

Smackdown – February 3, 2023: Good For A Present

Smackdown

Date: February 3, 2023

Location: Bon Secours Wellness Arena, Greenville, South Carolina

Commentators: Wade Barrett, Michael Cole

We're done with the Royal Rumble and the main event of Wrestlemania is set. That being said, there is a Sami Zayn sized road block on the Road To Wrestlemania and I'm not sure how they are going to deal with it. You can almost guarantee Zayn is getting the Elimination Chamber title shot, but dang it's going to be a fun right on the way there. Let's get to it.

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

We open with a recap of Sami Zayn finally turning on the Bloodline with a chair shot to Roman Reigns, but Jey Uso couldn't bring himself to help with the ensuing beatdown.

The Bloodline, minus Jey Uso, and everyone but Paul Heyman ignores questions about Jey. Heyman says they cannot confirm or deny Jey's Bloodline status at the moment.

Opening sequence.

Tag Team Titles #1 Contenders Tournament: Imperium vs. Braun Strowman/Ricochet

For a future Smackdown Tag Team Title shot. Strowman shoves Kaiser around to start before it's off to Ricochet for a headlock. A dropkick puts Kaiser down and it's back to Strowman, who picks up Kaiser on the floor. Vinci hits a big dive onto both of them though and we take a break.

Back with Strowman going shoulder first into the post, allowing the double teaming to begin. Strowman fights out of it though and it's back to Ricochet with the springboard crossbody. A running shooting star press hits Vinci and everything breaks down. Ricochet avoids the double dropkick in the corner but gets in a staredown with Gunther on the floor. That's enough for Gunther to be ejected but he gets in a staredown with Strowman on the floor.

Ricochet gets caught in a high/low for two and we take another break. Back again with Ricochet escaping the Imperial Bomb and getting back over to Strowman to clean house. Vinci's springboard spinning forearm has no effect on Strowman, who blasts Kaiser with a clothesline. The Monster Bomb into a Swanton off of Strowman's shoulders finishes Kaiser at 16:16.

Rating: B-. What a weird tournament this was, as Ricochet and Strowman, who are at least regular partners, get the win rather than McIntyre and Sheamus, who are such a dominant force that they could conceivably take the belts. Ricochet and Strowman are good enough as challengers, but I'm not sure how much I buy them as a threat to the titles.

We look at Rhea Ripley winning the Women's Royal Rumble, plus her choosing to challenge Charlotte for Wrestlemania.

Charlotte is ready for Rhea Ripley but Sonya Deville shows up and says she'll be taking the title. Wrestlemania is in Los Angeles and needs a star.

Rey Mysterio and New Day were at the Los Angeles Memorial Coliseum for a promotional appearance for an upcoming NASCAR race. Judgment Day interrupted and started yelling, resulting in....a car race between the Mysterios. They talk a lot of trash and Rey wins in the end. Of all the cross promotional stuff I've seen, this is far from the bottom of the list.

Women's Title: Charlotte vs. Sonya Deville

Charlotte is defending. They start slow with Charlotte taking over and knocking Deville down. A high crossbody connects but Charlotte misses a charge in the corner, allowing Sonya to get in a shot as we take a break. Back with Charlotte fighting out of trouble and hitting a belly to back suplex. The big boot gives Charlotte two but another one misses, allowing Sonya to snap her leg across the top.

A pump kick gives Sonya two and a middle rope knee to the face is good for the same. Sonya tries a Figure Four but gets reversed into a small package for two. Charlotte's moonsault hits raised boots so Sonya, with feet on the ropes, can get two. Back up and Charlotte gets the Figure Four into the Figure Eight to retain at 10:22.

Rating: C. This felt like the story that we had to get cleared out before we get to the Wrestlemania title matches as Charlotte has a lot more important things to do than beat up Deville. The result wasn't in doubt here and while the match wasn't bad, it was little more than a glorified workout for Charlotte. The Ripley match was already set up Monday, so why was this going to be a big deal on Friday?

Video on Cody Rhodes, who came back from a horrible injury and won the Royal Rumble to get a title shot at Wrestlemania.

The Bloodline is in the back and Jimmy Uso hasn't hear from his brother. Reigns: "Don't you find that disrespectful?" He isn't happy with what happened, but asks Jimmy a bit more emphatically if he has heard from his brother. Jimmy says again, he hasn't heard from him, but Jey will be there next week for the title match. Reigns asks what about the rest of them. Has Solo Sikoa talked to Jey either? It's Wrestlemania season, and Jimmy isn't finding Jey on the couch. Find Jey, now.

Black History Month video on Kofi Kingston.

Brawling Brutes vs. Viking Raiders

Ivar and Butch start things off and it's a brawl early on. A Valhalla distraction lets Ivar send Butch hard into the barricade though and we take a break. Back with Holland throwing suplexes on Erik, who cuts him off with a knee lift. An Alabama Slam plants Ivar but he takes Holland into the corner for some rapid fire elbows to the face. Butch tags himself in and hurricanranas his way out of something off the top. Butch's moonsault is pulled out of the air though and Ivar picks him up. Holland gets kicked in the face on the floor and Ragnarok finishes Butch at 10:48.

Rating: C+. Another good enough match here, as the Raiders get built up for a likely Elimination Chamber showdown with McIntyre and Sheamus. It's kind of weird that Sheamus has more or less dumped the Brutes for McIntyre, but he was overshadowing the other two anyway. I'm not sure how Butch and Holland will do on their own, but they're going to get the chance.

Post match McIntyre and Sheamus come out to bet up the Vikings.

We look at the Mountain Dew Pitch Black match from the Rumble.

Bray Wyatt is in his chair...and Uncle Howdy comes up to him. A jump scare ensues.

Elimination Chamber Qualifying Match: Zelina Vega vs. Shotzi vs. Natalya vs. Shayna Baszler

It's a brawl to start with Vega Code Redding Natalya for two, with Baszler making the save. Baszler drops Shotzi and stands on her head until Natalya makes the save. A knee to the face gives Baszler two on Natalya and we take a break. Back with Natalya's Sharpshooter being broken up and Baszler Kirifuda Clutching Vega. Natalya breaks that up and has to break out of another Clutch. The Sharpshooter makes Zelina tap to give Natalya the Chamber spot at 7:28.

Rating: C. The second her music hit, you could pencil Natalya in for the spot. I understand that she is going to be in there to walk a lot of people through the match, but dang there is an emotional drop when she comes in. Natalya has talent, but she takes away so much interest because she is the same wrestler she has been for years now.

The rest of the Bloodline can't find Jey Uso and Roman Reigns says that if they aren't all on the same page, the Bloodline is done. Paul Heyman has sent catering to the bus so Solo Sikoa and Jimmy Uso can go eat while Reigns takes care of business.

Here are Roman Reigns and Paul Heyman for a chat. Reigns would rather talk about Cody Rhodes, but the people are insisting that he talk about the past. We can do that, and the story goes back to WarGames. Reigns saw greed in Zayn's eyes that night, which is the same thing he sees in everyone's eyes these days. When he goes to a restaurant, Reigns has to deal with everyone using him for something else instead of doing something for him. Now he has to deal with the same thing from Zayn.

The people here can't ever give back either...and here is Zayn through the crowd to jump Reigns from behind. Heyman hands Reigns a chair but Zayn hits a spear to send Reigns running. Zayn says Reigns is wrong because he never wanted anything from him. Until now, because he is coming for the title. Heyman and Reigns look scared but Jimmy Uso and Solo Sikoa sneak in for the beatdown. The beating is on and Zayn gets taken down in the corner. Reigns blames Zayn for breaking up the Bloodline. He wants Zayn at Elimination Chamber in Montreal so he can ruin Zayn in front of his friends and family.

This Sami stuff continues to be phenomenal as he's the hottest thing in wrestling right now. I know it's still likely Cody's title to win and yes he might be a bit of a better option long

term, but those reactions for Zayn are something else, as he is showing fire like no one in WWE has done in years. It's going to be tough watching him come up short, but dang it is going to be one heck of a ride.

Overall Rating: B-. This was a weird show as the ending is by far the best thing, even if the rest of the show was pretty good. Part of the problem is Elimination Chamber is in just over two weeks and that means a very rushed build to the event. What we got was good, but Zayn vs. Reigns is dwarfing everything else and it is showing hard.

Results

Ricochet/Braun Strowman b. Imperium – Swanton Bomb to Kaiser

Charlotte b. Sonya Deville – Figure Eight

Viking Raiders b. Brawling Brutes – Ragnarok to butch

Natalya b. Shayna Baszler, Zelina Vega and Shotzi – Sharpshooter to Vega

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