

Smackdown – November 21, 2025: The Warm Up Important

Smackdown

Date: November 21, 2025

Location: Ball Arena, Denver, Colorado

Commentators: Michael Cole, Corey Graves

We're just over a week away from the Survivor Series and in this case that means it is time to both firm up more of the WarGames matches and set up some other things for the card. That can take a bit of time, but otherwise we also have to move forward in the Last Time Is Now tournament. Let's get to it.

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

We open with a long recap of the men's WarGames match, with Brock Lesnar and Roman Reigns returning on Raw.

Here is the Vision for a chat. Paul Heyman has a vision for WarGames, which will see five heroes crushed by each member of his team. This includes Logan Paul, who says he has a lot to say but cue the Usos to interrupt. Jey brings up taking out the Vision, with Heyman says just ticked off Paul.

Heyman takes credit for the Bloodline, with the first lesson he taught the Usos being that the numbers game always wins. The Usos say they aren't here alone so here is...Cody Rhodes' music. We cut to the back, where Drew McIntyre gets off Rhodes' bus and Rhodes is seen out cold. The Usos run to the back to check on Rhodes as I try to figure out how the cameraman knew to be there as McIntyre was getting off the bus.

Post break Rhodes is still down on the ground outside, with McIntyre driving away and shouting SEE YOU AT WARGAMES.

US Title: Ilja Dragunov vs. ???

It's open challenge time and it's...JD McDonagh challenging. We even get an explanation for why he's here, with commentary saying that McDonagh is here to support Finn Balor in the Last Time Is Now tournament. They fight into the corner to start until Dragunov hits him in the face to break that up. Back up and McDonagh sends him face first into the middle rope and we take an early break.

We come back with the two of them slapping it out until Dragunov hits a running clothesline. Some rolling German suplexes have McDonagh in more trouble but the Constantine Special is countered into a Spanish Fly. McDonagh suplexes him out to the floor for a double crash and we take another break.

We come back again with McDonagh getting two off a brainbuster but missing a moonsault. That lets McDonagh kick him in the face but Torpedo Moscow is cut off. Now the moonsault can connect to give McDonagh two, only for Dragunov to come back with Torpedo Moscow. The H Bomb retains the title at 15:20.

Rating: B+. This has become a standard on the show in recent months and that's a good thing. It's a case of having wrestlers come out there and do a bunch of stuff in the ring. As entertaining as the matches have been, it would be a bit nicer to have an actual story to set these matches up. While they're kind of getting there with Tommaso Ciampa, they need to have an actual match for it to work. Either way, another pretty awesome match here.

We look at the recent drama of Charlotte and Alexa Bliss/Rhea Ripley, with Charlotte not wanting to team with Ripley but then agreeing to do it anyway.

Charlotte and Bliss are in the back, with Bliss making her talk to Ripley, with Iyo Sky leaving.

Nick Aldis has no update on Cody Rhodes but goes over to yell

at the Vision. Drew McIntyre is still suspended, but he didn't come into the arena so there is no violation of the suspension. Oh and Bronson Reed will win tonight.

Ilja Dragunov runs into Tama Tonga, who says he's coming for the title. Dragunov also finds Tommaso Ciampa, who says a bit wordier version of the same thing.

Last Time Is Now Tournament First Round: Carmelo Hayes vs. Bronson Reed

Paul Heyman is here with Reed. Hayes slugs away to start fast but Reed is back up with a hard chop in the corner. A running knee in the corner has Hayes in trouble and a running elbow puts him down again. Hayes' DDT has Reed in trouble though and a springboard DDT drops him for a second time.

That's enough for Reed to bail out to the floor for a meeting with the Vision (with Logan Paul and Bron Breaker showing up) and we take a break. We come back with Hayes being whipped hard into the corner and we hit the chinlock. Reed tries to fight up but Paul interferes to cut him back down. Reed's backsplash misses so Hayes can roll him up for two, followed by a middle rope clothesline. The Fadeaway sets up the frog splash for two more but the First 48 is countered.

The Tsunami misses and it's the First 48 to send Reed outside. That means a big dive to take Reed down, followed by a top rope DDT to give Hayes two. Reed hits a heck of a running clothesline to send Hayes outside. Breaker loads up a spear, but cue Jey Uso to cut him off. Reed heads outside after Hayes...and it's Cody Rhodes to post Reed and give him Cross Rhodes. That's enough for Hayes to beat the count at 13:31.

Rating: B-. This might not have been the big giant slayer win for Hayes, but it was about the best option that they had available. Hayes needed a win and Reed shouldn't be getting pinned, so this was the solution. I've seen far worse, and Hayes is at least winning to become more of a star than he's

been in recent months.

Post match Rhodes says he doesn't want to be done with Drew McIntyre and historically, a Steiner is never better than a Rhodes. Logan Paul can go do a flip and Rhodes is the last person to beat Brock Lesnar and he did it TWICE. This was a fired up promo and that's where Rhodes can shine.

Chelsea Green hides from Giulia and Kiana James, who yell at Alba Fyre instead. With the two of them gone, Green comes out and says she's the greatest women's champion of all times. Jade Cargill pops up, with Green realizing she screwed up and running off.

Sami Zayn gives his friends a pep talk about the MFT's, who are ready to fight next week. The promos from the Motor City Machine Guns, Rey Fenix and Shinsuke Nakamura aren't much, but we do get an old school Survivor Series graphic to hype up the match.

Fraxiom vs. DIY

Candice LeRae is here with DIY. Ciampa is wearing a shirt that says "DON'T CALL ME A JACKASS", Gargano's says "DON'T CALL MY BEST FRIEND A JACKASS" and LeRae's is "DON'T CALL MY HUSBAND'S BEST FRIEND A JACKASS!" Ok that's kind of amazing. Anyway, Ciampa and Frazer start things off but it's off to Axiom off a quick blind tag. Everything breaks down and Fraxiom hits a pair of dives to the floor.

Back in and a pair of frog splashes hit Ciampa for two but Gargano is back up with a superkick. Frazer is sent into the steps for a crash and we take a break. We come back with Frazer coming back in to clean house. That's quickly cut off with a Shatter Machine for two, followed by a superkick/Fairy Tale Ending combination for two on Axiom. That's broken up and Axiom is right back on his feet as the Fireflies are out. LeRae steals Axiom's mask though and Gargano gets a fast pin at 7:44.

Rating: C+. The match didn't get a ton of time but it was four guys working their usual entertaining style. I could go for Axiom losing less frequently and I could definitely go for less of the stealing the mask deal, but at least the team had an out for the loss. They had a story coming into this with the US Title stuff, so this did have a few bonus points.

We get the sitdown face to face with Rhea Ripley and Charlotte. They have a history and they're willing to fight again, but first up it's WarGames. Ripley is willing to go to war with Charlotte at her side and Charlotte says yes. They shake hands and it seems to be ok.

Last Time Is Now Tournament First Round: Finn Balor vs. Penta

Penta jumps him to start and the brawl is on with Balor taking over. That's quickly cut off and Penta sends him outside for the big running flip dive. We take a break and come back with Penta hitting a superkick to send him into the corner. Balor is right back with some kicks of his own, which is countered into something like a MuscleBuster for two. The Sling Blade drops Penta again but the Coup de Grace misses, allowing Penta to get two more off a rollup. The Penta Driver gets two and the running Canadian Destroyer gives Penta the clean pin at 10:03.

Rating: B-. These guys had a fight for about ten minutes and it was pretty much all action throughout. That made for an entertaining match and it's encouraging to see Penta get another clean win. I'm not sure if he's going to make it past the quarterfinals, but at least he's getting there in the first place.

Sheamus is injured and out of the tournament so we'll have to see who is replacing him.

Solo Sikoa and the MFT's are ready to crush Sami Zayn and company.

Here is Team Ripley to name its final member. Ripley praises her current team members and brings out the fifth member: AJ Lee. Cue the other team to jump Ripley and company from behind, with Becky Lynch running in to jump Lee from behind as both teams seem to be complete to end the show. Lee was hardly a surprise and that made Lynch the obvious counterpart, which isn't a bad thing.

Overall Rating: B. This show was feeling focused again and they covered quite a few things. You had the US Title stuff, the tournament, and the WarGames build. Throw in the hype for next week's Survivor Series match and I liked the mix we had this week. It's nice to see them building towards some stuff when things are getting more important. Now just keep it going when we get to the actual important stuff.

Results

Ilja Dragunov b. JD McDonagh – H Bomb

Carmelo Hayes b. Bronson Reed via countout

DIY b. Fraxiom – Rollup to Axiom

Penta b. Finn Balor – Running Canadian Destroyer

Remember to follow me on Twitter and Bluesky @kbreviews and head over to my Amazon author page with 30 different cheap wrestling books at:

<http://www.amazon.com/Thomas-Hall/e/B00E6282W6>