

Smackdown – April 17, 2026: The Night Before

Smackdown

Date: April 17, 2026

Location: T-Mobile Arena, Las Vegas, Nevada

Commentators: Corey Graves, Joe Tessitore

Well, it's a day before Wrestlemania and I'm not sure how much can be done to help the show. The big story continues to be Randy Orton with Pat McAfee vs. Cody Rhodes and...what are they supposed to do to make that work? This show is almost always light on wrestling and heavy on talking, but we do at least have the Andre Battle Royal. Let's get to it.

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

We open with a variety of wrestlers (and Jelly Roll) talking about various big Wrestlemania moments that meant the most to them over the years. This was good stuff and could have been on the Wrestlemania broadcast.

Randy Orton and Pat McAfee arrive, with Nick Aldis showing up with a contract for McAfee. He has to look at it before he signs it...and then signs it anyway. Orton is off to say something while Aldis can park McAfee's truck.

Here is Orton for a chat. Orton gets to the point: he doesn't need McAfee around but he wants him there. McAfee is the one who tells him what he needs to hear, which is how we got here. Orton talks about how he was ready to face Drew McIntyre for the title but then Rhodes became champion.

Then Rhodes told Orton to be himself and WHO DOES RHODES THINK HE IS TO SAY THAT??? Rhodes does nothing but take, like needing Seth Rollins at Wrestlemania XL, which got Orton put through a table. Then he gave Kevin Owens a title shot and

Orton got attacked again. Now Orton is going to take something with an RKO.

Orton and McAfee leave, with Nick Aldis left holding the contract. That could be interesting.

MFT's vs. Wyatt Sicks

Street fight so it's a big brawl to start (of course) with the Wyatts clearing the ring early on. Rowan teases a dive but gets pulled outside, where Talla gets in a shot of his own. Talla grabs the steps and wrecks Gacy and Lumis before tossing them right at Rowan's head (that always looks great).

We take a break and come back with Howdy getting stomped down in the corner until Gacy is back in for the save. Lumis nips up for a legdrop but Mateo is back in to start wrecking people. Talla does the same until Rowan is there to knock him outside. Rowan's big dive connects and let's get the weapons. The Wyatts clean house again and we take another break.

We come back again with Howdy cleaning house with a chair, with Sikoa being release Rock Bottomed onto said chair. Nikki Cross hits a dive of her own but Talla breaks up the Sister Abigail. A Superfly Splash gives Sikoa two but Gacy and Lumis are back in for the save. Rowan and Talla crash to the floor, with Rowan coming up holding his knee. Tama loads up the Cutthroat but Sikoa quickly Spikes Howdy for the pin at 14:36.

Rating: B. That ending seems designed to sew some tension in the MFT's, which isn't exactly a surprise. The MFT's winning is a bit of a surprise but there is a good chance that this somehow isn't over yet. That makes for some interesting options, though Tama splitting off is an intriguing concept.

R-Truth and Damian Priest are still confused over who is running around cursing people. It might be New Day, Asuka or Grayson Waller. It turns out they have a title defense tonight, which is news to Priest.

Earlier this week, Miz and Maryse were renewing their wedding vows, with Kit Wilson officiating...when Danhausen popped in. Danhausen says he's ring bearer and maid of honor and maid of honor before cursing Maryse. This causes her to get hit in the face with some cake.

Video on Royce Keys losing his mother to an overdose and she never saw her kids getting to do what they loved. He wants to make her proud. This is quite the emotional video and that's a good thing. Now let Keys do some more stuff in the ring.

We look at Drew McIntyre attacking Jacob Fatu last week.

A police car drives into the arena and it's Fatu driving. Yeah he used to be a criminal but he's changed his life. No he didn't mind being put in handcuffs last week because he's not that person anymore. Tomorrow it's unsanctioned so there is no one to save McIntyre this time. McIntyre wants to put him back in the jail cell but that's in the rear view. After Wrestlemania, McIntyre is in his rear view mirror too because tomorrow, it's a beating.

Alexa Bliss and Charlotte want to win the titles tomorrow but they want to win tonight too. Charlotte wants the title more than friendship, which doesn't seem to surprise Bliss.

We look at the Wrestlemania set reveal.

Tag Team Titles: R-Truth/Damian Priest vs. Grayson Waller/Kofi Kingston

R-Truth and Priest are defending in quite the random match. I'm going to assume R-Truth mentioned this in his talk earlier but...yeah it's kind of easy to get lost listening to him. Waller slugs away at Priest to start and gets kicked in the face for his efforts. Priest sends him flying into the corner and hammers away before handing it off to R-Truth. Waller manages to knock R-Truth down but runs into Priest, with Kingston making a quick save.

We take a break and come back with R-Truth still in trouble but the illegal Waller's cover not counting. Kingston isn't happy with Waller and gets sent into him, allowing the tag back to Priest. House is quickly cleaned...and R-Truth gets on the apron for the tag from Kingston. R-Truth initiates John Cena's finishing sequence and the champs hit stereo Shuffles. An elevated Little Jimmy retains the titles at 9:25.

Rating: C+. This is the kind of match that fits in perfectly on this show as it's not like there was any doubt about the titles changing, but R-Truth and Priest got to do their thing. There were some stakes to the match and it was fine enough all things considered. If nothing else, it was nice to see the match get some extra time, which it probably wouldn't have gotten on a regular Smackdown.

Video on Cody Rhodes vs. Pat McAfee from last week, with Randy Orton attacking Jelly Roll.

Here is Jade Cargill, with Michin and B-Fab, for a chat. Well she would be but here is Rhea Ripley to interrupt instead. Ripley could lay Cargill out right now but she doesn't want Cargill to have any excuses at Wrestlemania. She accuses Cargill of hiding in any way she could find so this is Cargill's last chance to say something to Ripley alone.

Cargill mocks the idea of being scared of some cosplaying goth girl. Ripley has had her way around here because of the weak locker room. If Ripley keeps talking, Cargill will make it quick at Wrestlemania. Ripley laughs off the idea that she wants to be like Cargill and says her insecurities are the reason she is the woman she is today. They go face to face and Cargill walks away.

Solo Sikoa says they won as a team and now Talla Tonga needs to win the Andre. Now though, it's time to get the Tag Team Titles back. That's what Tama Tonga wanted, but he doesn't seem thrilled.

Tiffany Stratton vs. Jordynne Grace

For a Women's US Title shot and I had forgotten Grace was on the main roster. Giulia and Kiana James are at ringside and we get a handshake before we're ready to go. Stratton gets an early rollup for two and they're right back up for a standoff. Grace sends her into the ropes, with Stratton flipping away with ease. Grace goes strong with an electric chair drop onto the rope and a clothesline for two.

We take a break and come back with Stratton reversing a suplex into a DDT to leave them both down. Grace can't hit a powerbomb but Stratton can elbow her in the face, setting up a basement dropkick for two. Back up and Grace ties her in the ropes for some rapid fire headbutts, followed by a package powerbomb for two more. Stratton is back with a handspring Stunner into the Prettiest Moonsault Ever for the pin at 8:05.

Rating: C+. I was a bit surprised by the match as I had thought Stratton already was the #1 contender given how much she's been around Giulia as of late. If nothing else it's nice to see someone wanting to be the champion, which still doesn't have much of a history. This was a perfectly decent match, though DANG Grace has felt like nothing in WWE.

Here is Trick Williams for a chat. He's not happy with Sami Zayn, who went too far last week by going after Lil Yachty. Zayn hurt his friend last week and that hurt something much bigger: it hurt Williams' Wrestlemania entrance! Williams wants Zayn out here right now...but he gets a gingerbread man instead, with Williams having quite the laugh. Williams thinks Zayn's friends might be on Drury Lane but here is Zayn to interrupt.

Zayn says he's not having a good time with this and hasn't in a long time. What exactly did he do wrong? He doesn't know and he doesn't care, because this is for the ride or die Zayn fans. Those people will be in his corner at Wrestlemania and

beyond...but can this Gingerbread Man get away? Zayn says that Williams has talked a lot but hasn't shown Zayn anything in the ring. All Zayn sees is a little punk rookie about to walk into his first Wrestlemania with one of the best ever.

Williams says he is the plan and that he sees two gingerbread men. The fight is on with Zayn Helluva Kicking the Gingerbread Man but getting taken down by Williams, who holds up the title. They've basically done the double turn now and that's what it should be. Williams is on fire right now so go with him.

Video on the four way Women's Tag Team Title match, with the Bellas saying Nikki is still hurt. Bayley/Lyra Valkyria and the Irresistible Forces are ready, sans injuries.

Charlotte/Alexa Bliss vs. Bayley/Lyra Valkyria

They start fast...and the Irresistible Forces run in for the DQ at 30 seconds. As dumb as that might have been, it's not like the match needs any more build.

Post match the Forces lay everyone out.

Video on Brock Lesnar vs. Oba Femi.

Andre The Giant Memorial Battle Royal

Royce Keys, Axiom, Psycho Clown, Zack Ryder, Ilja Dragunov, Shinsuke Nakamura, Johnny Gargano, Joe Hendry, Rey Fenix, Berto, Angel, La Parka, Otis, Kit Wilson, Original El Grande Americano, Alex Shelley, Aleister Black, Shiloh Hill, Chris Sabin, Nathan Frazer, Talla Tonga, El Grande Americano, Apollo Crews, Akira Tozawa, Cruz del Toro, Joaquin Wilde

It's a brawl to start with Gargano laying on the mat...where Wilson trips over him to eliminate himself. Eh I chuckled, but then again I like Wilson. Frazer and Sabin brawl to the apron and Gargano gets rid of Frazer, with Sabin following. Talla dumps both Americanos and it's Hill vs. Dragunov in the

middle.

Dragunov kicks Hill out and Los Garza get rid of Parka. Fenix gets rid of Berto and Psycho Clown goes, uh, psycho, only to get clotheslined out by Keys. Gargano slingshot DDTs Axiom out and runs into Shelley on the apron. Fenix kicks Shelley out and Nakamura does the same to Crews. Hendry stops to pose and gets dumped by Black (that's a natural feud). Talla tosses del Toro and Wilde with ease and it's time for everyone to go after the giant.

Talla shrugs that off and chokeslams Fenix onto the apron for an elimination. A bunch of strikes drop Talla but Black throws Nakamura out. Black kicks Dragunov out as well and Black Mass is enough to eliminate Tozawa. Otis runs Black over and tosses Angel as Gargano drops to the mat again.

That's an easy elimination for Otis and Cardona gets the same treatment. We're down to Otis, Talla, Black and Keys, with Black kicking Otis down in a hurry. Keys throws Black out so Otis runs the other two over. Talla kicks Otis in the face though and we're down to Talla vs. Keys. The spinebuster plants Talla and Keys wins at 10:01.

Rating: B-. Ok then. I said do something with him and while the track record for winners is hit and miss for these things, that is certainly a notable win. The rest of the match went by quickly enough and it was the kind of match that gets people around Wrestlemania. I was looking forward to this and that's a nice feeling, as it means we're at the biggest time of the year and with the right winner.

Wrestlemania rundown.

Video on CM Punk vs. Roman Reigns.

Here is Cody Rhodes for the big final speech. We're not going to talk about the last three Wrestlemanias and the theory that someone is needling him. Tomorrow is simple: it's two men

having a match for the most important prize in this business. Earlier tonight, Orton was out here talking about Rhodes always taking things. That's interesting as Orton has never taken responsibility for anything.

As good as wrestling has become...and here is CM Punk to interrupt. Rhodes: "Champ to champ and friend to friend, if I shake your hands and we hug right now, are you going to turn on me and kick me in the balls too?" They take some shots at each others' formal wear due to the Hall Of Fame ceremony tonight, with Punk saying he hasn't been in a suit on WWE TV since Teddy Long's wedding.

Punk says he isn't Rhodes' teacher now but on Monday, the two of them will be there and he wants the fans to be there too. Go get it done tomorrow and have some fun. Punk goes to leave but Rhodes says hang on. This Sunday, Punk is up against someone who is so good they've had to invent names for him.

Punk wasn't born into this like Reigns and Rhodes were but Punk came here because WWE wanted him. Now Punk is back and better than ever and making a case to be the new Mr. Wrestlemania. Rhodes thanks him for everything he's done and Dusty would be proud of Punk (that has Rhodes near tears). Punk thanks him and they go into the crowd to celebrate with the people.

We get what looks like the opening video to Wrestlemania, as narrated by Lin Manuel Miranda. It's about being there for the moments and how one day, you'll tell your kids about where you were this weekend when more moments take place and more memories are made. Great stuff here, as WWE knows how to turn up the nostalgia.

Overall Rating: C+. This is one of the most unique shows of the year every single year and you know what you're getting with it. The wrestling is usually a few midcard matches to go along with the battle royal and a lot of talking about

Wrestlemania. That's exactly what we got here and the show was completely acceptable for what it was supposed to be. It's little more than a big Wrestlemania preshow and tomorrow the real stuff starts. In other words, this was the Wrestlemania Week Smackdown.

Results

MFT's b. Wyatt Sicks – Samoan Spike to Howdy

R-Truth/Damian Priest b. Kofi Kingston/Grayson Waller – Elevated Little Jimmy to Waller

Tiffany Stratton b. Jordynne Grace – Prettiest Moonsault Ever

Charlotte/Alexa Bliss b. Bayley/Lyra Valkyria via DQ when the Irresistible Forces interfered

Royce Keys won the Andre The Giant Memorial Battle Royal last eliminating Talla Tonga

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