntyre jumps over him in the corner and drops Big E. with another shoulder. They head outside with McIntyre hitting the overhead

belly to belly, followed by a Russian legsweep for two back inside. McIntyre hits a spinebuster for two and there's another overhead belly to belly to cut off Big E.'s comeback.

The Futureshock is countered and Big E. runs him over, setting up the Warrior Splash for two. The Michinoku Driver drops Big E. for two more but he's back with the Rock Bottom out of the corner for another near fall of his own. Now McIntyre can hit Futureshock for two more but the Claymore is countered into a powerbomb. That means a Stretch Muffler can work on McIntyre's knee until McIntyre rolls out.

Big E. doesn't seem to mind as he comes back with the Big Ending for a very close two. With that not working, Big E. loads up a super Big Ending but gets reversed into a super bulldog for the next near fall. The Claymore is countered and Big E. loads up the spear through the ropes but McIntyre runs back in for the Claymore and a VERY close two. To mix things up a bit, McIntyre loads up his own Big Ending, which is reversed into the real thing to retain the title at 13:22.

Rating: B. Take two big, heavy hitters and let them beat each other up for a little while. That's all we had here and it was a good one as a result. What matters here is giving Big E. another big win, as he hasn't been champion that long and needs to establish himself as a top guy a little bit more. This worked out rather well and was one of the best things on the card, which shouldn't be a surprise.

There was a Be A Star event earlier today.

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

Lynch is defending. No recap for this, but Lynch returned to beat Belair for the title at Summerslam, where she replaced Banks, who returned and attacked both of them. Belair picks Lynch up for an early suplex before gorilla pressing Banks (with one hand, because of course she can do that). Lynch is

back in to send Belair outside and roll Banks up for two. The Backstabber is blocked so Banks settle for Stratusfaction (while kicking Belair off the apron at the same time).

Belair is right back in to beat on Banks in the corner but Lynch elbows her into the face. Lynch monkey flips Banks at Belair, who gets taken down with a hurricanrana. Belair pulls Banks up into a torture rack but Lynch hits a missile dropkick, sending Belair flying on the impact. With Banks on the floor, Lynch picks Belair's leg and gets two off a bulldog. Banks comes back in so Lynch Bexplodes both of them for a double two.

Lynch goes up top but gets pulled out of the air and double planted down. That leaves Banks and Belair to fight over a backslide until Belair blasts her with a clothesline. Banks is back up with a knockdown of her own and goes up, only to have to bail out of the frog splash. After Belair sends Banks outside, a powerbomb gets two on Lynch. Everyone gets back in, with Belair grabbing a delayed vertical suplex on Lynch. While Lynch is still in the air, Banks tries a sunset flip but Belair kicks her away and THEN suplexes Lynch (that's scary).

Belair misses a moonsault though and it's a Bank Statement/Disarm-Her at the same time. That's let go because Belair should be mostly done so banks puts Lynch in the Bank Statement. Rather than just kicking her for the break, Belair hits a handspring moonsault, which does not exactly seem that wise. Back up and Banks sends Lynch outside, allowing her to grab Belair by the braid. Belair breaks that up and grabs a European Clutch for two, with Lynch breaking it up (sans handspring moonsault).

The Manhandle Slam gets two on Banks with Belair making another save. Belair slips out of another Manhandle Slam but gets sent out to the apron. Banks tries to powerbomb her off the apron but Belair backflips her way to freedom. Lynch is right back up with a double clothesline off the barricade and

it's the Disarm-Her on Belair back inside.

Banks tries to make the save so she Disarm-Hers both of them at the same time. That's broken up with Belair trying a double KOD but Lynch falls off. Belair is knocked down again but Banks reverses the Manhandle Slam. That just leave Belair to come back in with the KOD on Lynch. Banks tries to steal the pin but Lynch rolls her up and grabs the ropes to retain at 19:33.

Rating: B+. This was the action packed match that I was hoping it would be and there were times where I believed all three of them could win. It felt like the big time match that it needed to be and one of the biggest things on the card. I liked this a good bit and while I could go for them figuring out the title situation on each show, this was what the match needed to be. Pretty awesome stuff here and the match of the night.

We recap Edge beating Seth Rollins inside the Cell.

Long recap of Roman Reigns vs. Brock Lesnar for the Universal Title. Reigns has been champion since last August with Paul Heyman at his side. Now Lesnar is back though and suggesting that Heyman is really in his corner. It has become a question of whose side Heyman is on, which has become much bigger than the match itself.

Universal Title: Roman Reigns vs. Brock Lesnar

Reigns, with Paul Heyman, is defending. They go with the grappling to start and no one gets anywhere. Lesnar hammers away in the corner but it's too early for a suplex. Instead Reigns hammers away, only to have to block another German suplex attempt. Lesnar powers him into the corner for the shoulders to the ribs. The German suplex finally connects and it's more shoulders into the ribs in the corner. They head to the floor with Lesnar getting posted.

Reigns gets thrown back in but manages a Superman Punch,

setting up the HUGE dive over the top to take him out (good grief). Back in and the spear gets two, setting up another Superman Punch. Lesnar leapfrogs another spear to send Reigns into the corner (ala Goldberg at Wrestlemania XXXIII) and it's time for Suplex City, complete with Lesnar mocking Reigns' roar. The F5 gets two (on a great near fall) but another one is countered into the guillotine.

Lesnar breaks it up with a spinebuster and hits another F5, which in this case means throwing Reigns at the referee. The referee gets thrown outside and Reigns is back up with a spear for no cover. Heyman is conflicted and throws in the title...right between the two of them. Heyman: "YOU KNOW WHAT TO DO WITH IT!" They fight over the title with Brock pulling it away but the Usos come in for a double superkick. Reigns hits him in the face with the title and another referee comes in to count the pin at 12:22.

Rating: B. Good match here, mainly because it felt like a match. This wasn't about a bunch of finishers spammed together as they actually built something up for a change. That makes the match so much better and a lot more fun to watch, which is more than I would have bet on otherwise. The ending leaves the door open for more later on and doesn't give us a definitive answer to the Heyman deal. It's the best story in wrestling today and it would be a shame if they just cut it of.

The Bloodline celebrates as Lesnar wakes up to end the show.

Overall Rating: B+. This was actually a heck of a show with the big matches delivering and nothing bad throughout. The crowd was way into it as well and that is always going to boost things up. Above all else, there were some nice feel good moments here and the show felt like it was designed to make the fans happy rather than screwing them over time after time. Easily the best Saudi Arabia show to date and one of the best WWE shows of the year.

Results

Edge b. Seth Rollins – Stomp onto a chair

Mansoor b. Mustafa Ali – Slingshot neckbreaker

RKBro b. AJ Styles/Omos – Floating Bro to Styles

Zelina Vega b. Doudrop – Code Red

Goldberg b. Bobby Lashley – Spear off the ramp

Xavier Woods b. Finn Balor – Limit Breaker

Big E. b. Drew McIntyre – Big Ending

Becky Lynch b. Bianca Belair and Sasha Banks – Rollup while grabbing the ropes to Banks

Roman Reigns b. Brock Lesnar – Belt shot

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