

Smackdown – January 20, 2023: The Theme Show

Smackdown

Date: January 20, 2023

Location: Little Caesar's Arena, Detroit, Michigan

Commentators: Michael Cole, Wade Barrett

We're just over a week away from the Royal Rumble and that could make for an interesting build to the show. Most of the card is set and that means it is time for a Bloodline show. Sami Zayn is having some issues with the rest of the team and that could be very interesting. Other than that, we start the #1 contenders tag team tournament. Let's get to it.

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

We open with a recap of Sami Zayn going after Kevin Owens last week but getting some seemingly unwanted help from the rest of the Bloodline.

The Bloodline arrives and Roman Reigns doesn't seem thrilled with Sami Zayn.

We get brackets for the Tag Team Title #1 Contenders Tournament:

Drew McIntyre/Sheamus
Viking Raiders

Los Lotharios
Hit Row

Brawling Brutes
Imperium

Maximum Male Models
Legado del Fantasma

Dang. That's like, a division.

Tag Team Titles #1 Contenders Tournament First Round: Drew McIntyre/Sheamus vs. Viking Raiders

Valhalla is here with the Raiders. Before the bell, Michael Cole mentions Jay Briscoe passing away and talks a bit about how great of a team Jay and Mark were. That's all it needed to be and good for the new WWE bosses for letting it be done. It's a brawl to start and everyone fights on the floor until Sheamus fires off the forearms to the Vikings' chests. What looked to be a super White Noise is broken up, leaving Ivar to hit the crossbody against the barricade.

We take a break and come back with Sheamus fighting out of a chinlock but getting forearmed in the face. The Irish Curse gets Sheamus out of trouble though and the hot tag brings in McIntyre to clean house. The Michinoku Driver gets two on Ivar and the superplex is loaded up but Erik makes the save. That leaves McIntyre in the Tree of Woe and, after Sheamus takes out Erik, the sit up into the belly to belly superplex drops Ivar as we take another break.

Back again with McIntyre dropping Ivar but the Claymore is cut off with a kick to the face. Sheamus and Erik come in to slug it out but Valhalla breaks up the Brogue Kick. Ivar hits the top rope splash for two on Sheamus, giving us a shocked Viking face. The Vikings beat Sheamus down but he knees Ivar out of the air. The Claymore hits Erik and the Brogue finishes Ivar at 17:45.

Rating: B. These guys got time and beat each other up, which is what you probably wanted to see from this kind of a match. Let four big, strong guys beat each other up for the better part of twenty minutes with Sheamus and McIntyre getting a win onto what could be a win in the tournament. Good opener here and you could feel some of those shots.

Sami Zayn comes in to see Roman Reigns and asks if everything

is cool. Reigns saw how Sami looked last week and knows he is going to try to cover things tonight. Reigns wants the truth and Sami admits that he was a little disappointed when he was ready to finish Kevin Owens but the Usos and Solo Sikoa got involved.

Owens keeps saying that Sami is being used and for a split second...Sami doesn't know, but it's all fine. Reigns: "Get out." Reigns isn't going to do this every single week and wonders when he had to start running his plan by the Honorary Uce. Sami should just go find Kevin and start his own Bloodline. Paul Heyman has to tell Sami to get out and looks shocked.

Raquel Rodriguez is in the Royal Rumble.

Here is LA Knight for a match but first, he wants someone to help Bray Wyatt figure out what he is. One week he isn't Uncle Howdy and then one week he is. Knight knows who he is and is ready to take out Wyatt at the Royal Rumble.

LA Knight vs. Ray Jones

Knight takes him into the corner to start but the Bray Wyatt logo pops up on screen. Blunt Force Trauma finishes Jones at 30 seconds.

Post match it's the return of the Firefly Fun House, complete with the cast of puppets. Bray Wyatt is fixing the door, complete with his pants too low, requiring a Bray symbol for a censor. Bray says he has missed all of us so much and he can't wait to have lots of fun with his friends once again. The Fun House friends aren't sure about the Pitch Black match but Bray wonders who would name their kid Los Angeles Knight.

Bray gives us a special moment about how the dark is a special place where things can hide. Then the screen goes wacky and we see Uncle Howdy, with Bray's voice saying "I told you so." Bray pops back up and, in a serious voice, says he hopes

Knight understand. He is the one who opened the door and whatever comes through it is his problem. BYE! HAVE A NICE DAY! So are we continuing our path through Bray's history?

Tag Team Titles #1 Contenders Tournament First Round: Los Lotharios vs. Hit Row

B Fab is here with Hit Row. Adonis gets caught with a double basement superkick to start so Top Dolla pulls Humberto to the floor. Humberto is knocked over the announcers' table but Los Lotharios dropkick him down. The distraction lets Adonis grab a rollup with tights for the pin at 2:39. This really wasn't that good.

Video on Cody Rhodes return. He's back at the Royal Rumble.

Braun Strowman is in the Royal Rumble.

Here is Charlotte for a chat and she gets straight to the point: if Sonya Deville has a problem with her, come do something about it. Cue Deville, who says she had to be dragged off of Charlotte last week. Does Charlotte just not get it? She wants another title shot, but Charlotte tells her to focus on the Royal Rumble. Charlotte will fight her right here and right now, but Sonya turns it down. She wants the title on the line, which draws out Adam Pearce to say Sonya can't do this. The distraction lets Sonya jump her from behind and leave.

Roman Reigns is annoyed at the Sami Zayn situation but Paul Heyman tries to talk him down. With Kevin Owens coming up, maybe it's better to have Sami on the inside instead of the outside.

Lacey Evans demonstrates the Cobra Clutch. Just get Sarge in here already.

Tag Team Titles #1 Contenders Tournament First Round: Imperium vs. Brawling Brutes

Kaiser hammers on Butch to start but he's right back with an armbar. Vinci comes in and double teams Butch down as we take a break. Back with Butch rolling over for the tag to Holland so house can be cleaned. A double delayed backdrop puts Imperium down and it's already back to Butch. The cross armbreaker goes on so Vinci busts out a double belly to belly moonsault for the save and two. Butch hits a heck of a tornado DDT to leave us with a double knockdown. Holland comes in off the hot tag as everything breaks down. A brainbuster on the floor knocks Butch silly, leaving the European Bomb to finish Holland at 12:31.

Rating: C+. These teams are always worth a look, though it isn't quite the same without Sheamus and Gunther there with them. Imperium going forward is a smart way to go, as the team is starting to get some traction as more than just Gunther's goons. They don't need to win the titles, but getting a win or two in the tournament would do them a lot of good.

Paul Heyman tells Sami Zayn that Roman Reigns wants to see him.

Shayna Baszler is in the Royal Rumble.

We get a long and lengthy look back at Raw's history. There are some rather cool clips in there.

Karrion Kross, with Scarlett, is not amped up to face Rey Mysterio next week. Rey can't decided what he wants to be and that isn't how it works. Therefore, he's going to take Rey out, and then win the Royal Rumble.

Tag Team Titles #1 Contenders Tournament First Round: Legado del Fantasma vs. Maximum Male Models

Zelina Vega is on commentary and announces that she is in the Royal Rumble. Del Toro takes Mansoor down without much effort to start but Mace comes in to shove Legado to the floor. Back in and Mace's double chokeslam is broken up, meaning Legado

sends him to the floor for a change. The big flip dive drops Mace and it's an assisted splash for two on Mansoor back inside. Mace comes in but gets sent into Mansoor for a crotching in the corner. The Russian legsweep/running kick to the face finishes Mace at 2:55. The Models continue to not work.

Sami Zayn comes in to see Roman Reigns again, with Reigns suggesting that he overreacted. Reigns says he wants as much loyalty as he puts into this and Zayn insists that he has it. All Reigns has to do is ask for something to be done, so Reigns tells him to have the transportation ready for after the contract signing. Fists are bumped.

It's time for the contract signing. Roman Reigns takes forever to get to his seat...and then Kevin Owens pops up and hits him with the Stunner. The invading Usos are dispatched as well and a powerbomb puts Reigns through the table. Owens signs and now Sami Zayn shows up, which has Owens running up the steps and into the crowd as the Usos are back up too.

Overall Rating: C+. They had a theme here with the tag tournament stuff and that is a fine way to go for a night. The Rumble card is all set so there isn't much that needs to be done there other than announce names for the Rumbles. The contract signing didn't take much time at all and now there is the issue of Sami being there late because he was doing what Reigns told him. This was a show that moved some stuff forward as things are coming together at the right time. I'll take that as a big positive and hope they can pull off the important stuff, though that is the much trickier part.

Results

Sheamus/Drew McIntyre b. Viking Raiders – Brogue Kick to Ivar

LA Knight b. Ray Jones – Blunt Force Trauma

Hit Row b. Los Lotharios – Rollup to Angel

Imperium b. Brawling Brutes – European Bomb to Holland

Legado del Fantasma b. Maximum Male Models – Russian

legsweep/running boot to the face combination to Mace

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