

# Smackdown – December 16, 2022: Call It An Early/Late Christmas Present

## Smackdown

Date: December 16, 2022

Location: Allstate Arena, Rosemont, Illinois

Commentators: Wade Barrett, Michael Cole

We are just over a month away from the Royal Rumble and it's time for a pretty big title match on the way there. This week will see Gunther defend the Intercontinental Title against World Cup winner Ricochet, which should make for a solid main event. Other than that, Roman Reigns is here so let's get to it.

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

The Usos and a spiffy looking Sami Zayn arrive.

Opening sequence.

Women's Tag Team Titles: Damage Ctrl vs. Liv Morgan/Tegan Nox

Damage Ctrl, with Bayley, is defending. Nox takes over on Sky to start and hits a gordbuster, setting up a double suplex for a near fall. Morgan comes in and knocks Sky to the floor, where she gives chase with the kendo stick. Both champs are sent outside for the big dive from Nox and we take a break.

Back with Nox having to fight out of trouble and handing it off to Morgan to pick up the pace. Morgan nips up out of the corner but gets caught in a double powerbomb for two, with Nox making the save. Back to back Codebreakers rock Sky and the Shiniest Wizard gets two as Sky makes the save this time.

Morgan sunset bombs Kai to the floor, leaving Nox to hit the

reverse cannonball on Sky in the corner. Another Shiniest Wizard is cut off with a Shotei palm strike, only to have Nox break up the Asai moonsault. Bayley's interference is broken up but here's a woman in black to kick Nox. Security takes her away and the Over the Moonsault retains the titles at 10:45.

**Rating:** C+. I like the idea of having something in there as a mystery with the woman in black. Other than that, this was a nice match without much of a chance for the thrown together team to win the belts. The good thing is that the titles are actually being defended though, as it gives them at least some value rather than having them sit on the shelves for weeks if not months at a time.

Video on Gunther, who is ready for Ricochet.

Video on Ricochet, who is ready for Gunther.

Video on Kevin Owens' recent issues with the Bloodline.

Sami Zayn is nervous about his moment with Roman Reigns at the top of the hour. He goes to get something to eat, leaving the Usos to wonder what Reigns has planned tonight.

We look at LA Knight going after Bray Wyatt last week but only finding his shirt, with the lights going out.

We see a video provided by a QR code, showing a bound and gagged LA Knight, with someone taking a Bray Wyatt mask off of him.

Here is LA Knight to address being kidnapped and attacked for the last few weeks. He's still right here knocking on Bray Wyatt's front door because since Wyatt's return, all he has done is dress like a clown. Then Knight gets jumped by someone like Wyatt but it WASN'T Wyatt? Knight invites him out here right now so cue the Fireflies.

Here is Wyatt himself, to say they both know how this ends. The fight is on with Knight getting the better of things, but

then the weird videos pop up and here is Uncle Howdy in person. Knight isn't sure what to think but Wyatt seems glad to see his uncle. As Knight bails, Wyatt and Howdy laugh a lot. So he's a real person. That's at least a step forward and a question answered.

Video on Tribute To The Troops.

### Intercontinental Title: Ricochet vs. Gunther

Ricochet is challenging...and hang on as the rest of Imperium is ejected. Gunther powers him down to start and even goes after a leg for some smart strategy. More power tossing has Ricochet in trouble but he grabs a headlock. Some skinning of the cat and a backflip get Ricochet loose but Gunther kicks him out to the floor. Another drop onto the apron has Ricochet down on the floor as we take a break.

Back with Ricochet hammering away but getting slammed down with ease. The Boston crab doesn't last long for Gunther though and Ricochet kicks him in the face for the escape. A backbreaker sets up another Boston crab though as Ricochet just can't get away. Somehow that one is broken up as well so Gunther goes with a chop into the sleeper on the mat. The bodyscissors is broken up and Ricochet fights out, managing to send Gunther into the corner.

Some enziguris rock Gunther and a running corner dropkick has him staggering even more. A suplex is a bit too much for Ricochet though and it's Gunther's running dropkick to stagger him instead. Gunther tries a powerbomb but gets hurricanranaed to the floor for a crash. There's a big springboard moonsault to take Gunther down again and we take another break.

We come back with Ricochet hitting his big running flip dive to the floor but getting kicked in the jaw. The big clothesline only gives Gunther two but his top rope splash hits raised knees. Now Ricochet manages the suplex for two and the shooting star press is good for the same. Ricochet slugs

away and hits a superkick, only to get chopped out of the air. Another HARD powerbomb gives Gunther two so it's the Last Symphony to retain the title at 21:49.

**Rating:** B+. They had me believing in the possible title change here and that is a heck of a feeling for Ricochet getting the title shot. Gunther sells amazingly well for a monster but then his next gear is almost impossible to stop. Very few people can crank it up to that level and Gunther does it as well as anyone today. Ricochet more than held up his end too here and fought from underneath the whole way. Great stuff here and I was hooked throughout.

Post match Imperium comes out for the beatdown but Braun Strowman makes the save.

Jimmy Uso comes in to see Roman Reigns and asks if Sami Zayn is becoming a full Uso tonight. Reigns doesn't say anything so Jimmy says he's with Reigns no matter what. With Jimmy gone, Reigns has Paul Heyman call Adam Pearce. Post break, Pearce comes in to see the Bloodline, with Heyman pitching Reigns/Zayn vs. Kevin Owens/a partner of his choosing on the December 30 Smackdown. Works for Pearce, who leaves after a glare from Solo Sikoa.

Video on the history of Tribute To The Troops.

Hit Row vs. Viking Raiders vs. Legado del Fantasma

The winners get a future Tag Team Title shot. Ashante, Ivar and Wilde start things off but everything breaks down rather fast. Legado gets clotheslined outside and it's Dolla left alone in the ring. Erik comes back in to forearm him down but stereo springboard missile dropkicks put Erik on the floor as well. Stereo springboard flip dives have Legado in control as we take a break.

Back with the Vikings getting to clean house but Legado makes another save. Del Toro's Phoenix splash gets two on Dolla but

Adonis breaks up the high/low. Everything breaks down again and Dolla loads up a dive...which gets caught on the ropes, leaving him to land on the apron but celebrate the dive grazing the pile anyway (that was BAD). Zelina Vega, B Fab and Valhalla get in a fight on the floor and a limping Top Dollar gets back in for the Heavy Hitter to finish Wilde at 9:14.

**Rating:** C-. The match wasn't very good in the first place, but Hit Row has become one of the biggest disappointments since their return. They aren't exactly good in the first place, and then you have that kind of a botch. I'd be surprise if the team is still around in three months, as this just isn't working, future title shot or not. The rest of the match was decent enough, but that dive (or whatever it was) is the only thing people will be remembering.

Raquel Rodriguez is ready to come back to face Ronda Rousey...so Rousey and Shayna Baszler jump her for a beatdown.

Here is the Bloodline for a chat. After their very lengthy entrance, Roman Reigns talks about how this is the first time he has seen his team since WarGames, which they dominated. Now though, they have a KO Problem, but Reigns and Sami Zayn are going to get together and take care of him for good.

Zayn says Owens is a problem and no one likes him, which is why he is Owens' only friend. That is NOT cool with Reigns, so Zayn starts backtracking fast. Then John Cena pops up on screen, saying he has gotten a text from Owens, reminding him that he hasn't had a WWE match this year. So what about being partners on December 30? In a rather length answer involving a Santa Claus reference, Cena is in to end the show.

**Overall Rating:** C+. This was a weird show but the opener was good, the Wyatt segment actually did something, the Intercontinental Title match was great, and the main event worked save for one spot. At the same time, this show gets knocked down a bit by how many video packages we had. It was A

LOT of recapping and hyping stuff up, which might be great if you're trying to stretch out a double taping, but it doesn't make for a very great TV show. Cut some video, add in another match of value and this show goes way up, as that Ricochet vs. Gunther match more than makes the rest worth watching.

### Results

Damage Ctrl b. Liv Morgan/Tegan Nox – Over the Moonsault to Nox

Gunther b. Ricochet – Last Symphony

Hit Row b. Viking Raiders and Legado del Fantasma – Heavy Hitter to Wilde

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