

Smackdown – May 16, 2025: The Changing Of The Seasons

Smackdown

Date: May 16, 2025

Location: First Horizon Coliseum, Greensboro, North Carolina

Commentators: Joe Tessitore, Wade Barrett

We're done with Backlash and that means it is time to get ready for Money In The Bank. The show is in less than a month so it's time to start getting ready with the qualifying matches. Other than that, John Cena is still the World Champion and that means he'll need a new challenger sooner or later. Let's get to it.

[Here is Backlash if you need a recap.](#)

We open with a long Backlash rematch.

Here are Solo Sikoa, Jacob Fatu, and Jeff Cobb for a chat. Sikoa introduces Cobb as JC and talks about how it's time to bring everything back to the family. That starts tonight with him winning his Money In The Bank qualifying match. Fatu grabs the mic (the fans approve) and says don't get it twisted: he brought the US Title back to the Family and he's ready to deal with anyone coming after the title by himself.

Sikoa says he and JC get what he means and this is all to help Fatu. The title on his shoulder is proof of the love Sikoa has for him. Fatu begrudgingly says he loves Sikoa, who wants a bit more than that. Cue LA Knight to run in from behind and jump JC before running off again. At some point Knight needs to win something over one of these guys and I don't see that happening anytime soon.

Michin and B-Fab want to win a briefcase and the titles but Chelsea Green and the Secret Hervice come in, with Green

saying she'll win the briefcase. Alexa Bliss pops in for some glaring. Green threatens to put tariffs on mediocrity and B-Fab and Michin are first.

Money In The Bank Qualifying Match: Alexa Bliss vs. Chelsea Green vs. Michin

Green charges into a superkick to the floor to start and Michin blocks Bliss' headscissors. Bliss rolls Michin up for two instead so Green yells at both of them, earning herself a double dropkick to the floor. Green is back up to knock both of them down and we take a break. Back with all three down before Michin gets up to knock them into the corner.

A Cannonball hits both of them for two each before everyone gets in a kick to the head. Green and Bliss slug it out until Michin cuts Bliss off. Back up and Bliss gives Michin a tornado DDT and Twisted Bliss gets two with Green making the save. The Unprettier hits Michin but Bliss pulls her away and hits the Sister Abigail DDT to pin Green at 9:03.

Rating: C+. Bliss is back and in a match where she has succeeded before, but at the same time, it's still hard to get interested in her with the whole weird evil stuff. Otherwise, this was a match where I was hoping to see Green move on, and it would not surprise me to see her get into the match anyway. It would be a shame to see that incredible run she had over the last few months just end so quickly and it would surprise me if that wound up happening.

We look back at Fraxiom beating the Street Profits last week and then getting beaten up by DIY (who also attacked the Motor City Machine Guns).

Fraxiom vs. DIY

Ciampa takes Axiom down by the arm but Axiom is right back up so Frazer can come in for a kick to the face. Everything breaks down and Fraxiom hit some dive, only for Gargano to

pull the rope down. Axiom crashes out to the floor and DIY gets in a double pat on the back as they take over. Back in and Gargano slams Axiom legs first into the ropes and we take a break.

We come back with Frazer coming in to clean house, with the running shooting star press getting two on Gargano. The Phoenix splash misses though and Gargano superkicks Frazer's moonsault out of the air. The Fairy Tale Ending/superkick combination gets two on Frazer with Axiom making the save.

Project Ciampa gets the same on Frazer but Ciampa misses the running knee. A superkick/brainbuster combination plants Gargano for two, with Ciampa's running knee making the save. Axiom and Gargano slug it out until Axiom tries to tie up the arms. Ciampa is back in to go for Axiom's mask but Frazer makes the save. Frazer rolls Gargano up for the pin at 11:18.

Rating: B. Fraxiom's rapid push continues and that is a fun thing to see. They already have some status from NXT and it's nice to see them having such similar success around here. If nothing else, we might be in for a surprise title change when the rematch takes place. As usual, DIY can work with anyone and they can more than hang with a team as fast as Fraxiom.

Post match DIY jumps Fraxiom but the Motor City Machine Guns run in for the save.

Andrade gives Rey Fenix a pep talk before Fenix's Money In The Bank qualifying match. Solo Sikoa and company come in to look for LA Knight.

The Street Profits applaud Fraxiom on their win and the title match is on for next week. Works for Fraxiom.

Wade Barrett had a sitdown interview with R-Truth earlier today. R-Truth says you can always depend on John Cena, who he calls a beacon of light. Barrett thinks this is crazy, as Cena attacked R-Truth at the Backlash press conference. R-Truth

says that wasn't the Cena he knew but if he has to beat Cena back to his senses, so be it. They're fighting at Saturday Night's Main Event. This continues to be one of the more interesting stories in WWE at the moment, just because it has been set up for such a long time now.

Damian Priest is sick of Drew McIntyre and wants him in a cage.

Carmelo Hayes, with the Miz, is ready to take out Aleister Black.

Aleister Black vs. Carmelo Hayes

Miz is here with Hayes. They grapple to start until Black shoulders him down, giving us a double nip up. The threat of Black Mass has Hayes bailing away, with Black sitting down at the same time. Miz offers a distraction though and Hayes takes over with a flip dive. We take a break and come back with Black kicking Hayes out to the floor.

Back in Black strikes away, including a dropkick to put him down again. Hayes gets in a spinning faceplant but Black kicks him in the face again. A German suplex gives Black two but Hayes grabs the suplex cutter for the same. Miz gets on the apron, which doesn't sit well with Hayes, allowing Black to strike away again. Black Mass is loaded up, which draws Miz in for the DQ at 10:27.

Rating: C+. They're in a bit of a weird place here as they're teasing the idea of Black needing help against these two but that brings up a pair of problems. First of all, Black needs to be on his own rather than being part of a group, at least for a good while. At the same time, shouldn't Black be able to handle them on his own? It doesn't seem to be asking that much.

Post match Miz and Hayes lay Black out.

Alexa Bliss wants the Money In The Bank briefcase but stops to talk to Charlotte, who is outside of Nick Aldis' office. Charlotte says they were never friends but Giulia walks out of the office. Aldis comes out and says Giulia is on Smackdown. Makes sense as there was no need for her to be in NXT for the long term.

We look at Tiffany Stratton cashing in her Money In The Bank briefcase to beat Nia Jax for the Women's Title. Now Jax wants her title back.

Here is Drew McIntyre for a chat. The only thing in that video from Damian Priest that was true was all of the violence they have inflicted on each other. McIntyre has beaten Priest a few times now and Priest can't let it go. The reality is that Priest has cost McIntyre over and over and this has to end, so he'll see Priest in a cage next Saturday. As McIntyre goes to leave, he runs into Solo Sikoa and company on the way to the ring for Sikoa's match. Simple and to the point here, which is what the feud needs. We've seen them fight enough already.

Money In The Bank Qualifying Match: Solo Sikoa vs. Rey Fenix vs. Jimmy Uso

JC and Jacob Fatu are here with Sikoa, who drops Fenix to start. Uso and Fenix knock Sikoa outside though, leaving Fenix to kick Uso in the head. They chop it out until Fenix hits a springboard missile dropkick. Sikoa pulls Jimmy to the floor for a ram into the announcers' table, only for Fenix to dive onto both of them. Back in and Spinning Solo plants Fenix before Rock Bottoming Uso onto the table.

We take a break and come back with Uso going up top, where Fenix catches him with a shot to the head. Uso superkicks Fenix out of the air but Sikoa drops Uso to give us a three way breather. Sikoa hits a pair of running Umaga Attacks in the corners but Uso superkicks him into a rollup from Fenix. Back up and Fenix's rope walk kick to the face hits Uso. Cue

Sikoa's monsters to offer distractions though, allowing Sikoa to hit the Samoan Spike to pin Fenix at 13:07.

Rating: C+. It was nice to have a match with a bit more drama, as Sikoa has bragged about doing a lot of things but hasn't been able to make them happen. If nothing else, it's nice to see him getting the chance to succeed, even if it isn't likely going to go anywhere. At the same time, Fenix isn't exactly on fire yet and that's not a great sign for his future.

Post match LA Knight runs in for the brawl but Nick Aldis says it's Knight vs. JC right now.

LA Knight vs. JC Mateo

Mateo is in street clothes and powers Knight down to start. Knight's rollup doesn't work at all so he grabs a headlock instead. With that broken up, Knight's running shoulder gets him nowhere but a neckbreaker works a bit better. Knight hammers away in the corner but Mateo runs him over with an elbow to the face. A belly to belly is cut off and Knight is back with a middle rope bulldog.

Back up and Mateo suplexes him over the top for the big crash. We take a break and come back with Mateo hitting something like a spinebuster. Another overhead belly to belly sends Knight flying and Mateo grabs a waistlock. Back up and Mateo sends him outside, where Mateo posts himself by mistake.

Knight makes the comeback and hits a neckbreaker into a reverse DDT. Mateo is right back with the swinging belly to back suplex into a standing moonsault to leave them both down. Knight is back up but dives onto Sikoa and Fatu. That's enough of a distraction for Mateo to grab the Tour Of The Islands (spinning reverse powerslam) for the pin at 15:24.

Rating: B-. This was a fine way to get Mateo off to a strong start, as he is another monster around Solo Sikoa, but nothing close to the rest. Mateo is more about technical skill and

power, which isn't something you see very often. Good start here, even if it meant that Knight had to take another loss.

Post match Mateo and company pose, with Fatu holding up the title not sitting so well.

We look back at Berto standing up to Santos Escobar.

Escobar talks to Angel and is willing to forgive Berto, but he needs Angel to find him.

Shinsuke Nakamura is not scared of Aleister Black and he is sharpening his katana into an unstoppable blade.

Here's what's coming next week.

Tiffany Stratton runs into Jade Cargill, who wants the title. Stratton isn't worried about Cargill getting the briefcase. Naomi can be seen watching in the background.

Smackdown Women's Title: Nia Jax vs. Tiffany Stratton

Stratton is defending. They circle each other a few times to start before Jax goes with the power. That means Stratton can have her handspring cut off and Jax drops her onto the top rope. A running hip attack sends Stratton into the post and we take a break. Back with Stratton being sent hard into the post but avoiding another hip attack. A hurricanrana sends Jax into the post and a high crossbody gives Stratton two back inside.

Jax's Samoan drop into a backsplash gets two so Stratton grabs a belly to belly for two. Jax sitout powerbombs her into a legdrop for two so she goes up. Stratton is right there to cut her off and a super small package gets two more. Cue Naomi with a chair but Jade Cargill cuts her off. That leaves Jax to hit the post and the Prettiest Moonsault Ever...gets two?

Jax shoves her off the top for a crash to the floor and it's time to clear the announcers' table. A Samoan drop onto the table plants Stratton and they head back inside. The

Annihilator is loaded up but Stratton tries a powerbomb, only to pull Jax down onto her...for two as Stratton grabs the rope. Jax tries to bring in a chair but Stratton dropkicks it into her face. The Prettiest Moonsault Ever retains the title at 13:46.

Rating: B. They were rolling near the end there and it's a big deal for Stratton to hopefully wrap things up with Jax. Beating the former champion without the briefcase helps and I can even forgive Stratton surviving a bigger than usual Annihilator. Odds are Jax will be in Money In The Bank, but as long as she doesn't win, it should be a good enough deal for her in the short term.

Overall Rating: B-. The focus has definitely shifted hard towards Money In The Bank and that is a good thing. Without Cena here this week, there wasn't much else to focus on so instead they built towards the ladder matches and Fraxiom vs. the Street Profits. Throw in a title match main event and the show worked out. Just please get us down to two hours again, as these longer shows are not doing it any favors.

Results

Alexa Bliss b. Chelsea Green and Michin – Sister Abigail DDT to Green

Fraxiom b. DIY – Rollup to Gargano

Aleister Black b. Carmelo Hayes via DQ when Miz interfered

Solo Sikoa b. Rey Fenix and Jimmy Uso – Samoan Spike to Fenix

JC Mateo b. LA Knight – Tour Of The Islands

Tiffany Stratton b. Nia Jax – Prettiest Moonsault Ever

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