

Fastlane 2023: It's Worth The Drive

Fastlane 2023

Date: October 7, 2023

Location: Gainbridge Fieldhouse, Indianapolis, Indiana

Commentators: Michael Cole, Corey Graves

We're at the second of the not so important sounding pay per views here and coming into the show, we have a five match card. That either means we're getting some bonus matches announced or things are going to go long this time. The main event would seem to be John Cena and LA Knight facing the Bloodline so let's get to it.

I was sitting in the upper deck for this show, with the Titantron on my right.

The opening video features Pat McAfee (ok that makes sense) and talks about how Indianapolis is all about speed and moving forward, though sometimes you run into oncoming traffic. As you probably expected, the previews for the matches are included.

We recap the Tag Team Title match. Cody Rhodes brought Jey Uso back to WWE (after about two weeks) and is the only person to believe in him. The Judgment Day recruited Cody but got turned down, meaning it was a lot of fighting and an ensuing title match.

Tag Team Titles: Judgment Day vs. Cody Rhodes/Jey Uso

Rhodes and Uso are challenging and my goodness does Uso get an amazing reaction with the fans waving their arms along with him. Priest and Uso start things off with Priest running him over off a shoulder block. Uso ducks a right hand in the corner and slugs away though and Cody comes in to start on

Priest's knee. Priest blasts Uso with a clothesline to cut that off and it's Balor coming in for his own stomping.

A headbutt gets Uso out of trouble and allows the tag to Rhodes, with a delayed gordbuster putting Uso down. Priest gets in a kick to the head from the apron but Balor's chinlock doesn't last that long. It's back to Priest for a double arm crank and Rhodes is lured in so Uso can be kept in trouble. For some reason, about twenty minutes into the show, we see a wide shot of the arena and Cole talks about the show, almost sounding like he's pitching it to new viewers.

Uso finally fights his way out of the corner and it's Rhodes coming back in to clean house. The Disaster Kick hits Balor and Rhodes gives Priest a dragon screw legwhip over the rope. Balor is right back with 1916 for two but it's too early for the Coup de Grace. A delayed superplex plants Balor but Rhodes can't follow up. Uso comes back in with a high crossbody for two on Priest, who comes right back with a lifting Downward Spiral for two.

The limping Priest loads up a Razor's Edge but gets low bridged to the floor for a ram into the announcers' table. Back in and the Superfly Splash gets two on Priest, followed by a Cody Cutter to Balor. Uso spears Priest but cue Rhea Ripley and Dominik Mystério. Uso superkicks Dominik but gets quite the smile and wave from Ripley.

Back in and the distracted Uso gets hurricanranaed into a Coup de Grace from Balor, with Cody diving in for the save (after sitting at ringside until it was his cue for a terrible visual). Ripley briefcases Uso in the face for two but cue JD McDonagh to swing the case at Cody...but he hits Priest in the knee by mistake. Cross Rhodes on the table drops Priest and it's a Cody Cutter/Downward Spiral combination to Balor. Another Cross Rhodes gives Cody the pin and the titles at 20:44.

Rating: B+. This went nuts in the end and I had a great time with the whole thing by the final moments. I wouldn't have bet on the win after Judgment Day and the Bloodline joined forces last week but this was quite the twist. Good job on the surprise and the place went nuts on the win, even as McDonagh is probably about to get destroyed for screwing up again.

Booker T., Wade Barrett and Xavier Woods order pizza from Pizza Hut. This explains why I saw a Pizza Hut car driving into the arena as I was walking in.

We recap Bobby Lashley/the Street Profits vs. the LWO. Lashley and the Profits are being extra aggressive and have taken out part of the team. Rey Mysterio has an idea so it's mystery partner time.

LWO vs. Bobby Lashley/Street Profits

It's just Rey Mysterio and Santos Escobar (with Zelina Vega) to start for the LWO. Escobar kicks away at Ford's leg to start and then does the same to his head. A crossbody has Ford in more trouble but he manages a right hand to cut Escobar off. Escobar is back up with a super hurricanrana to drop Ford but he takes Escobar into the corner.

Lashley comes in for a running shoulder to the ribs and the one armed vertical suplex allows Ford to come back in for two. The beating doesn't last long as it's back to Mysterio to pick the pace way up. Lashley knocks Mysterio outside though, meaning it's time for quite the grin. Ford's running splash gets two on Mysterio and Dawkins drives in some more shoulders in the corner.

Mysterio avoids a big charge from Lashley but Ford is right there to pull Escobar off the apron in a smart move. That earns Ford a Meteora from Vega but there is no one for Mysterio to tag. The villains head outside...and Carlito of all people returns to be the LWO's third man. Carlito dropkicks Dawkins to the floor so Mysterio and Escobar can hit dives.

The Backstabber finishes Ford at 10:04.

Rating: C+. Not a great or blow away match but this was all about the Carlito return. Yes a lot of people figured it out in advance but it was still a cool moment with a familiar face returning and getting to be put into a nice slot. It's nice to have Carlito back and we could be in for a longer feud with these teams as the other LWO members are likely to be out for the time being.

Post match, commentary gets Pizza Hut, as delivered by Xavier Woods.

We look at Jade Cargill's debut on the Kickoff Show.

We recap the Smackdown Women's Title triple threat. Iyo Sky won the title at Summerslam, then defended it against Asuka a few weeks ago. Charlotte got involved and Asuka lost, so now it's time for everyone to fight.

Smackdown Women's Title: Asuka vs. Charlotte vs. Iyo Sky

Sky is defending. Asuka starts fast by misting Charlotte for an early two, leaving us with Asuka vs. Sky. With Charlotte on the floor to get her eyes fixed, Asuka cranks on an armbar back inside. Sky grabs some rollups for a VERY near fall on Asuka, who is right back with a kick to the chest. Asuka comes back in and takes both of them down before unloading on Asuka in the corner.

Charlotte gets double teamed down, leaving Sky to missile dropkick Asuka into a heap. Asuka is fine enough to grab a German superplex for two but Charlotte comes in with a high crossbody to both of them. Back up and Charlotte takes over on both of them again, including a double flipping clothesline for two each. Asuka is back up and sends Charlotte outside, where she sends Sky out onto her for a crash.

Sky manages to drop Asuka with a moonsault, allowing Charlotte

to moonsault off the top onto both of them. Back in and Charlotte goes up top with Sky, only to get caught in the Tower Of Doom. Charlotte is able to grab a Boston crab to Asuka but Sky makes the save with a running Meteora.

Things get complicated as Asuka gets a leglock on Charlotte but Sky adds a crossface, leaving them commentary confused about what happens if Charlotte taps. That's let go so Charlotte is back up (of course) with a spear. Cue Bayley (against Sky's wishes) as Charlotte gets the Figure Eight on Asuka. Bayley's distraction means the referee doesn't see Asuka tap, right before Sky's Over The Moonsault crushes Charlotte to retain at 17:14.

Rating: B. This got better as it kept going, even with Charlotte being the focal point and getting the tap, meaning she is all but guaranteed to get another title shot down the road. It's good to see Sky retaining though, as she has more than earned a big win like this one. I'm just worried that it's going to be the Charlotte show down the road, though that's all but guaranteed most of the time.

We look at Cody Rhodes and Jey Uso winning the Tag Team Titles earlier tonight.

LA Knight arrived in a Slim Jim racing car. For some reason in the arena, we saw the car pulling up (though we couldn't see that it was Slim Jim) and then the video pulled off before we saw who was in it.

We recap John Cena/LA Knight vs. the Bloodline. Cena returned a few weeks ago and got on the Bloodline's bad side, so Knight stepped up to help him.

Here is Pat McAfee (sporting an Indianapolis Colts title belt) for a surprise. He wasn't about to miss this show in this city and thinks Indianapolis would be a great choice to host Wrestlemania. This city never lets the energy go down and now he's going to do commentary. Before that though, he introduces

John Cena.

John Cena/LA Knight vs. Bloodline

Paul Heyman is here with Jimmy Uso and Solo Sikoa. Cena and Jimmy start things off with Cena powering him down, meaning Heyman's guidance is needed. Heyman's guidance seems to be "grab a headlock" but Cena is back up to run him over. Cena wants and gets Sikoa, who drops Cena with a single shot to the face. Jimmy comes in to stomp away, allowing Sikoa to tie Cena in the Tree of Woe for the running headbutt.

A missed charge doesn't go so well for Jimmy but the tag to Knight is cut off. The chinlock has Cena in more trouble and he just can't quite get over for the tag again. Back in and Sikoa hits the running Umaga Attack in the corner but Cena fights up. That earns him a running spinwheel kick and it's right back to Jimmy.

A quick AA gives Cena a breather but Sikoa breaks up the tag again. There's a headbutt to Sikoa, giving us a LET'S GO SOLO chant from Jimmy (it doesn't catch on). A Banzai Drop hits raised knees though and the diving tag brings in Knight to clean house. Knight neckbreaker Jimmy and stomps away in the corner, followed by a DDT to Sikoa.

Everything breaks down and the LA Elbow hits Jimmy, setting up Cena's high crossbody to Sikoa. Jimmy is right back up with a Superfly Splash to Cena and everyone is down. Knight is sent outside so Cena loads up the AA on Sikoa, only to be superkicked by Jimmy. That lets Jimmy go up, with Knight coming in to jump up for the superplex. The Five Knuckle Shuffle sets up the BFT to finish Jimmy at 17:22.

Rating: B. Nice match here, though it felt more like a big time Smackdown main event than something that needed to be on pay per view. Instead, this was more about giving Knight the big rub by having him team with Cena for a high profile win. Knight is going to have to deal with the Bloodline in the

future and that could make for a big moment.

Post match, the winners show respect.

Damian Priest wants to cash in Money In The Bank tonight, but Rhea Ripley says he's too banged up and won't let him.

The Indiana Hoosiers football team is here, including Declan McMahon, Shane's son/Vince's grandson. I wonder how he got those tickets.

The Brawling Brutes like the new WWE toy truck.

We recap Seth Rollins defending the Raw World Title against Shinsuke Nakamura. Rollins beat him last month to retain but Nakamura won't leave him alone. Therefore tonight, it's Last Man Standing.

Raw World Title: Seth Rollins vs. Shinsuke Nakamura

Rollins is defending in a Last Man Standing match. Cole brings up that Rollins has not been pinned in a singles match since January before remembering that pins mean nothing here. Nakamura bails to the floor to start and sends a chasing Rollins' bad back into the barricade. The fans want tables but will have to settle for Rollins suplexing him on the floor and peeling back the ring mats.

Rollins can't send Nakamura into the exposed concrete but he can hit him with the steps. It's time to throw in a bunch of weapons, which gives Nakamura quite the extended break. Nakamura is able to come back with some hard knees, allowing him to grab some nunchucks. A few hard shots keep Rollins down and Nakamura covers him with a trashcan. Kendo stick shots have Rollins in more trouble and there's a knee to put him down for nowhere near a ten.

Rollins fights out of the reverse exploder though and scores with the Sling Blade for a needed breather. Some stick shots have Nakamura in trouble for a change and there's the suicide

dive to the floor. Back in and a frog splash crushes Nakamura, with Rollins having to pull himself up. Nakamura gets up as well and knees Rollins down, meaning a table can be set up in the corner.

Rollins is able to send him into (not through) the table and the Stomp gives Rollins eight. The announcers' table is loaded up and it's time to bring out a ladder. Nakamura is laid on the table but gets up and rolls away before Rollins can jump off of said ladder. They fight into the crowd with Rollins knocking him over towards the entrance. Nakamura knocks him off the stands and onto a well placed pad though, leaving Rollins to have to beat the count.

Some chair shots knock Rollins back to ringside, where he can't hit a Pedigree on the concrete. He can hit it back inside though, allowing another table to be set at ringside while Nakamura beats the count. Nakamura puts him on the table and hits a top rope double knee for eight. More chair shots have Rollins in trouble as Cole is begging him to stop. Rollins manages a posting and loads Nakamura onto the announcers' table before climbing the ladder.

Nakamura gets up and climbs the other side, where the mist knocks Rollins off the ladder and through the table. That's good for nine so they go back inside. Kinshasa through the table gets nine more, with Rollins having to roll to the floor to survive. Nakamura takes him into the crowd again and they go up onto a small platform. Rollins manages a Pedigree and Stomp onto said platform for nine of his own, followed by a Falcon Arrow through a table (good thing it was there) to retain at 28:24.

Rating: B. That was a hard hitting match and Rollins felt like a star when he won, but it was also kind of a paint by numbers Last Man Standing match. I'm not sure how many times I've seen someone do the roll to the floor spot to save themselves in this kind of match but it's hardly anything more. This should

finish their feud though and now Rollins can move on to something else while Nakamura does....I'm not sure at this point.

Rollins celebrates and a highlight package wraps us up.

Overall Rating: B. I liked the show, but it felt like a big time special edition of Raw than a pay per view. The Tag Team Titles changing hands was a surprise, but other than that, the main event was the only thing that felt like it really belonged on a major show. It wasn't bad by any means and the worst match was completely fine. I just need something more than this, as five matches doesn't even feel like a card that matters all that much. It's worth a look if you want an easy show (that doesn't even last three hours), but they weren't hiding that this was just setting the table for the big stuff next month.

Results

Cody Rhodes/Jey Uso b. Judgment Day – Cross Rhodes to Balor
LW0 b. Bobby Lashley/Street Profits – Backstabber to Ford
Iyo Sky b. Charlotte and Asuka – Over The Moonsault to Charlotte

John Cena/LA Knight b. Bloodline – Blunt Force Trauma to Uso
Seth Rollins b. Shinsuke Nakamura when Nakamura could not answer the ten count

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