

# Smackdown – December 23, 2022: I Guess This Counts As Merry

## Smackdown

Date: December 23, 2022

Location: Allstate Arena, Rosemont, Illinois

Commentators: Michael Cole, Wade Barrett

It's a taped show from Chicago, which means the fans should be livelier than most regular crowds. Since it is the Christmas season, the main event is a Miracle On 34th Street Fight as Ricochet and Braun Strowman vs. Imperium, but we also have a gauntlet match for a future Women's Title match. Let's get to it.

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

Here is the Bloodline to get things going. Paul Heyman talks about all of their upcoming wins, including the Usos defeating Hit Row later tonight and Solo Sikoa getting another victory. Next week though, it's the biggest televised match of the year, as Roman Reigns and Sami Zayn team up to defeat Kevin Owens and John Cena. Reigns get the mic, but has to pause for a SAMI chant. Next week, Reigns is going to SMASH someone, but Sami is looking a little off.

Reigns tells him to get it off of his chest, so Sami talks about how he has found family and respect in the Bloodline. You would think that would be enough, but there is a Kevin Owens cloud hanging over him. Owens' existence and the fact that their names have been tied together makes Sami mad because he can't get away.

Now John Cena is coming back too and wants to steal the show, but the Bloodline IS the show. Next week, Owens and Cena will

acknowledge Reigns. Sami gets a hug to wrap it up. I'm not sure when it's happening, but the Bloodline turning on Sami and him coming back to fight against them is going to be the reaction of the year.

#### Tag Team Titles: Usos vs. Hit Row

Hit Row, with B Fab is challenging and Sami Zayn is here too. Adonis armdrags Jey to start but a chop block cuts Dolla off. Dolla fights up and brings Jey in but a chop block puts him right back down. We take a break and come back with Dolla getting over to the corner for the hot tag to Adonis so house can be cleaned. A cheap shot cuts Adonis off though and a Samoan drop gives Jimmy two. Dolla is back in and the Heavy Hitter gets two, with Jimmy having to make a save. Back up and Adonis gets sent outside, leaving the 1D to finish Dolla at 9:06.

**Rating:** C. The titles weren't going to change hands here and I don't think anyone bought the idea that they were. The Usos have been on top for so long that it is hard to fathom them losing, which is one of the problems with a match like this. There wasn't much drama and Hit Row isn't good enough to create it, so this was just ok at best.

We look at Ricochet coming up short to Gunther last week in a great match.

Imperium is ready to take out Ricochet and Braun Strowman tonight.

#### Gauntlet Match

For a future Smackdown Women's title match. It's Emma in at #1 and Xia Li in at #2, with Li running her over to start. Emma gets a suplex for a breather, but Li knees her in the face. The Cyclone kick finishes Emma at 1:47 and it's Tegan Nox in at #3. Nox strikes away but gets kneed in the head for her efforts. Another Cyclone Kick finishes Nox at 3:19 total and

it's Raquel Rodriguez in at #4.

We take a break and come back with Li working on Rodriguez's banged up arm. Rodriguez fights up and hits the spinning Vader Bomb elbow for two. Back up and Li misses the Cyclone Kick, allowing Rodriguez to grab the Tejana Bomb for the pin at 9:05. Liv Morgan is in at #5 and goes right at her, but has to power out of what seems to be a powerbomb attempt. Morgan's victory roll gets two and they trade rollups for a near fall each. A choke works a bit better for Morgan but Rodriguez powers out for a double knockdown.

We take a break and come back again with Rodriguez hitting a superplex but Morgan manages a shot to the arm for a breather. There's the middle rope dropkick to Rodriguez, setting up the Rings of Saturn for a smart hold. Rodriguez powers up again and swings Morgan off, only to get caught in a Codebreaker for two more. Back up and Rodriguez is fine enough to hit a fall away slam into the springboard corkscrew Vader Bomb elbow for another near fall. Morgan is back up with a sunset bomb but Rodriguez powers her up into a Tejana Bomb for the pin at 19:35.

Sonya Deville is in at #6 to complete the field and starts fast with the rapid fire kicks in the corner. Rodriguez tries to make the comeback but gets sent shoulder first into the buckle. An armbar in the ropes has Rodriguez in more trouble but she has to let go, allowing Rodriguez to plant her down for the pin at 22:35. Hold out though as here is Ronda Rousey to announce that Shayna Baszler is a surprise entrant at #7. Baszler goes right in and strikes away, even pulling off Rodriguez's arm brace. The posing takes too long though and Rodriguez rolls her up for the pin at 24:11.

**Rating:** B-. Like most gauntlet matches, this left me wondering why some of the regular matches we see aren't over as fast as some of the falls in this one. At the same time, the Morgan vs. Rodriguez stuff worked well and they had a nice chemistry

going. Rodriguez winning was the only real option here and they made her look good in the process, so call this a nice success.

We look at Uncle Howdy being revealed as a real person last week, freaking LA Knight out even more.

Here is Bray Wyatt for a chat. Bray talks about how hard it is to come out here and be yourself, but he'll never be tired of people wanting to see him. He talks about trying to present the realest version of him that he can, meaning LA Knight owes him an apology. No one, including Knight, believed that it was really him with all of those attacks...and then the light switches a bit. Wyatt seems to get sidetracked and crouches down before grabbing the Mandible Claw on the cameraman. The weird stare goes on as Wyatt has to be pulled off, leaving him confused and upset. The mind games continue, but they seem to have a direction.

### Angel vs. Rey Mysterio

Karrion Kross and Scarlett are watching from the crowd while Humberto is here with Angel. Rey snaps off a headscissors to start and pounds away in the corner, only to have Angel TAKE OFF HIS PANTS. A backbreaker gives Angel two but Rey sends him into the ropes to set up the 619. Humberto breaks that up, allowing Angel to hit a superkick for two. The Wing Clipper is blocked so Angel tries his own 619. That doesn't work either as Rey hits his own, setting up a slingshot DDT for the pin at 3:51.

**Rating:** C. Well first of all, oh yeah, Los Lotharios still work here. Other than that, this was a completely watchable back and forth match with Mysterio busting out a nifty new finisher. There wasn't exactly a lot to see here but Mysterio getting in the ring and wrestling a basic match shows you just how good he really is. He can wrestle a completely competent match against almost anyone, which isn't exactly a universal

skill.

Ricochet and Braun Strowman are ready for Imperium.

Emma yells at Scarlett and Karrion Kross for getting on Riddick (as in Madcap Moss) and Rey Mysterio. She slaps Scarlett, causing Kross to say Emma doesn't know what she just did.

We look back at John Cena's career before he returns next week. The Make-A-Wish and military stuff gets a look at well before wrestlers talk about what a legend he is. I'm assuming this is airing rather than a Kevin Owens segment as Owens missed the double taping.

Lacey Evans is back next week.

#### Ricochet/Braun Strowman vs. Imperium

Miracle On 34th Street Fight. Strowman cleans house to start and throws Ricochet into a dropkick to Vinci in the corner. Vinci's middle rope crossbody is pulled out of the air but Imperium starts in on Strowman's leg for a breather. Strowman is fine enough to backdrop the villains to the floor, where Ricochet adds a hurricanrana as we take a break.

Back with Strowman getting posted and Ricochet getting beaten with a candy cane. Strowman gets back up and lifts Imperium onto his shoulders but they rake the eyes for a save. There's a double suplex on the stage as Ricochet is back up. Some right hands stagger the already bleeding Vinci but Kaiser manages a chair shot for a breather. It's time to open the giant present on stage and it's....a ballerina, who dances away.

Another box is opened to reveal New Day dressed as soldiers to kick Imperium low (Barrett: "They're nutcrackers!") and march away. Strowman is back up and runs Imperium over before dragging Ricochet over to ring announcer Samantha Irvin. Some mistletoe is busted out and the kiss (from his real life

girlfriend, in Cole's words) brings Ricochet back to life. House is cleaned and it's the running powerslam into the splash off of Strowman's shoulders to pin Vinci at 11:54.

**Rating:** C+. What else were you expecting here? They were in a match involving big presents and Christmas decorations at the end of a holiday show. There was one result to this match and it was never supposed to be anything else. The match was completely fine and felt like something you might see on a house show, making this a completely entertaining main event.

**Overall Rating:** C+. For a show that was taped and the second two hour episode of the night, this was a totally acceptable show, which even had some good stuff included. WWE knew it wasn't going to have a huge audience so why try doing anything important? The biggest development is finding Ronda Rousey's next challenger for next week, which is hardly earth shattering. Nice show here though and I had a good time with it throughout.

### Results

Usos b. Hit Row – 1D to Dolla

Raquel Rodriguez won a gauntlet match last eliminating Shayna Baszler

Rey Mysterio b. Angel – Slingshot DDT

Ricochet/Braun Strowman b. Imperium – Splash to Vinci

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