

# Backlash 2025: Way Above And Beyond

## Backlash 2025

Date: May 10, 2025

Location: Enterprise Center, St. Louis, Missouri

Commentators: Michael Cole, Wade Barrett

We are officially back on pay per view and in this case, it's kind of an In Your House style card. This show is pretty much all about Randy Orton, the hometown hero, challenging John Cena for the Smackdown World Title. Odds are this is the last match in their very storied rivalry and that's carrying the show. Let's get to it.

The opening video looks at Randy Orton vs. John Cena, some of the other matches, and then Orton vs. Cena again.

US Title: LA Knight vs. Drew McIntyre vs. Damian Priest vs. Jacob Fatu

Fatu is defending and the fans are chanting for him at the start. Knight and Fatu slug it out in the corner while the other two head to the floor. Fatu is sent into the post and dropped with a neckbreaker, followed by a slingshot shoulder. A pop up powerslam takes McIntyre down but Knight has to reverse Fatu's Samoan drop into a reverse DDT. McIntyre is back up with a trio of neckbreakers but Knight is right there to break up the Claymore.

Priest's super hurricanrana brings Fatu down and he takes out Fatu again on the floor. The fans want tables (because of course), but have to settle for Priest hitting an Old School crossbody on McIntyre. Fatu sends Priest into the barricade and it's time for the big McIntyre vs. Fatu slugout. The pop up Samoan drop plants McIntyre and the running Umaga Attack makes it worse.

McIntyre gets tied in the Tree of Woe but he superplexes Knight down. Fatu gets superplexed onto Knight in a Swanton and cleans house, with the fans going nuts. The BFT drops Fatu and Priest gives Knight the South Of Heaven, only to turn into a Claymore. Priest falls onto Knight for two, with McIntyre making a last second save. McIntyre sends Fatu outside and drops Knight with the Futureshock.

The Claymore does it again but Priest pulls the referee at two, giving McIntyre something else to hate him about. McIntyre and Priest fight over the barricade, but Knight avoids Fatu's triple jump moonsault. The top rope elbow hits a standing Fatu, followed by another one to a downed Fatu for two. Priest and McIntyre brawl at the tech area, where South Of Heaven sends both of them through a bunch of tables.

With all that going on, Knight sends Fatu into various things at ringside but Solo Sikoa shows up to pull Fatu off the announcers' table. Knight goes after Sikoa but gets jumped by the debuting Jeff Cobb, who crushes Knight against the post. Fatu is a bit confused but hits the running Umaga attack and the triple jump moonsault to retain at 17:56.

**Rating:** B. Hot opener here and the countdown is even more officially on to Fatu breaking free as a massive good guy star. He's doing things that no one else can do in the ring and the crowd is responding to him. It's one of those cases where you do not see someone doing this kind of thing very often and that works. We're also likely coming up on Priest vs. McIntyre again, maybe in a Last Man Standing match, and that's a fun way to go. Good, hot opener here.

Post match Fatu looks at Sikoa and Cobb but leaves on his own.

We recap Lyra Valkyria vs. Becky Lynch. Valkyria grew up idolizing Lynch and they won the Women's Tag Team Titles together at Wrestlemania. Then they lost the titles on the following Raw, with Lynch beating her down. Valkyria is ready

for revenge and is willing to put the Women's Intercontinental Title on the line. There is another history here as Valkyria took the NXT Women's Title from Lynch, so the win isn't a crazy thought.

#### Women's Intercontinental Title: Lyra Valkyria vs. Becky Lynch

Lynch is challenging and takes her down to start before hammering away. An armdrag has Valkyria looking a bit shaken but she's right back with a rocking horse to have Lynch in trouble for a change. That's switched into a surfboard, with Lynch not being able to do much. A northern lights suplex gets two on Lynch and she goes outside for a breather. Back in and Lynch takes Valkyria down and hammers away before rubbing her face into the mat.

A kick to the face in the corner gives Lynch two and she takes Valkyria outside to yell at Valkyria's fiance. Valkyria strikes away back inside and grabs a fisherman's buster for two. A sitout powerbomb gets the same and Valkyria takes her up top for a delayed superplex. They trade rollups for two each, with Lynch getting caught grabbing the rope. Valkyria fights back and hits a top rope Fameasser for two more.

Instead of covering, Valkyria hesitates before going up for a moonsault, allowing Lynch to get her knees up. They fight over a cross armbreaker until Lynch grabs the Manhandle Slam for two. A frustrated Lynch hammers away and goes to grab a chair. That's taken away so she pulls a turnbuckle pad off, only to get caught with a spinning kick to the head. Valkyria hits a middle rope moonsault for two but gets sent face first into the buckle (not the exposed one).

Another Manhandle Slam gives Lynch another two but a quick Nightwing connects...and the referee is busy trying to put the turnbuckle pad back on. The very delayed cover gets two and they trade rollups, until Valkyria actually gets the upset pin at 18:45. Valkyria was touching her nose over and over on the

cover so there is a good chance it's busted.

**Rating:** B+. This went WAY above and beyond what I was expecting and they pretty much hit it out of the park. Valkyria hung in there with an all time legend and even beat her clean. If WWE is serious about bringing in some fresh blood, that's exactly what they need to do. Valkyria did it here and Tiffany Stratton did it at Wrestlemania. These two beat the fire out of each other and Valkyria retains to really establish her in a big way. Nice job, and Bayley can come back to feud with Lynch sooner than later.

Post match Lynch grabs the Disarm-Her, with Valkyria grabbing her nose (commentary acknowledges it too).

We recap the Intercontinental Title match. Dominik Mysterio won the title in a four way match at Wrestlemania, also involving Penta. Since Penta didn't get pinned, he's getting a title shot here.

#### Intercontinental Title: Penta vs. Dominik Mysterio

Mysterio, in Psicosis inspired gear (well, Nicho El Millionairio), is defending and kicks him into the corner to start. A handstand doesn't work for Mysterio as Penta kicks him down, only to be sent outside for a suicide DDT. Back in and a slingshot hilo gives Mysterio two and the fans seem to like his cockiness.

Penta fights out of a chinlock and hits a crossbody to the floor for a needed breather. A crucifix gets two on Mysterio, who grabs a quick Oblivion for two of his own. They crash out to the floor and here is Judgment Day for the distraction. Balor grabs the chair but takes WAY too long, meaning the referee can throw them all out. Penta hits the big flip dive onto Carlito and McDonagh but cue El Grande Americano to headbutt Penta off the top. The frog splash retains the title at 9:25.

**Rating:** C+. This was a step down from the previous two matches but it was a perfectly serviceable match which would have been fine on any given Raw. The interference should set up something for the future and it was a good way to make Mysterio look like a star. WWE pretty clearly has something planned for him and this was a rare showcase. Not a great match, but it did what it needed to do.

We recap Gunther vs. Pat McAfee. Gunther lost the World Title to Jey Uso at Wrestlemania and McAfee was rather excited. On the following Raw, Gunther yelled at commentator Michael Cole and attacked him, with McAfee stepping up for his friend. McAfee got choked out too and now we have a match to settle things, as McAfee is standing up against a bully.

#### Pat McAfee vs. Gunther

Michael Cole flat out says he's not going to be impartial here, which makes sense. Gunther doesn't seem impressed by McAfee and grabs an armbar. That's reversed into a headlock before Gunther puts him on the apron for a pat on the head. McAfee tries to jump back over the top but trips a bit, allowing Gunther to knock him down without much trouble. Some shots to the face stagger Gunther a bit but he fires off the chops to cut McAfee right back down.

A quick kick to the back staggers Gunther but he's back with a kick of his own. Gunther suplexes him down and grabs the sleeper, which is actually broken up. Another German suplex drops McAfee but he slips out of another one. McAfee gets in some punts for two and a pump kick into a superkick has Gunther rocked. Another kick is countered into a powerbomb though and Gunther pulls him into the Boston crab. Cole goes to ringside and tells McAfee to give up so Gunther drags him back to the center.

Some elbows to the head rock McAfee again and Gunther pulls Cole inside. That's enough for McAfee to get in a big boot but

Gunther kicks him right back down. Gunther tries a suplex but Cole grabs the foot to trip him down, giving McAfee two. That ticks Gunther off and the distraction lets McAfee get a sleeper. That's broken up though and Gunther blasts him with a clothesline. The sleeper goes on and McAfee is in trouble but he fights up again. Gunther pulls him back down though and McAfee is out at 14:08.

**Rating:** B. This was about as well put together as it could have been. At the end of the day, McAfee and Cole combined aren't going to be a threat to Gunther and there was no reason to pretend they would be. McAfee got in some punts as his big weapon and while they staggered Gunther, they didn't put him in any serious trouble. Gunther shrugged them off, along with Cole's interference, and then won. I was enjoying the story they were telling, but there was no way this was ending any other way without one heck of a surprise.

Post match Gunther actually shows McAfee some respect.

We recap John Cena vs. Randy Orton, which is built around the two of them being all time greats and joined at the hip for the better part of twenty years. Now it's one more time, with the roles reversed for the first time on the big WWE stage.

#### Smackdown World Title: John Cena vs. Randy Orton

Cena is defending and Orton is the hometown hero. We get the Big Match Intros and we're ready to go, with the fans entirely behind Cena. They circle each other a bit to start and Cena pokes him in the eye, only for Orton to do the same, with Cena bailing out to the floor. Back in and Orton grabs a headlock takeover to grind away on Cena. Back up and Cena gets shouldered out tot he floor, where it's time for a walk up the aisle.

Orton throws him back in and gets punched in the corner, only to reverse it for twenty right hands of his own. The chinlock goes on but Cena reverses into one of his own, only to get

belly to back suplexed down. Back up and Cena initiates the finishing sequence but the AA is countered. Orton can't get the hanging DDT but he can mostly block the STF. Now the hanging DDT can connect but the RK0 is blocked.

Cena tries the AA, which is reversed into an RK0 in a sweet counter to leave them both down. Back up and an AA gives Cena two so he tries the running shoulders. Orton comes up to counter one of those with an RK0 (points for finding new ways to do that thing) but the Punt misses. Another AA plants Orton but Cena misses a Punt...and the referee gets bumped. Cena hits yet another AA, though he realizes the referee is down.

That lets Cena grab the belt, which takes too long so Orton hits the RK0 for a delayed two. They go outside and Orton clears off the announcers' table. That takes too long though and the referee gets bumped again. Cena's AA is countered though and Orton gives him an AA onto the table. Orton loads up a table (this match did not need a table) and gives Cena an AA through it as the referee is STILL down (I'm guessing because the first one didn't go well).

The RK0 connects and another referee runs in for two so Cena grabs the belt. That hits the new referee so Orton this another RK0 for no cover. Cue Nick Aldis and some agents to check on the referee (unlike the one who went into the steps, who was down for about five minutes and got nothing) so Orton RK0's everyone he can, including Aldis. The Punt is loaded up but here is R-Truth to beg Orton for mercy. Orton clears him out and Cena hits Orton low, setting up a belt shot to retain the title (as the first referee recovers after about ten minutes) at 27:56.

**Rating:** B. This is going to be one of the more divisive matches you'll see in awhile. It's an absolute insane mess of spamming finishers and a ton of ref bumps, but I haven't laughed so much at a match in a good while. It went so over the top that it was turning into something of a farce, which

made me laugh. I'm not sure how much drama there was about a title change, but I can go with these two having one last song and dance for the road.

Post match Cena says he wants competition and isn't finding it here. He goes to leave and gets cheered, which makes him pause for a second before heading out. That's some interesting character stuff from Cena. He's still bitter, but he slipped back into his old self there for a second. Remember that a few weeks ago, he was saying he didn't need to do anything but show up. Now he wants competition, because in his heart of hearts, he's a competitor and wants to prove he's the best, no matter what he might say.

**Overall Rating:** B+. This one is going to depend on your taste in the main event and I found it absolutely hysterically entertaining. The only match on the show which wasn't rather good was Mysterio vs. Penta and even that was completely fine. For a show that had a grand total of no expectations coming in, this was a heck of an entertaining night. The fact that it was done before 10pm EST makes it even better. Pretty great show here.

### Results

Jacob Fatu b. LA Knight, Drew McIntyre and Damian Priest – Triple jump moonsault to Knight

Lyra Valkyria b. Becky Lynch – Rollup

Dominik Mysterio b. Penta – Frog splash

Gunther b. Pat McAfee – Sleeper

John Cena b. Randy Orton – Belt shot

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