

Smackdown – January 6, 2023: It Should Have Been Bigger

Smackdown

Date: January 6, 2023

Location: FedExForum, Memphis, Tennessee

Commentators: Michael Cole, Wade Barrett

We are less than a month away from the Royal Rumble as we are officially in the new year. That means we should be in for some fun tonight and there is certainly a big main event. This week, the Usos will be defending the Tag Team Titles against Drew McIntyre/Sheamus in a match that was originally scheduled for last month. Let's get to it.

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

The Bloodline opens things up by throwing chairs from the crowd as Roman Reigns and Paul Heyman come to the ring to join them. Reigns demands acknowledgment and seems to receive it but doesn't seem happy. This week, we are going to hear from Sami Zayn, who says this year belongs to the Bloodline.

Zayn brags about the team winning its matches on Raw but that's not what Reigns wants to talk about. He wants to talk about LAST YEAR when he and Zayn faced John Cena and Kevin Owens. Some people have said they lost, but Reigns doesn't remember his shoulders being on the mat. Nah, Sami lost last week, so why did he call his shot? That's what Reigns does, just like Babe Ruth.

Reigns thinks Sami might want to be the Tribal Chief. Why is Sami doing what Reigns does? Reigns starts screaming at Sami about wanting his job until Kevin Owens interrupts. Owens talks about how Reigns has a K0 Problem and can't get rid of him. Maybe he should deal with it in a title match at the Royal Rumble. Reigns: "Yeah sure whatever." Reigns will give

him the shot if Owens leaves forever after he loses. Owens seems to agree but the wording is a bit vague on if it's title vs. career.

Earlier today, Kofi Kingston and Santos Escobar got into it backstage over Kofi's Royal Rumble botch last year, meaning we've got something tonight.

Kofi Kingston vs. Santos Escobar

Xavier Woods and the rest of Legado del Fantasma are here too. Escobar gets in a shot to start and Kofi is rocked, allowing him to go up top. That's fine with Kofi, who kicks him to the floor as we take a break. Back with Kofi in trouble but managing to fight his way back up. Woods offers a trombone distraction but Escobar is fine enough to kick Kofi in the head for two.

Kofi slips out of a fireman's carry and gets two off the SOS. Kofi goes up but gets kneed out of the air for two, leaving them both needing a bit of a breather. The brawl starts on the floor though and the distraction lets Escobar hit a jumping superkick. The Phantom Driver finishes Kofi at 10:05.

Rating: C+. You had two talented wrestlers with a bit of time so of course this worked out fairly well. Kingston is the definition of bulletproof in WWE so having him put over a newcomer like Escobar is one of the smarter things to do. It wasn't a classic but for ten minutes on Smackdown, this was quite easy to watch.

Kevin Owens vs. Roman Reigns for the title is set for the Royal Rumble. No words on Owens leaving if he loses so that doesn't sound like a stipulation.

Sami Zayn tries to talk to Roman Reigns but gets Paul Heyman instead. Heyman thinks this isn't a good time as the Usos go in to see Reigns. Last week Heyman said stay three steps ahead, but that still might be a bad time for Sami.

Liv Morgan enters the Women's Royal Rumble and is willing to go in at #1.

We look back at Uncle Howdy attacking Bray Wyatt last week, which freaked out LA Knight in the process.

LA Knight was walking through Memphis earlier today and after getting over how bad that was, he thought it was great that Bray Wyatt can't keep his freaks in line. At the Royal Rumble, Wyatt is getting what is coming to him, YEAH.

Emma/Madcap Moss vs. Karrion Kross/Scarlett

This is Scarlett's in-ring TV debut and we're joined in progress with the women coming in off double tags. Scarlett shrugs off some right hands and suplexes her for two. Kross comes in to glare at Emma, allowing Scarlett to post her. Emma gets sent over the announcers' table, leaving Kross to hit the Krosshammer into the Krossjacket for the win at 3:08.

Rating: C-. This was little more than a squash for Kross and Scarlett, as Emma and Moss never felt like they were a threat to win. Scarlett is someone who can easily handle herself in the ring and doesn't always have to be on the floor. Kross seems to be ready for a showdown with Rey Mysterio and that means he wasn't going to need to break a sweat here with Moss.

Post match Kross and Scarlett put a Rey Mysterio mask on Moss and says Rey is running out of time.

We look back at Charlotte returning and winning the Smackdown Women's Title from Ronda Rousey in less than a minute.

Sheamus and Drew McIntyre were at Jerry Lawler's bar earlier and fired each other up for their Tag Team Title match tonight.

Here is Charlotte for a chat. She is happy with her title win last week and doesn't really care what people think of her. The one thing she isn't is complacent, so she will face

anyone. Cue Sonya Deville, who wants and receives a title shot.

Women's Title: Charlotte vs. Sonya Deville

Charlotte is defending and kicks Deville out to the floor to start. Back from a break with Deville going after the knee and grabbing a chinlock. That's broken up and Charlotte hits some clotheslines, followed by a flipping clothesline for two. A spear cuts Sonya down and the Figure Eight retains the title at 6:46.

Rating: C-. So that happened. Charlotte wasn't going to drop the title this fast but they didn't even bother with anything close to drama. It was all about getting Charlotte in the ring again to clarify that she's all nice and good now, with Deville being a good first victim to the title reign.

Video on Cody Rhodes returning to WWE last year.

Remember how Lacey Evans has been training? She still is.

Royal Rumble Qualifying Match: Ricochet vs. Top Dolla

Dolla powers him into the corner to start and gets Ricochet on top to toss him down. A big boot gives Dolla two but he takes too long dancing, allowing Ricochet to kick him in the head. The standing Sliced Bread drops Dolla and the shooting star press finishes him off at 1:57.

Post match Dolla shakes Ricochet's hand...allowing Ashante Adonis to superkick Ricochet in the face. B Fab adds in a kick of her own as all of Hit Row seems to have turned. Braun Strowman runs in for the save, which shouldn't have happened as Top Dolla needed to look dominant here.

The Usos go to the ring for their title match. Roman Reigns tells Paul Heyman to bring him Sami Zayn.

Video on Gunther vs. Braun Strowman for the Intercontinental

Title next week.

Sami Zayn comes in to see Roman Reigns and Paul Heyman, with Reigns telling him to sit without giving him a look. Sami immediately says that Reigns is the Tribal Chief and no one else is. Reigns doesn't accept because he holds himself to a high standard and no one should be treated like Sami was earlier. He doesn't accept because he should be apologizing, so Reigns says he is sorry.

Reigns understands that he is mad at Kevin Owens and taking out on Sami. That's why he's going to let Sami help him get rid of Owens, when Sami and Owens face off next week. Sami is in but hears the Usos' music and goes towards the ring. Hold on though, as Reigns wants Sami to watch with him.

Tag Team Titles: Usos vs. Drew McIntyre/Sheamus

The Usos, with Solo Sikoa, are defending. Sheamus takes Jimmy down to start and it's off to Drew, who tosses him into the corner. Jey comes in and manages a quick suplex to take over, allowing Jimmy to come in for some choking. Drew gets sent outside and suicide dived into the barricade as we take a break.

Back with Sheamus hitting the ten forearms to Jey's chest but Jimmy gets in a shot to take over again. Drew cuts off the double Uce and it's a double super White Noise for two on the champs. A flip dive off the apron takes the Usos down and it's a Claymore for two on Jey with Jimmy making the save.

We see Reigns/Zayn/Heyman eating popcorn as they watch the match as the 1D hits Sheamus....for two as McIntyre makes the save. Sikoa goes after Drew but here are the Brawling Brutes to cut him off. Sheamus Brogue Kicks Jey so Jimmy makes the save. A dive takes the Usos out so Sheamus picks Jey up, only to be rolled up with Jimmy giving an assist to retain at 13:19.

Rating: B-. They had a bit of drama when Sheamus survived the 1D but there is only so much of a reason to believe the Usos are losing anytime soon. Sheamus and McIntyre could have gotten the title shot on a big stage and just a Smackdown main event doesn't feel that big. Good TV match, but it should have been a bit bigger.

Overall Rating: B-. Pretty solid show tonight, but the question now is what happens with Sami/Owens/Reigns. That seems like it is about to blow up either in the next few weeks or at the Royal Rumble at the latest. Other than that, the Rumbles continue to loom, but there are only three out of sixty spots filled. That could take up a lot of time over the next few weeks so things could start picking up rather quickly. For now though, a good show that could have been bigger.

Results

Santos Escobar b. Kofi Kingston – Phantom Driver

Scarlett/Karrion Kross b. Emma/Madcap Moss – Krossjacket to Moss

Ricochet b. Top Dolla – Shooting star press

Usos b. Drew McIntyre/Sheamus – Assisted rollup to Sheamus

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