

Smackdown – September 5, 2025: Double Barrel Greatness

Smackdown

Date: September 5, 2025

Location: Allstate Arena, Rosemont, Illinois

Commentators: Michael Cole, Corey Graves

We're back from Europe after Clash In Paris and the main story here is something from Raw. In this case that's because hometown legend CM Punk has all but said he'll be here, while suggesting that he might be bringing a certain family member with him. John Cena is here too, and that might make for some big moments with just over two weeks to go before Wrestlepalooza. Let's get to it.

[Here is Clash In Paris if you need a recap.](#)

We open with a long Clash In Paris recap.

Here is John Cena to get things going and the fans are happy to see him. Cena says he's glad to hear that because he's been trying to give it everything he has on this farewell tour. He's out there with nothing planned and tonight he's here to just take it in. Cena isn't used to the most positive receptions around here but these people are special. Their chants can bring people back to WWE but this is Cena's final time in Chicago and on Smackdown (oh that's big).

This place is important for him though because he started his WWE career right here. This place is special though, because for Cena it is the greatest crowd WWE has. Cena thanks the fans but here is Sami Zayn to interrupt. The fans don't seem happy to see him but Zayn is here to thank Cena for everything he's done. Zayn reminds Cena that he debuted against Cena in a US Open Challenge and here he is as the US Champion. Therefore, with Cena's permission, he wants to bring back the

US Open Challenge.

Works for Cena, who goes to leave, but Zayn stops him. If this is Cena's last night on Smackdown, he wants to repay the favor and give Cena a shot at the US Title. Again, works for Cena. This was a more emotional moment for Cena and you could tell it was meaning something to him. Zayn's part was a nice call back and bonus as well.

US Title: John Cena vs. Sami Zayn

Cena is challenging. We're joined in progress with Cena working on the arm but Zayn is right back with an armbar of his own. Cena's armbar is broken up and Zayn springboards over him, only to get suplexed back down. One heck of a whip into the corner has Zayn in trouble and we take a break.

We come back with Cena hitting the AA for two and blocking the exploder into the corner. A pop up powerbomb gives Cena two (nice nod to Kevin Owens) but he misses a charge into the post. The Helluva Kick misses and Cena hits an Angle Slam (Cole completely misses the point but Graves catches it) for two.

We take another break and come back with Zayn hitting the exploder into the Helluva Kick for two and they're both down. Zayn misses a charge in the corner and walks into a GTS of all things for two more. A spear of all things gives Cena two (Cole AGAIN misses the point, saying that was a nod to Roman Reigns, with Graves suggesting it was a certain Canadian) and the fans, in on the idea, want an RKO. Instead it's a super AA and they're both down again...and here's Brock Lesnar. The referee is pulled out and we'll call it a no contest at 21:30.

Rating: B+. They were rocking near the end and I think we can accept the interference ending as a way to keep either from taking a loss. Cena just going nuts and doing a big tribute to a bunch of his old opponents (he used an ankle lock during a break) was a lot of fun. Zayn wasn't exactly popular here, but

it was still a heck of a match as they were both feeling it.

Post match it's an F5 apiece as the fans aren't pleased. Lesnar gives Cena another F5, puts his hat back on, and leaves.

Post break, Lesnar says he'll see Cena at Wrestlepalooza and the match is on.

And with that, we're over 50 minutes into the show. Not a bad start.

Carmelo Hayes and Miz talk to a busy Nick Aldis about a Tag Team Title match. He'll consider it and hurries off.

Becky Lynch arrives.

Video on Aleister Black vs. Damian Priest.

Damian Priest vs. Aleister Black

Black jumps him from behind during the entrance and sends Priest over the barricade before the bell. We take a break and come back with a limping Priest trying to get inside but Black kicks him down. Black sends him inside and the bell rings, with Priest falling down off a big swing. Black gets in something like an Octopus hold, followed by a middle rope Meteora and we take a break.

We come back with Black getting crotched on top but he elbows Priest in the head for two more. Priest fights up and slugs away, including some hard kicks to the chest. The Old School crossbody connects and Black Downward Spirals him onto the apron, followed by a Razor's Edge onto the announcers' table. They get back in and Black begs off but grabs the referee to block South Of Heaven. A quick Black Mass finishes for Black at 9:37.

Rating: B-. Priest is more than protected in the loss and that's fine, as he'll have a reason to come back for revenge

later. It's a good way for Black to look superior, though Priest is going to need to crank up the violence. That could make for a good Smackdown main event down the line, especially with some special stipulations.

Video on Drew McIntyre vs. Randy Orton.

Here's what's coming next week.

Tiffany Stratton is ready to shut Jade Cargill up next week.

Cargill is ready as well but Nia Jax interrupts. Cargill says get out of her way or catch these hands tonight.

Nick Aldis comes in to see a rather enthusiastic Becky Lynch. CM Punk is here and they can't have anything going wrong here, but Lynch says it'll be fine.

Women's United States Title: Giulia vs. Michin

Giulia, with Kiana James, is defending. They slug it out to start and James gets on the apron, which doesn't make much of a difference. Giulia misses a charge to the floor but comes back with a neckbreaker outside and we take a break. We come back with Giulia snapping off a German suplex, only for Michin to hit her own. Michin whips her into the corner for the cannonball but Giulia's sitout driver gets two more. Michin fights up but has to hurricanrana driver James. The distraction lets Michin hit the running knee to retain at 7:35.

Rating: C+. It's nice to see Giulia actually get in the ring, though she's going to need a much bigger opponent than Michin. This didn't feel like it was supposed to be some big title defense or anything close, so maybe someone new can come after the title soon. Giulia and James are a fine enough combination, with James mainly there as the standard talking distraction.

We look at Chelsea Green and Alba Fyre attacking Charlotte

last week.

Charlotte is upset over her knee but Alexa Bliss, with a stethoscope comes in, saying the power of friendship will heal her pain. Charlotte talks to Lily and realizes she might be losing it.

Here is Seth Rollins, in the crowd, for a chat. He's ready to kill the legend of CM Punk and introduces Becky Lynch, through the entrance, to make it happen. Lynch DOES NOT like the Chicago crowd and runs down their local sports teams (minus the Bears, as Rollins is a fan). Cue CM Punk to interrupt (yeah they like him), with Rollins waving with a big grin on his face in a funny bit.

Lynch thinks Punk should be embarrassed but he has nothing to be embarrassed about. Punk is tired of Rollins hiding behind everyone and Lynch asks how his jaw is feeling. The fans chant for AJ LEE and Lynch tries to cut them off but Punk says they can chant her name. Punk says he could snap his fingers and have one of his sisters (who raises her hand) take Lynch out. Or he could call Bayley or Rhea Ripley and have them do it.

Lynch slaps him over and over (Rollins dances over this) and Punk goes to the floor. This is the kind of situation he wanted to avoid, because he would never put his hands on a lady. Thankfully he knows someone who will and LET'S LIGHT IT UP. Lynch and Rollins panic as AJ skips to the ring, takes a quick lap, and gets inside as the fans are losing it. The brawl is on and Lynch drops her, followed by a big slap. Lynch and Rollins bail as Punk hugs AJ to end the show.

The pop for AJ's return was massive as they weren't exactly subtle that she was coming back. It helps that she doesn't have to be some kind of all generational talent but rather just able to do what she did before. She's only 38 so it's not like this is someone twenty years passed their prime. This worked well and it has me interested in the mixed tag.

Overall Rating: B+. Despite having a 21 minute opening match, this wasn't a wrestling heavy show. Instead, this was built around the very lengthy (yet great) opening segment/match/fallout and the big closing. That sets up two major matches at Wrestlepalooza and that's what it needed to be. They didn't bother with anything close to subtlety here, as it was two huge segments, a big match, and two midcard matches to pad it out. Heck of a show here, with the big stuff nailing it on both sides.

Results

John Cena vs. Sami Zayn went to a no contest when Brock Lesnar interfered

Aleister Black b. Damian Priest – Black Mass

Giulia b. Michin – Running knee

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