

Wrestlemania XLII Night One: I...Wait...Who...And Then He...HUH?

Wrestlemania XLII Night One

Date: April 18, 2026

Location: Allegiant Stadium, Paradise, Nevada

Commentators: Wade Barrett, Michael Cole

We have arrived. After a less than great build and some questionable choices, it's time for the biggest weekend of the wrestling year. No matter what happens here, this is a special event and we have Cody Rhodes defending the Smackdown World Title against Randy Orton in the main event. Let's get to it.

The opening video, as narrated by Lin-Manuel-Miranda, talks about the memories and moments that are made at Wrestlemania. Years from now, our children will ask us where we were when things happened at this show. Heck of an opener here and it still worked even though it aired on Smackdown last night.

Here is John Cena as the host. He seems actually taken aback by the reception and then talks about how the Road To Wrestlemania has been rough this year. As Michael Cole has said, it's been polarizing, but the important thing is that we're here now. Cena getting emotional was a great thing to see as you can tell this means a lot to him.

Usos/LA Knight vs. Vision/IShowSpeed

The Usos come through the crowd and Knight comes to the stage in a customized truck. The Vision and Speed have a unique entrance of their own, as they have nine different camera angles shown at once to cover everything. We officially start and the Vision is knocked to the floor, leaving Speed alone with Knight. Speed's headlock doesn't work as Knight just stands up and walks around with him, sending Speed running off.

Knight stomps on Paul in the corner and it's back to the Usos for a double elbow. Theory comes in off a blind tag though and jumps Jimmy so the villains can take over. The stomping has Jimmy in trouble but he fights back on Paul and gets over to Jey. Theory comes in as well and gets punched in the face, followed by the spear. Paul dives in for the save and everything breaks down, with Speed snapping off a headscissors. Speed accidentally knocks Paul down so Theory tells at him, only for Knight to send them into each other. The BFT finishes Theory at 7:07.

Rating: C+. It's no classic, but it did exactly what it needed to do. They go the celebrity in there and he didn't embarrass himself, with Knight getting the pin in the end. It's just a basic match, but I do like the idea of taking something simple and doing it well. Nice enough here and that's a good way to start the show.

Post match Paul yells at Speed and drops him with the metal fist. Paul loads up the announcers' table but Jimmy and Knight make the save. Knight helps him up and Speed goes up top for the huge splash through the announcers' table.

Drew McIntyre vs. Jacob Fatu

Unsanctioned. Fatu comes out with fire dancers while McIntyre knocks down a stone wall and walks through the hole. The entrances take a long time so Fatu dives onto McIntyre to start fast. The weapons are thrown in early on but Fatu is smart enough to knock McIntyre down again. It takes too long to get a toolbox though and McIntyre decks him from behind. A catapult sends Fatu face first into the bottom of the ring and it's time for a table.

Actually it's time for McIntyre to continue his tradition of tweeting during a match, which allows Fatu to fight back. A pop up Samoan drop gives Fatu two but McIntyre knocks him down again. The chair is loaded up in the corner but they both

avoid going into it. Instead Fatu misses a charge and goes face first into the post, allowing McIntyre to suplex him down. McIntyre gets knocked back down though and Fatu's triple jump moonsault connects...for two.

McIntyre finds a piece of metal to jab into Fatu's head and then sends him onto some open chairs for two more. That's not ok with McIntyre, who grabs the referee's belt, only to walk into a superkick. Fatu chairs him in the back a few times and now it's his turn with the belt. The whipping ensues so Fatu goes to grab the toolbox, allowing McIntyre to hit a Claymore for two.

McIntyre screams at the referee some more but loses a slugout with Fatu, who fires off some headbutts. Fatu puts him on a table and hits him with a chair to keep him down. That doesn't really work either as McIntyre is right back up to hit him with a chair as well. Fatu is shoved off the top and through a table at ringside, which somehow doesn't do much to slow him down. Back in and Fatu hits him in the head with the toolbox, setting up the triple jump moonsault through the table to finish McIntyre at 14:17.

Rating: B. That's what this should have been, as Fatu survived everything a former multiple time World Champion threw at him and then finished him off. Some of the no selling and things that were shrugged off were a bit much, but that was how the match needed to go. Fatu gets probably the biggest win of his career and can move on to...whatever is next, just like McIntyre. Good brawl.

We run down the remaining card.

Women's Tag Team Titles: Charlotte/Alexa Bliss vs. Bella Twins vs. Irresistible Forces vs. Bayley/Lyra Valkyria

The Forces are defending, there is one from each team in at all times and it's one fall to a finish. Actually hang on as

Nikki Bella says she can't get medically cleared so she's called in an old friend. And PAIGE is back, which is great to see after how bad her neck has been over the years. It's a brawl to start with Jax taking over, only to get knocked outside by Charlotte.

Brie's chops don't get her very far as Valkyria hits a dropkick. Back up and Brie kicks away at Valkyria and Charlotte but the tag to Paige is cut off. Legend takes Brie outside for a drop onto the apron, leaving Bayley to middle rope elbow Bliss. Legend is back in to start taking over but she gets pulled out of the corner, allowing Brie to hit a middle rope dropkick. The tag brings in Paige, who strikes away at Jax and cleans house as everything breaks down.

The Paige Turner connects with Bayley making the save. A Lash Extension hits Valkyria so another save is made. Legend is knocked outside so it's off to Paige vs. Charlotte for a big showdown. Paige wins the slugout and gets two off a small package. Charlotte is sent outside where Nikki beats on her with the crutch. Bliss tries Twisted Bliss but hits raised knees. The Rampaige gives Paige the pin and the titles at 8:29.

Rating: C-. Well that happened. As usual, these matches are kind of all over the place and it's just a collection of spots that only kind of tie together. The ending was all about the big moment of the Bellas and Paige getting a special win. I'm not big on the Bellas, but it is good to have Paige back. Other than that, this was just kind of a mess with way too much going on to have a coherent match.

Women's Intercontinental Title: Becky Lynch vs. AJ Lee

Lee is defending and comes out with an army of school girls dressed like her and carrying replica belts. On the other hand, Lynch is played to the ring live for a pair of cool

entrances. Lynch is ticked off to start and gets sent outside, with Lee's dive being powerslammed into the barricade. Back in and Lynch puts her down again and goes to take the turnbuckle pad off. The referee (Jessika Carr, who has had issues with Lynch) calls her insane and ties it back up.

Lee uses the delay to fight back for two but the Black Widow is countered. Lee's standing Sliced bread connects but the Shining Wizard is countered into a powerbomb for two. A quick Black Widow attempt is swung into the corner and the Manhandle Slam gives Lynch two. Lynch gets into it with the referee again and they shove each other, allowing Lee to grab a Manhandle Slam for two of her own.

Lee grabs the Black Widow so Lynch pulls the hair to escape. The referee checks on Lee so Lynch gets the buckle off and pulls the referee over. That's enough of a distraction for Lee to be sent into the buckle, setting up the Manhandle Slam to give Lynch the title back at 8:18.

Rating: C+. This felt like it should have been a Raw main event more than big time Wrestlemania title match. The stuff with the referee did fit well with the story, but these two just don't have the best chemistry. Lee can go away for a bit again and come back to do something fresh, as anything she does now is pretty much bonus money. Lynch has a bunch of people who can come after the title, so this is the right result after an ok match.

Gunther vs. Seth Rollins

Rollins' eyes are blacked out for a cool look. Gunther jumps him from behind before the bell though and hits the dropkick into the powerbomb to send him outside. Rollins goes to the eyes when they get outside and throws some chairs at Gunther as the bell hasn't rung yet. Rollins flips him off and they get inside, with the bell ringing and Rollins taking over. Gunther gets knocked down again and stomped in the head but

knocks Rollins down for a breather.

The pace slows way down and Gunther stands on Rollins' head before trying a delayed vertical superplex. That's broken up though and Rollins somehow gets him up for the Buckle Bomb. It's too early for the Stomp so Rollins hits a clothesline and they're both down. They kick away at each other until Rollins wins a chop off, only to get powerbombed for two more.

Gunther slowly hammers away but the clothesline is countered into a failed Pedigree attempt. Rollins hits a knee but the Pedigree is blocked again, only for tries it again and connects (though it didn't look great). A Stomp gives Rollins two but Gunther pulls him into the sleeper. Rollins manages to get out and they trade big shots, with Gunther's clothesline putting Rollins down.

Gunther takes too long going up though and gets superplexed into a Falcon Arrow for two. Rollins gets his own sleeper to send Gunther to the ropes and then out to the floor. The suicide dive is blocked and Gunther powerbombs him onto the apron and announcers' table. Rollins shakes that off and counters the powerbomb into a Pedigree on the table. The Stomp drives Gunther into the table...and Bron Breaker is back with a Super Spear to Rollins. Back in and the sleeper finishes Rollins at 15:53.

Rating: B+. This took time to get going but they wound up having a heck of a fight. Gunther winning is fine as Rollins can get back to Breaker, where he belongs. Gunther is probably getting ready to retire Brock Lesnar at Summerslam so he needs all the build he can get. Good match here, despite a slow start.

Post match Breaker glares at Rollins...and runs all the way down the ramp to spear him again. Breaker hugs Paul Heyman as he leaves.

We meet the Hall Of Fame class:

Hulk Hogan vs. Andre The Giant (biggest match ever so that fits)

AJ Styles (yep)

Demolition (as overdue as it gets)

Dennis Rodman (someone had to get the celebrity spot)

Sycho Sid (how was he not in already)

Bad News Brown (put him in or he might hurt you)

Stephanie McMahon (yeah she's probably still talking too)

Raw Women's Title: Liv Morgan vs. Stephanie Vaquer

Morgan is challenging and basically does the music video to Trouble down the ramp. Vaquer goes after after her to start and Morgan is in early trouble. The Devil's Kiss is blocked though and Morgan is right back up with a Backstabber. Morgan loads up her own Devil's Kiss but Vaquer is grabs an SVB for two.

Vaquer hits her own Oblivion for two but here is Roxanne Perez for the distraction, allowing Raquel Rodriguez to knock Vaquer off the top. Oblivion gives Morgan two but Vaquer is back to dive onto Rodriguez and Perez. Morgan is up to send her into the steps though and a middle rope Codebreaker knocks Vaquer silly. Another Oblivion gives Morgan the title back at 6:52.

Rating: C+. Well that was quick. I'm not sure why they were flying through this match so fast but it didn't feel like they had time to really do anything. At the same time, Vaquer only had so much of a chance in this one as Morgan has been on fire as of late. You could only stretch that out so far, as this was pretty much all about Morgan getting her coronation and it wasn't a secret.

Here is John Cena for the attendance announcement: 50,816. Last year both nights had over 60,000.

Hold on though as here is Bianca Belair for a surprise. Belair says they need to add one more to that list and opens her rather feathery blue attire to reveal that she's pregnant.

Yeah ok that's awesome.

We recap Cody Rhodes vs. Randy Orton. They were close back in the day and Rhodes considers him his mentor. Then Orton won the Elimination Chamber to get the title shot and Rhodes wants the old Orton, who listens to those voices. Orton turned evil thanks to someone calling him, who was revealed to be Pat McAfee of all people. This resulted in Orton attacking Rhodes to quite the positive reaction and beating up Jelly Roll. Yeah see why this has been kind of a mess?

Smackdown World Title: Cody Rhodes vs. Randy Orton

Rhodes is defending and his entrance is...a lot. He has basically a museum of his previous ring gear and clips of him in it before rising up through the stage as he does for big matches. Pat McAfee is here with Orton and handles Orton's entrance. Also of note, not counting the Big Match Intros or the pre-match video, from the time McAfee's name appeared on the Titantron to the end of Rhodes' music: 15:18, or 35 seconds shorter than the longest match of the show.

McAfee jumps Rhodes before the bell but Rhodes fights back and sends Orton outside. Cross Rhodes takes McAfee out and here is Jelly Roll to put him through the announcers' table. McAfee is taken out on a stretcher as Cole talks about Orton possibly having a back injury. As McAfee is wheeled out, he gives a thumbs up in a great moment. The bell actually rings and they fight over a top wristlock, which is quite the way to go for this kind of a feud.

Back up and Orton tries the over the back backbreaker...but he's hurt. A poke to the eye lets Orton grab a chinlock but Rhodes fights up and puts him down again. That sends Orton out to the floor for a breather so Rhodes sends him back inside for a half crab. With that broken up, Rhodes switches to a waistlock but Orton fights out and...needs some time. Orton takes him up top for a superplex and then hits the powerslam, allowing him

to shake his back a bit.

The hanging DDT slows Orton down again but the RK0 is blocked. Rhodes sends him outside, where Orton cuts off a suicide dive. Orton drops him onto the announcers' table for another breather but Rhodes stops him with a posting. Back in and Rhodes starts in with a few stomps (it looks like he's trying a Garvin Stomp but doesn't quite know how to do it). The Disaster Kick gets two so Rhodes rubs the blood on his own chest. A hanging DDT gives Rhodes two but Orton is back with a Cross Rhodes for two of his own.

The RK0 is countered into a backslide to give Rhodes two, followed by an RK0 to Orton for two more. They head outside again with a ticked off Rhodes being dropped onto the announcers' table. Back in and a quick RK0 gives Orton two and they slowly slug it out. Rhodes goes to the eye so Orton RK0's the referee but the low blow is blocked. Rhodes kicks Orton low but the Cody Cutter is countered into an RK0. Cue Pat McAfee with a referee shirt (and a neck brace) to count two. That means an RK0 to McAfee, allowing Rhodes to hit Cross Rhodes to retain at 23:40.

Rating: C. Well, it got better near the end (it couldn't have gotten much worse) and Rhodes seemingly got rid of McAfee for good so we'll call that a win. I still have no idea what is going on or how this is supposed to make sense, but I don't think WWE is quite sure either. This felt like "throw a bunch of stuff out there and hope they're confused enough by the time we're done", which is quite the way to go for the main event. It turned into a better match near the end and that was enough to save it (kind of) but wow this was a mess.

The problem is that's just the insanity that went with it, as you also have the majority of the match being Rhodes working on the back in slow motion. I'd assume there's a bit of truth to Orton being hurt but nothing terrible, which just leaves me wondering why they went in this direction. It's not some

terrible match overall, but sweet goodness it's an amazing spectacle of nuttiness.

Post match Rhodes celebrates but Orton takes the title from him. A belt shot drops Rhodes and Orton Punts him before holding the title to end the show.

Overall Rating: C+. This show was ok enough for the most part, but as usual these two night Wrestlemanias just feel incomplete when you watch them this way. It's a mixture of there being too much for one night but not enough for two and that leaves you with stuff like this, with short matches and some very questionable nuttiness.

Rollins vs. Gunther and Fatu vs. McIntyre were both good, but wow those things were few and far between. It's not awful, but as usual it leaves you with a "that's it?" feeling as there is so much left tomorrow. Overall, the good outweighs the bad and...whatever that main event was supposed to be, but just barely.

Results

LA Knight/Usos b. IShowSpeed/Vision – BFT to Theory

Jacob Fatu b. Drew McIntyre – Triple jump moonsault through a table

Brie Bella/Paige b. Irresistible Forces, Bayley/Lyra Valkyria and Charlotte/Alexa Bliss – Rampaige to Bliss

Becky Lynch b. AJ Lee – Manhandle Slam

Gunther b. Seth Rollins – Sleeper

Liv Morgan b. Stephanie Vaquer – Manhandle Slam

Cody Rhodes b. Randy Orton – Cross Rhodes

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