

Smackdown – March 1, 2024: Professional Wrestling Is Cool

Smackdown

Date: March 1, 2024

Location: Desert Diamond Arena, Glendale, Arizona

Commentators: Corey Graves, Wade Barrett

Elimination Chamber is over and now we have nothing left on the way to Wrestlemania. That is going to be clear this week as the Rock is back and will be around for the next few weeks. Rock still needs something to do at Wrestlemania and Cody Rhodes has issued a challenge for some point in the future. Maybe we find out something tonight so let's get to it.

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

Elimination Chamber recap.

Here is the Bloodline, minus the Rock, to get things going. Reigns has the fans acknowledge him and it used to be louder, so he has them do it again. The fans want Rocky, so Reigns says get on his page or he is leaving. Reigns isn't happy so he tells Paul Heyman to fire up the jet because we're done here. Heyman says we can't leave that soon because we have other business here. The Rock will be here soon but Reigns is not at all happy with the delay.

We take a break and come back with the Rock in person (and likely in a \$500 shirt). Rock says Glendale is about ten miles from Phoenix and it makes sense for all of these people to be here from Phoenix. It turns out that Phoenix is the #1 city for meth and cocaine use so it all fits. FINALLY, your life has meaning because you cactus loving crackheads have a reason to live, because FINALLY the Rock has come back to Arizona.

It's a great time because for the first time in a long while, professional wrestling is cool. In a word, it is electrifying and that is why everywhere WWE is going, the places are sold out. It's because of the Rock, Roman Reigns and the Bloodline, with the fans seemingly agreeing. You know who isn't cool? Cody Rhodes. If Cody wants to challenge the Rock, the answer is....no. The Rock knows that a lot of the women here want to go one on one with him and deal with his 22 inches. He means his arms of course, and he can't believe Cody is so stupid as to challenge the Rock when he has Reigns to face.

The Bloodline has a counter offer for them: on night one of Wrestlemania, the Rock/Reigns vs. Seth Rollins/Rhodes. But it won't be a regular match. If Rollins and Rhodes win, the Bloodline is barred from the main event of night two, with contracts signed to guarantee it. But if the Bloodline wins, Cody vs. Reigns is Bloodline Rules, meaning anything goes. Maybe Rock is guest referee and Solo Sikoa sings the National Anthem. Rock: "Sikoa has a h*** of a voice." Fans: "SOLO!"

Or maybe Rock can bash Rhodes' head in because it's all fair. Rhodes and Rollins can show up next week in Dallas for an answer and Rhodes knows Rock is the boss on the board. If the challenge isn't accepted (we pause for a HHH chant), Rhodes' challenge is ended tragically. Rock loads up the catchphrase but Reigns grabs his arm (Heyman is terrified) and says he needs something. Reigns will do anything for his family, but he needs this one thing: acknowledge me.

Rock doesn't look sure about that and takes off the sunglasses before acknowledging Reigns as the Tribal Chief. They hug and Heyman's jaw is hanging open in a great visual. Rock: "This is family. Now go home and smoke some more crack." He loads up the catchphrase, with Reigns turning it into "what the Bloodline is cooking". Posing ensues and we're finally done, nearly forty minutes into the show.

So yeah this was very long and they had me hooked the entire

time. They were pressing all of the right buttons with the character stuff as the Rock is still one of the best heels of all time. Reigns interrupting Rock gave us some absolutely amazing facials from Heyman and Rock proclaiming his loyalty to Reigns was a big moment. They also set the stage for Wrestlemania, and Rhodes could get that huge Cinderella moment, provided Rock hasn't turned himself into the most popular guy in the world again.

Austin Theory and Grayson Waller are looking at the end of the men's Elimination Chamber match, when Randy Orton comes in to say that was hilarious. You know what else is funny? Orton taking one of them to the ring and trying to rip their head off! So which one is it going to be? They aren't sure so Orton slaps Theory on the back and says see you out there. That's going to make an entertaining match.

Tiffany Stratton vs. Naomi

Stratton flips around to start but Naomi runs her over and dances a bit. Neither is sure what time it is until Naomi sends her into the corner for a running dropkick. A facebuster gives Naomi two and Stratton rolls outside as we take a break. Back with Stratton hitting a running double stomp for two of her own but Naomi hits something like a hanging Pedigree onto the apron. They slug it out until Stratton hits a spinebuster for two more and they're both down. Stratton goes to the eyes and sends her into the post though, setting up the Prettiest Moonsault Ever for the pin at 8:10.

Rating: C+. The best sign for Stratton's future is that she already feels like she belongs on this show. There hasn't been much of a transitional period as she came up to the main roster pretty much ready to go and hasn't missed a step. She has the character stuff down and the in-ring work to back it up. While she might not be ready for the main event yet, she feels like an almost complete package just a few weeks in and that's impressive.

Video on Bayley being thrown out of Damage CTRL and coming for Iyo Sky at Wrestlemania. Dakota Kai may or may not have sided with Bayley though, which evens the numbers up a bit.

Bayley/Dakota Kai vs. Kabuki Warriors

Non-title and this is Kai's first match in about nine months. The Warriors jump Bayley to start and Sky shoves her off the top so Asuka can fire off the kicks. Bayley gets sent into the corner but manages to send the Warriors into each other. The crawl for the tag...doesn't matter as Kai drops to the floor because it's a ruse. Bayley goes after Kai but gets beaten down by the Warriors as this is thrown out somewhere around 4:30.

Rating: C. This wasn't about the wrestling and there is nothing wrong with that. I'm also glad that they didn't drag out the Kai turn, as it always felt like a strong possibility (at least) and I'd rather they just go with it. If nothing else, this means Bayley has time to recruit some friends and that opens up all kinds of doors.

Post match the beatdown is on with Kai posing with Damage CTRL.

Post break Damage CTRL is in the back and runs into Jade Cargill. Nothing happens though as Nick Aldis gets Jade out of there.

Bron Breaker vs. Xyon Quinn

Spear finishes Quinn at 6 seconds.

Video on Legado del Fantasma vs. LW0.

In Memory of Virgil.

Santos Escobar vs. Carlito

Street fight. They brawl to the floor to start and Carlito

goes straight for a table. Carlito has to whip him into the steps though and then grabs a kendo stick, only to get taken down by a suicide dive. We take a break and come back with Escobar hitting the running knees, crushing Carlito, and the trashcan over his head, in the corner. Escobar's dive is cut off by a chair though and Carlito puts the trashcan over him instead.

Some kendo stick shots have Escobar in more trouble and NOW we can get that table set up. That takes too long so Escobar gets in a knee to the face, only to get crotched on top. Cue Legado to help beat Carlito down for two so the LWO runs in to even things up. Legado gets the better of the fight but cue the returning Rey Mysterio, albeit still on crutches. As you might have guessed, that's just a ruse as Mysterio takes out Legado, allowing Carlito to spit the apple at Escobar. The Backstabber into the 619 gives Carlito the pin at 11:14.

Rating: B-. Much like the previous match, this wasn't about the wrestling but rather having Rey back for revenge. That was a cool moment and while they did the ruse with the crutches, they didn't waste time on it. Good brawl, and it's nice to see Carlito win something other than a tag match for a change.

Here's what's coming on next week show.

The New Catch Republic want another Tag Team Title shot at Wrestlemania, but Nick Aldis says he and Adam Pearce have a plan for next week. LA Knight pops up and is looking for AJ Styles, but Aldis has told Styles to stay away this week. Knight has a chair waiting for Styles and there is nothing Aldis can do about it. Nice fire from Knight here.

Randy Orton vs. Austin Theory

Kevin Owens is on commentary and Grayson Waller is here too. Owens gets in a rather funny bit about how he's smart for bundling his insurance (with Progressive Insurance, the show's sponsor) but Theory and Waller are the kinds of idiots who pay

for everything separately. Orton hammers away to start (with Owens counting along, including throwing in some French) before taking it outside.

Waller cuts off the rams into the announcers' table (Owens is disappointed) and Theory drops Orton onto the table as we take a break. Back with Orton catching Theory on top for the superplex, only to slip and land feet first, with Theory flipping over anyway. Theory was either looking for something to grab or tried to turn it into a Blockbuster on the way down (major points if it's the latter) but seems to be fine, with Orton snapping off the powerslam.

They go outside again and Orton drops both villains onto the announcers' table (Owens: "DID YOU SEE HIM BOUNCE? I UNTIED HIS SHOE!") for some nasty crashes. Back in and Theory counters the RK0 by sending him into the post, setting up the Blockbuster for two. Theory forearm him in the head for two more and tries the rolling...oh never mind as he lands in the RK0 to give Orton the pin at 9:16.

Rating: C+. This was the fun main event to close out and it went rather well. Orton is going to be over no matter what he is doing and beating up a midcard heel is always going to work. They didn't have a great match or anything but Orton did his usual and Owens was a blast on commentary to really make it work.

Post match Theory goes after Orton but Owens runs in and gives Theory a Stunner (with a Scott Hall jump) and Orton RK0's Waller. The good guys pose to end the show.

Overall Rating: B+. Before I get into this: yes, I'm aware none of the matches were rated that high and as I've said multiple times in this, the wrestling wasn't the point tonight. This show was about cranking up the energy and setting the stage for Wrestlemania next month. They covered that in a lot of ways, with some of them taking place in the

same segment.

We have the challenge for the big tag match at Wrestlemania, Mysterio back, Kai turning on Bayley and what could be the start of some big multiman match for the US Title with Owens and Orton being friendly. That's all in addition to Rock being back to his old self and the tease of a bunch of stuff in the opening segment. WWE is on a roll right now and they know it, but more importantly you can feel it, which was the case this week.

Results

Tiffany Stratton b. Naomi – Prettiest Moonsault Ever

Bayley/Dakota Kai vs. Kabuki Warriors went to a no contest when Kai turned on Bayley

Bron Breakker b. Xyon Quinn – Spear

Carlito b. Santos Escobar – 619 from Rey Mysterio

Randy Orton b. Austin Theory – RK0

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