

Smackdown – April 19, 2024: The Show Setting Up The Show After The Show Before The Show

Smackdown

Date: April 19, 2024

Location: PPG Paints Arena, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

Commentators: Corey Graves, Wade Barrett

We have just a few weeks before Backlash and that means it is time to crown a new #1 contender. That gets covered this week, as LA Knight meets AJ Styles in a Wrestlemania rematch for the shot against Cody Rhodes at Backlash. Other than that, we very well may be in for some new Tag Team Title belts. Let's get to it.

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

We run down the card.

AJ Styles vs. LA Knight

For the World Title shot against Cody Rhodes at Backlash. Knight grabs a headlock to start and puts the brakes on before Styles can hit the dropkick. They head outside with Knight ramming him into the announcers' table, as is Knight's custom. A running dropkick through the ropes puts Styles down again and we take a break.

Back with Knight slugging away but stereo crossbodies leave them both down. They slug it out with Knight getting the better of things and taking Styles up top. The top rope superplex gives Knight two but Styles is back with the Pele. It's too early for the Phenomenal Forearm so Knight slams him

down, setting up the jumping elbow. Styles heads to the apron and manages a quick poke to the eye, setting up the Phenomenal Forearm to go to Backlash at 11:04.

Rating: C+. Styles makes good sense as Cody's first challenger as Knight would be too popular. Cody vs. Styles will be at least a perfectly acceptable match between two talented stars and Cody should look good as a result. I'm not wild on Knight losing so soon after Wrestlemania, but at least he got his big win there, which is better than nothing at all.

We look back at Tama Tonga debuting and wiping Jimmy Uso out of the Bloodline.

Earlier today, Solo Sikoa, in a very nice suit, meets Paul Heyman in the back and introduces Tama Tonga as the newest member of the Bloodline. Heyman doesn't seem sure about this but Sikoa cuts him off and wants to know if Kevin Owens is here.

Here is Nick Aldis in the ring to introduce HHH for an announcement. HHH talks about the amazing future that Nick Aldis (and Adam Pearce) are leading us into, so we need Grayson Waller and Austin Theory out here. They get right to the point: the team will now be known as the WWE Tag Team Champions, complete with new belts, which look like the old WWF World Tag Team Titles. Since we have new champions, we need new challengers so let's do this.

Well also after Naomi says she isn't letting her friendship with Bayley get in the way of winning the Women's Title tonight.

Street Profits vs. New Catch Republic vs. Legado del Fantasma vs. AOP

Austin Theory and Grayson Waller are on commentary. Ford headlocks Bate to start but Bate technicals him down without much effort. It's quickly off to Berto to get in a cheap shot

on Ford, setting up a running knee from Angel. The AOP aren't having this and come in to wreck people as we take a break.

Back with Akam hitting Ford in the face and grabbing an over the shoulder backbreaker. Ford manages to slip out and get over to Bate for a tag as everything breaks down. As the champs can't focus because of their beautiful new titles, a Tower of Doom (or most of one) leaves some people down, with Bate being double gorilla pressed off the top to make it worse. An assisted powerbomb gets two on Bate but the Republic is back with stereo ankle locks to Legado. Those are broken up and we take another break.

Back again with Rezar powerbombing Dawkins and Bate getting planted as well. The Republic escape the Super Collider and knock the AOP outside as everything breaks down again. Berto's springboard spinning kick to the face gets two on Dawkins but Dawkins is right back up for the Domsday Blockbuster. Bate snaps Dawkins' fingers before the Republic and Ford all hit flip dives to the floor. Back in and Berto clotheslines Bate, setting up Angel's Lionsault. Ford frog splashes in for the save and the Revelation gives Dawkins the pin on Angel at 17:14.

Rating: B-. This got more time than I was expecting and it worked pretty well. The biggest story here is getting the first challengers set up for the new champs and the Profits are great choices. They're the kind of team who could conceivably give the new champs a run for their money or even win the titles, but they could also be a good set of first victims. Nice match here, with the time flying by.

We look at Rhea Ripley vacating the Women's Title due to her shoulder injury.

Bayley is a bit shaken up by what she saw Rhea Ripley do on Raw but she's not losing tonight.

Paul Heyman and Solo Sikoa keep looking for Kevin Owens but

Heyman tells him that he (as in Solo) isn't allowed to make these decisions yet. Sikoa: "Are you done yet?" They come into the arena and, after a break, Heyman talks about being one of the better backstage politickers in WWE. We pause for a WE WANT ROMAN chant, which has Heyman a bit broken up, but Solo takes the mic.

Sikoa says he had to lose a brother last week to gain a new member of the Bloodline in Tama Tonga. Cue Tonga, who is beating Kevin Owens down the aisle. Referees help Owens to the back as Sikoa and Tonga pose, but (the very bloody) Owens comes back, only to get beaten down by the Bloodline again. Nick Aldis eventually comes in and the Bloodline leaves. Heyman is selling the heck out of this stuff, as the fear he is showing makes me want to know what happens when Reigns, or someone else, shows up again.

Post break Nick Aldis drags Paul Heyman to the parking lot where Tama Tonga's car has rammed into Kevin Owens'. Heyman is aghast but Aldis threatens him with repercussions if he doesn't get this under control.

Santos Escobar vs. Carlito

Elektra Lopez and Zelina Vega are here too. Carlito hammers away to start and sends him outside, setting up a dropkick through the ropes. Vega poses on Carlito's shoulders and we take a break. Back with Escobar snapping off a super hurricanrana as Vega is looking terrified. The armbars go on but Carlito fights up to make the clothesline comeback. The women get into a brawl on the floor and the distraction lets Escobar hit the Phantom Driver for the pin at 7:37.

Rating: C. Not much to this one, which has been the case for almost everything Carlito has done in recent months. They seem to be pointing towards Carlito being revealed as the guy who took out Dragon Lee, but it almost feels too obvious. At the same time, a heel turn could do Carlito some good, as he

doesn't have anything going on at the moment.

Damage CTRL is in a sky box...but Jade Cargill and Bianca Belair pop up next to them to watch the main event.

Cody Rhodes, currently in England on the UK tour, praises AJ Styles and says he's looking forward to the title match at Backlash.

Smackdown Women's Title: Bayley vs. Naomi

Naomi is challenging and they fight over wrist control to start. Bayley takes her down into an armbar but Naomi fights up with a springboard bulldog. The Rear View gives Naomi two and we take a break. Back with Naomi hitting a high crossbody for two but Bayley knocks her down for a change. The top rope elbow only hits raised knees though and Naomi grabs a slingshot X Factor.

Naomi's split legged moonsault hits raised knees and now the top rope elbow connects for two. It's too early for the Rose Plant and Naomi pulls her into the reverse Rings Of Saturn. Bayley gets to the rope so it's time to slug it out/yell at each other. Both of them crash out to the floor, where Bayley hits a Bayley onto the announcers' table...and cue Tiffany Stratton to jump Bayley for the DQ at 11:17.

Rating: C+. There's a good chance that this is setting up a triple threat for the title at Backlash and that isn't a bad way to go. Stratton interfering here makes sense but they waited long enough that her interference still felt like a surprise instead of waiting around for her to come in. Naomi has some complaining to do here and we should be in for a showdown when she gets another chance.

Stratton sends them inside for the double Prettiest Moonsault Ever to end the show.

Overall Rating: C+. They were in a weird spot with this show

as they had to set some things up for Backlash, but with the biggest story being "Roman Reigns isn't here and the Bloodline is going nuts" and the Draft next week, it wasn't the most important feeling of a show. What matters is they had a good enough show with some nice action, but everything is changing next week and they knew it.

Results

AJ Styles b. LA Knight – Phenomenal Forearm

Street Profits b. Legado del Fantasma, New Catch Republic and AOP – Revelation to Angel

Santos Escobar b. Carlito – Phantom Driver

Bayley b. Naomi via DQ when Tiffany Stratton interfered

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