

Smackdown – April 12, 2024: The Wheels Keep Moving

Smackdown

Date: April 12, 2024

Location: Little Caesars Arena, Detroit, Michigan

Commentators: Corey Graves, Wade Barrett

It's the first Smackdown after Wrestlemania and the big story is Cody Rhodes finishing the story, meaning it is time to find out what is next. That could go in a variety of different directions and after Raw, we aren't likely to see the Rock anytime soon. I'm curious about where this and everything else goes so let's get to it.

Here are [Night One](#) and [Night Two](#) of Wrestlemania if you need a recap.

We open with a quick Wrestlemania recap.

Here is Cody Rhodes to quite the hero's welcome, including the YOU DESERVE IT chant that delays the start of his chat. Cody talks about how the Rock interrupted him on Raw and it made him think of someone from Detroit. That someone would say "who the h*** told you tonight was open mic night b****?"

After that line from Cody's wife Brandi Rhodes from a few years ago on AEW Dynamite, Cody apologizes for the swearing and talks about the Rock handing him something we couldn't see. Cody doesn't say what it was but says that with Rock going off to Hollywood, he's in the rear view mirror. That means it is time to get ready for Backlash in France, where he will be facing one of six wrestlers.

Cody goes over the six options (Santos Escobar, Rey Mysterio, LA Knight, AJ Styles, Bobby Lashley and Kevin Owens) and says in some cases you need to find out who the better man is. We

are sold out here in Detroit and he is no longer the hunter but rather the hunted. To those six wrestlers, if you come at the king, you better not miss. For those of you don't know him, he was undesirable, became undeniable and is now undisputed. This was the short form victory speech from Cody, but he moved towards his first challenger so the wheels continue to turn.

The Bloodline finds Cody Rhodes' dressing room, with Kevin Owens sticking his head out. Solo Sikoa says he'll take care of this. Paul Heyman says winning and losing matters here and if you want the locker room back, the title has to come back to the Bloodline. That's from the Tribal Chief, so Sikoa seems to rethink things.

Sheamus is coming back.

LA Knight vs. Santos Escobar vs. Bobby Lashley

The winner faces the winner of another triple threat match for the Backlash title shot. After seeing a clip of Legado del Fantasma saying they didn't attack Dragon Lee last week, it's a brawl to start with Lashley taking over. Lashley and Knight head outside, with Escobar diving onto both of them as we take a break about a minute in.

Back with Lashley cleaning house until Knight knocks him to the floor. Knight takes over on Escobar...and here is Legado to beat him down, including a triple powerbomb. Lashley comes back in but gets beaten down as well, with the Street Profits coming in for the save. With everyone else gone, Knight hits the BFT to pin Escobar at 8:34.

Rating: C+. The action was good but there was a lot packed into this and that might not have been a good thing. Having that many people run in made the match feel secondary and that shouldn't be the case in a match with some actual stakes. Knight winning should be setting up a rematch with AJ Styles next week and that is a good way to go.

The LWO doesn't believe that Legado del Fantasma didn't take out Dragon Lee. Rey Mysterio says he's done a lot in recent years, but he thinks he has one more run as WWE Champion.

Here is the Bloodline for a chat. Paul Heyman talks about how things went badly at Wrestlemania and brings up Seth Rollins being the big problem. Rollins came in and distracted Reigns, who gave into temptation and went after Rollins so the focused Cody Rhodes could end everything. Cody Rhodes is the new undisputed WWE Champion, but like a phoenix rising from the ashes...and Solo Sikoa cuts Heyman off.

Sikoa says loses matter, so there are consequences to losing, right? Heyman agrees, with Sikoa saying consequences need change. Heyman panics, but Sikoa moves him aside to look at Jimmy Uso. Sikoa slowly hugs him, says he loves him, and then steps aside so the debuting Tama Tonga can jump Jimmy. The beatdown is on and Tama poses, with Sikoa pulling Heyman over to them (Heyman: "NO PLEASE!").

Heyman gets to do the pose with them and tries to call Roman Reigns, but Sikoa knocks the phone out of his hand and stomps on it. Jimmy gets the chair wrapped around his head in the corner, where Sikoa says he loves him and the running hip attack (Heyman: "THIS IS NOT WHAT THE TRIBAL CHIEF WANTS!") connects. The Bloodline leaves, with Heyman looking terrified/bewildered and Jimmy looking dead. This was tremendous, with Heyman selling things as only he can and a feeling of "when the Tribal Chief is away, the mice will play". The Bloodline continues, and now we get to see where things go in the new direction.

Cameron Grimes vs. Bron Breaker

Breaker wrestles him around to start and hits the Steiner Line. Grimes manages some kicks out of the corner but goes up and is kind of World's Strongest Slammed out of the air. The spear finishes for Breaker at 1:19. If Breaker can be

healthy, he's World Champion in a few years.

AJ Styles is ready for Rey Mysterio and Kevin Owens and hopes LA Knight is watching.

Here is Bayley for a chat and the fans really seem to love her again. She talks about how good it feels to hear that again and how she has been champion before. This time feels different though because she beat Iyo Sky to get here. It represents the most talented locker room she has ever been a part of, but even more than that, it's because of all of the fans. The fans never gave up on her and she thanks them so much.

Let's start this off right by giving someone a new opportunity so here is Tiffany Stratton to interrupt. She isn't sure why she wasn't invited to Wrestlemania so she accepts the challenge. Bayley wasn't talking about "Terry" because she had someone else in mind: Naomi. Tiffany: "NAOMI? She couldn't win a title if it glowed in the dark!" Cue Naomi, with Tiffany saying she already beat her. Naomi takes the coat off and says Tiffany is trying her on the wrong night. She can't accept Bayley's challenge just yet because she needs to beat Tiffany right here and now. Bayley is slipping right back into her old style and that is great.

Paul Heyman checks on Jimmy Uso, when Tama Tonga comes in to say by orders of the Tribal Chief (Heyman is scared again), and Solo Sikoa comes in with the taped thumb. Tonga and Sikoa leave. Heyman: "What the h*** does that mean?" Lost and confused Heyman is working very well.

Tiffany Stratton vs. Naomi

Non-title and Bayley is at ringside. We're joined in progress with Naomi running the ropes but getting knocked down. Stratton takes her into the corner for some shots to the ribs but Naomi hits a knee to the face. Back up and Naomi hammers away, only to be sent outside for a crash as we take a break.

We come back with Naomi hitting a middle rope spinning kick to the head. Stratton drops her again and hits a running double stomp for two of her own. The Prettiest Moonsault Ever misses though and Naomi grabs a rollup for the pin at 9:16.

Rating: C. They needed to give Naomi a win to set her up for her title shot and while I could have gone with it not being against Stratton, this was the right way to go. Stratton is going to be around the title picture sooner than later and it wouldn't shock me to see her cause some mayhem when Naomi gets her shot.

Grayson Waller and Austin Theory brag about winning the Smackdown Tag Team Titles.

The Street Profits and New Catch Republic are watching the video. Nick Aldis says we'll find the next challengers next week.

Logan Paul brags about beating a legend in Randy Orton and a dunce in Kevin Owens. It was the biggest Wrestlemania ever and that's because of him.

Chelsea Green/Piper Niven vs. Jade Cargill/Bianca Belair

This is Niven's first match in about two months. Belair beats up Green to start so it's off to Niven, who tries going after the braid. That doesn't work at all as it's off to Cargill, who hits Jaded for the pin at 1:22. Yeah that worked.

Kevin Owens takes a Detroit Tigers WWE Title belt and, after shoving a CM Punk shirt off the table, talks about how he's going to win. Also, Dominik Mysterio sucks.

Rey Mysterio vs. Kevin Owens vs. AJ Styles

The winner gets LA Knight next week for the shot against Cody Rhodes at Backlash. Styles gets sent to the floor to start but he cuts off Rey's dive without much trouble. Owens knocks Styles down and hits a Cannonball against the barricade. Rey

drops Owens and we take an early break.

Back with Styles flipping Rey into a tornado DDT on Owens but being able to block the 619. Owens is back in and Styles is sent outside, leaving Owens to hit the swinging superplex on Mysterio. With everyone back in, Owens German suplexes both of them at once for a rather nasty landing and a triple breather. Rey tries the 619 on Styles but Owens breaks it up and hits a Stunner to send Rey outside. The Swanton hits knees so Rey and AJ go up. Styles hits a Styles Clash to send Rey onto Owens, which is enough to give Styles the pin at 9:14.

Rating: B-. They did some cool stuff in here but Styles was the only winner that made sense here. Styles vs. Knight II for the title shot is a good way to go and it wouldn't surprise me to see Styles move on. Styles is a perfect choice to be Rhodes' first challenger, as beating him would mean something but it's not wasting a big title shot. For now though, nice main event to set up next week.

LA Knight comes out for the staredown with Styles to end the show.

Overall Rating: B-. The Bloodline stuff was the highlight here, with Tama Tonga being added in a good moment. Other than that, they set up a #1 contenders match to get us the Backlash main event and gave us Bayley's first challenger. Throw in squashes for Bron Breakker and Jade Cargill and this was a fun show which also played off what we saw at Wrestlemania.

Results

LA Knight b. Santos Escobar and Bobby Lashley – BFT to Escobar

Bron Breakker b. Cameron Grimes – Spear

Naomi b. Tiffany Stratton – Rollup

Jade Cargill/Bianca Belair b. Chelsea Green/Piper Niven – Jaded to Green

AJ Styles b. Kevin Owens and Rey Mysterio – Super Styles Clash to Mysterio

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