

Smackdown – May 3, 2024: They Thought It Was Special

Smackdown

Date: May 3, 2024

Location: LDLC Arena, Lyon-Decines, France

Commentators: Corey Graves, Wade Barrett

We have a rare taped show this week as the show is in France before tomorrow's Backlash. That means we could have something interesting here, but there is always the chance that not much happens here and everything is built around the special atmosphere. Backlash could use the build and maybe that is what we get this week. Let's get to it.

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

Bayley/Naomi/Bianca Belair/Jade Cargill vs. Damage CTRL/Tiffany Stratton

Naomi (in French flag gear) starts with Sane and sends her into the corner for the running basement dropkick. Belair comes in with a handspring moonsault and a marching suplex as the fans are WAY into everything. Bayley tags herself in and Belair is not happy, with Stratton taking Bayley down for two to make it worse.

We take a break and come back with Bayley still in trouble, including Asuka hitting a sliding knee for two. Stratton's handspring elbow in the corner sets up a handspring elbow for two of her own. Bayley fights up and sends Stratton into the corner, allowing the tag off to Cargill for the house cleaning. Everything breaks down and Asuka missile dropkicks Cargill. Kai adds a scorpion kick but gets caught in the KOD to give Belair the pin at 10:17.

Rating: C+. This was the all star tag match with the point

being as many people in there as possible. Damage CTRL is flailing but Kai taking the fall is the best way out of this whole thing for them. The important part was keeping the winners looking strong and not having Stratton take the fall on her way into the title shot at Backlash. Nice opener here and Belair/Cargill feel like major stars.

A-Town Down Under is ready for their first title defense and insult the French fans.

Bianca Belair and Jade Cargill want a win and to be done with Damage CTRL. Bayley doesn't seem impressed.

We look at Carmelo Hayes being drafted to Smackdown last week and coming after Cody Rhodes in a losing effort in last week's main event. Hayes did show promise though.

Carmelo Hayes is entering the King Of The Ring tournament when Bobby Lashley comes in to offer him any advice he can. Hayes appreciates it but he has it figured out. Lashley points out that he lost last week, with Hayes asking when Lashley took his own shot. Lashley tells him to watch out who he disrespects.

We look at the Smackdown Draft Picks, with the rosters locking this Monday.

New Catch Republic vs. Authors Of Pain

The Final Testament is here with the Authors. Dunne dropkicks at Akam to start and grabs a mostly ineffective armbar. Bate comes in and strikes away but gets powered into the corner so Rezar comes in for a fight over a suplex. Everything breaks down and the villains are sent outside for a flip dive from Bate. Back in and Bate is suplexed into the corner to put him in trouble and we take a break.

We come back with Rezar grabbing a bearhug but Bate slips out and hits a dropkick. A few more shots are enough to bring

Dunne back in for the comeback as the fans are going nuts with this stuff. Everything breaks down and Bate manages the airplane spin on Akam, setting up Dunne's running knee for two. Scarlett offers a distraction so Kross can take Bate out, leaving Dunne to walk into the powerbomb/neckbreaker combination for the pin at 10:28.

Rating: B-. As usual, the power vs. speed formula worked well here as both teams did their parts. This could have gone either way as they're both heading to Raw so the story might not be over. The Authors are good in the monster role and the Republic knows how to be the scrappy underdogs. Throw in the impressive airplane spin and this works.

We recap Kevin Owens/Randy Orton vs. the Bloodline.

Paul Heyman can't get Nick Aldis to call off the match so what happens is on Aldis' hands. Aldis: "Is that from the Tribal Chief?" Heyman reveals he hasn't spoken to Roman Reigns since Wrestlemania, meaning he pulled Reigns out of the Draft. Aldis isn't pleased and makes Heyman the guest on the RKOrton Show.

Here are Kevin Owens and Randy Orton for the RKOrton Show. They waste no time in sucking up to the French fans before saying how disappointing it is that their first guest is Paul Heyman. Cue Heyman, who threatens them with Bloodline violence. Owens wants to know who the real Tribal Chief even is anymore, but here is the Bloodline for the brawl. The villains are cleared out and we have another segment designed to get people on the show, which is fine.

The Street Profits want the Tag Team Titles.

Angel vs. LA Knight

The rest of Legado del Fantasma is here with Angel and after another weird QR code, we're ready to go. Knight starts fast with a neckbreaker to send Angel outside, where he is sent into the announcers' table on the floor. A corner clothesline

and suplex give Knight two inside and we take a break. Back with Berto's distraction letting Angel get in a shot of his own, only to have Knight clothesline him down. The BFT finishes for Knight at 6:42. Not enough shown to rate but Knight gets a win to get him back on track after losing to AJ Styles.

Post match Knight enters the King of the Ring but Santos Escobar seems to do the same. Violence is teased but Knight hits the catchphrase and leaves instead.

We look back at Carlito being revealed as Dragon Lee's attacker.

Carlito says he wanted one more Wrestlemania moment but Lee got it instead. That wasn't cool, so he...gets jumped by Lee instead.

Tag Team Titles: Street Profits vs. A-Town Down Under

The Profits are challenging and enter through the crowd. A quick misdirection gets things going and Dawkins is pounded down into the corner. That doesn't last long as it's quickly off to Ford for the dropkick and Waller is planted with a Rock Bottom. The Swanton sets up the big flip dive as the Profits get to pose.

We take a break and come back with Ford kicking Theory and hitting a springboard elbow on Waller. Everything breaks down and Waller walks the ropes for a missile dropkick. The Sky High into a Doomsday Blockbuster gets two on Waller and even commentary has to praise the kickout. The referee tries to get rid of Ford, leaving Theory to roll Dawkins up, with Waller coming in for a Downward Spiral to retain the titles at 8:06.

Rating: C+. Even though the champs won the titles about a month ago, I thought there was a chance of a title change here to make the show feel special. As it is, it's nice to have Theory and Waller pick up a win over a credible team. The tag

divisions are going to look a lot different starting next week and it's a good move to have the new champs start their reign with a win like this one.

Here are Cody Rhodes and AJ Styles for a face to face staredown before their title match at Backlash. Styles thinks Cody is overlooking him because he is all distracted by everything going on around him. Cody loves the spotlight because everyone wanted Dusty Rhodes' son. Then the pressure got to be too much and he left.

Styles came here and people didn't want him, so he had to prove himself over and over. Now he is ready to prove that he is that phenomenal (the fans REALLY approve). Cody talks about everything he has done to get here including a bunch of mistakes. Now though, he is ready to prove he had what it takes and that is too sweet. The handshake results in Styles slapping him in the face.

The Bloodline and Randy Orton/Kevin Owens are brawling in the back to end the show.

Overall Rating: C+. They were in a weird spot with this show as they're coming up on a pay per view that does not feel important in the slightest and this show didn't do much to help it. This show felt much more like a house show than anything else, but these fans never get to see this kind of thing live so they were going nuts all night. The wrestling was good, but there was almost nothing you needed to see here, with Heyman's reveal about not talking to Roman Reigns since Wrestlemania being the only important point. Not a bad show, but absolutely not necessary viewing.

Results

Bayley/Naomi/Bianca Belair/Jade Cargill b. Damage CTRL/Tiffany Stratton – KOD to Kai

Authors Of Pain b. New Catch Republic – Powerbomb/neckbreaker combination to Bate

LA Knight b. Angel – BFT

A-Town Down Under b. Street Profits – Downward Spiral to Dawkins

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Smackdown – April 26, 2024 (Draft Night One): They Can Do Better

Smackdown

Date: April 26, 2024

Location: Heritage Bank Center, Cincinnati, Ohio

Commentators: Corey Graves, Wade Barrett

It's time for the Draft and that means we will be seeing sixteen picks tonight, which could make for quite the shakeup. Only half of the roster is available to be selected tonight with the other half taking place on Monday Night Raw. We are

also eight days away from Backlash and the show could use a boost. Let's get to it.

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

Note that I was in the arena for this show, sitting in the upper seats, looking straight at a corner post with the entrance on my right.

Here are the Draft Rules:

- Raw, Smackdown and NXT stars are eligible
- Four rounds tonight, Six rounds on Raw
- Four picks per round
- Champions are protected
- Smackdown picks first tonight, Raw picks first on Monday
- The rosters lock May 6

Paul Heyman explains that Roman Reigns is voluntarily pulling out of the Draft because he doesn't want to hog the #1 spot while he is not going to be around for a good while. That means Nick Aldis needs to make a new star and Heyman is intrigued.

NXT is excited about potential callups.

Corey Graves is in the ring to moderate a contract signing between AJ Styles and Cody Rhodes. Styles says it is time for some Georgia boys to fight. Their paths have not crossed before but Styles respects Cody for making a name for himself outside of WWE, just like Cody did. Styles learned a lot from Dusty Rhodes, including how to carry the title. At Backlash, we find out if Cody can carry it.

Styles signs, leaving Cody to talk about how there is respect between them. But when he signs this contract, it becomes a must win. Cody signs, leaving Styles to say the title reign ends at Backlash. Not much to this, but it's not supposed to be some big epic story. That being said (and I wish I could

take credit for this), at some point Cody is going to face someone who didn't know Dusty and I have no idea what they are going to talk about.

With Styles gone, here is HHH to announce the first picks, with Cody joining him.

Smackdown

1. Bianca Belair
2. Carmelo Hayes (From NXT)

Monday Night Raw

1. Jey Uso
2. Seth Rollins

Cue Carmelo Hayes, who (after shrugging off some WHOOP THAT TRICK chants, a reference to his rivalry with Trick Williams in NXT) has been hearing Cody talk about how if you come at the king, you best not miss. Hayes never misses, and he's shooting his shot against Cody tonight. Cody is in and we have a main event.

Legado del Fantasma vs. LWO

That would be Berto/Angelo vs. Rey Mysterio/Dragon Lee in this instance. Berto drops Lee to start but Lee is right back up with some elbows to the face. Angel low bridges Lee to the floor though and we take an early break. Back with Rey getting the hot tag and hitting a top rope seated senton. Berto is sent to the floor and it's the 619 into Project Dragon to give Lee the pin on Angel at 5:26. Not enough shown to rate but it was a quick and to the point match, which really didn't need a break.

Post match Santos Escobar pops up to say he is not a liar. That's why he has had Elektra Lopez find the security footage of Dragon Lee being attacked. The footage shows Carlito, of the LWO that is, attacking Lee, and then jumping back in to act like he found him. Carlito lays out the LWO, making him

the heel that he should have been a LONG time ago.

Bron Breaker vs. Cedric Alexander

Spear finishes Alexander at 15 seconds.

We look at Tiffany Stratton breaking up last week's Women's Title match.

Stratton tells Nick Aldis she should get the next Women's Title match but Aldis has another idea. Bayley has suggested Naomi vs. Stratton for the title shot, with Stratton suggesting that Bayley be at ringside. Deal.

Here are Michelle McCool and Torrie Wilson for the next picks.

Smackdown

3. Randy Orton

4. Nia Jax

Monday Night Raw

3. Bron Breaker

4. Liv Morgan

The fact that Jax has "former model" as the third fact in her bio tells you a lot. Yes she's a model, but apparently there wasn't a third thing about her career worth mentioning.

We look at the Bloodline attacking Kevin Owens last week.

The Bloodline arrives and Solo Sikoa asks Paul Heyman if they have been drafted. Heyman recaps the Roman Reigns issue and says no one has drafted the Bloodline because they don't know who it includes. Tama Tonga shows up and here is Kevin Owens to brawl with him.

Here is Bianca Belair for a chat. She is ready to win the Women's Tag Team Titles with Jade Cargill to continue ending Damage CTRL. Cue the Kabuki Warriors but Jade Cargill cuts them off. Cue Kevin Owens and Tama Tonga to brawl to the ring,

with Solo Sikoa joining them. Randy Orton comes in for the save and the Bloodline bails after a brawl.

Here are the Dudley Boyz for round three.

Smackdown

- 5. LA Knight
- 6. Bloodline

Monday Night Raw

- 5. Ricochet
- 6. Sheamus

Tiffany Stratton vs. Naomi

Bayley is at ringside. Naomi starts fast so Stratton bails to the floor, where Naomi hits a baseball slide. Back in and Stratton hits a running hip attack to the back of the head, only for Naomi to tie her up in the ropes. A jumping faceplant sends Stratton outside and Naomi dives onto her as we take a break. Back with Stratton getting two off a spinebuster but Naomi grabs a headscissors driver for the same. They both grab swinging faceplants for a double knockdown...and here is Nia Jax to jump Bayley on commentary. Naomi goes out for the save and gets sent into the post for the DQ at 6:18.

Rating: C+. This didn't have much time to get anywhere but the biggest problem is Jax being around. She brought things down on Raw and now she is going to get to do it again here. That is hardly the best news imaginable and it wouldn't shock me to see her added to the title match at Backlash. Either that or get the next one after that. Either way, it doesn't give me hope for the future of the division.

Post match Jax leaves and Stratton hits Bayley and Naomi with the Prettiest Moonsault Ever.

The Street Profits and B Fab are ready to win the Tag Team

Titles next week. Cue A Town Down Under, who mock the Cincinnati Bengals, and get scared off by Bobby Lashley.

The Final Testament attacks the New Catch Republic. Karrion Kross promises to continue the violence no matter what.

Here are Teddy Long and JBL for the final picks.

Smackdown

7. AJ Styles
8. Andrade

Monday Night Raw

7. Alpha Academy
8. Kiana James (From NXT)

Here are the final picks:

Smackdown

1. Bianca Belair
2. Carmelo Hayes (From NXT)
3. Randy Orton
4. Nia Jax
5. LA Knight
6. Bloodline
7. AJ Styles
8. Andrade

Monday Night Raw

1. Jey Uso
2. Seth Rollins
3. Bron Breaker
4. Liv Morgan
5. Ricochet
6. Sheamus
7. Alpha Academy
8. Kiana James (From NXT)

Video on Kiana James (which is good, as the fans were silent after her name was called).

James is in NXT and is ready to show what got her this far. Shawn Michaels comes in for the hug.

Nick Aldis announces Bayley defending against Tiffany Stratton and Naomi at Backlash. He brings in Teddy Long to announce the Bloodline vs. Randy Orton/Kevin Owens.

Here's what's coming next week.

Carmelo Hayes vs. Cody Rhodes

Non-title. Hayes starts fast with a springboard clothesline, only to get knocked outside as we take a break less than a minute in. Back with Hayes escaping a headlock and elbowing Rhodes into the corner. They trade chops in the corner with Rhodes getting the better of things, only to have Hayes come back with a spinning faceplant.

The springboard DDT gets two but Rhodes is back with a Disaster Kick for two. Rhodes goes old school with a running powerslam for two more, followed by the Cody Cutter for the same. Hayes is back with the First 48 (Codebreaker) but they both try springboards at the same time and miss (Rhodes seemed to come up favoring his shoulder). Rhodes has had it and grabs Cross Rhodes for the pin at 8:42.

Rating: B-. The only thing that matters right now is Rhodes' shoulder, which hopefully is just banged up and not seriously hurt. They went home in a hurry after the landing but at the same time, they were only going to be able to go so much longer. Hayes looked good here, but that has been the case with his previous Smackdown previews. Nice main event here, as Hayes gets to rub elbows with the big star.

AJ Styles comes in after the match for a rather intense handshake but no violence as the show ends.

Overall Rating: C+. Obviously this was a show where the wrestling wasn't the point, but this was kind of a dull show. They did a bunch of stuff for Backlash and it still isn't enough to shake off the feeling that it is a glorified house show. The Draft stuff was just kind of there, with Hayes and Breakker feeling important and not much else. I didn't dislike the show, but I was expecting a good bit more than what we got here.

Results

LW0 b. Legado del Fantasma – Project Dragon to Angel
Bron Breakker b. Cedric Alexander – Spear
Naomi b. Tiffany Stratton via DQ when Nia Jax interfered
Cody Rhodes b. Carmelo Hayes – Cross Rhodes

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