

# **Wrestlemania XXXVII Preview: Intercontinental Title: Big E.(c) vs. Apollo Crews**

Bang the drums properly.

This is a Nigerian Drum Fight, because WWE needed another name for hardcore and thirty plus writers couldn't come up with anything better. Crews' gimmick isn't exactly brilliant, but it is slowly starting to grow on me as he is actually making the ridiculous thing work. At the same time, Big E. has been champion for over three months and hasn't really done anything but feud with Crews. That could go a few ways, but I'm not sure which way it will be.

As worried as I am about what a Nigerian Drum Fight is going to entail, Crews needs to win the title here. He can drop it back to Big E. in the future but what matters here is giving Crews some momentum, because he hasn't actually won anything of note since his heel turn. Big E. winning wouldn't surprise me, but it probably needs to be Crew going over here, just for the sake of his future.

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## **Smackdown – March 26, 2021: Something To Look At**

**Smackdown**

Date: March 26, 2021

Location: Tropicana Field, St. Petersburg, Florida

Commentators: Michael Cole, Corey Graves

It is time to start the real final push to Wrestlemania because we are finally done with Fastlane. There is a really strong possibility that Daniel Bryan is added to the Wrestlemania main event and after the pay per view, that is the best thing that they could do. Other than that, there is a good chance that we are going to be able to see something else added to the show, as we have three Smackdowns left. Let's get to it.

[Here is Fastlane if you need a recap.](#)

We open with a recap of the Fastlane main event, with Edge costing Daniel Bryan the Universal Title. Roman Reigns tapping to Bryan did feel like a huge deal.

Here is Daniel Bryan with a chair to get things going (now complete with an info graphic saying "actually made Roman Reigns tap out at Fastlane"). Bryan talks about how everyone saw Reigns tap at Fastlane, even though Reigns said he would rather die than tap. Then Edge hit him in the back with a steel chair because Edge thinks everyone should let us see the Edge vs. Roman Reigns dream match.

Bryan is tired of everyone having a dream match but him, so he is willing to earn everything again. He wants Roman Reigns for the Universal Title tonight and is sitting right here until he gets his shot. Post break, Bryan is still sitting in the ring and after a recap of what he said before the break, here is Adam Pearce to say the referee's decision is final. Reigns is still the Universal Champion and his next title defense will be against Edge at WrestleMania.

Bryan understands and says he can face the winner immediately after Reigns vs. Edge is over. Pearce says no and Bryan calls him out for the double standard. How about this: Edge vs. Reigns on the first night and Bryan vs. the winner on second

night? Cue Edge to say every match he wrestles could be his last one and he is sick of hearing from Bryan after Bryan last twice. The fight is on and Edge hits a quick spear before unloading with the chair. Edge stares a lot and egads don't go to a closeup of him these days.

Roman Reigns tells Jey Uso to deal with this and use force if he has to.

### Seth Rollins vs. Shinsuke Nakamura

Fastlane rematch. Nakamura starts fast and gets Good Vibrations in the corner. A knee to the back on the apron rocks Rollins and we take a break. Back with Rollins getting in some crossface shots to slow Nakamura down. Nakamura fights up and hits a running knee, followed by the sliding German suplex. Nakamura's running knee hits the buckle though and Rollins connects with the springboard knee to the head. A Falcon Arrow gets two but Nakamura is right back with a spinning kick to the head. The reverse exploder sets up the Landslide as the camera goes into a much closer angle. Rollins gets caught in the cross armbreaker but he powerbombs his way to freedom. The Stomp finishes Nakamura at 9:11.

**Rating:** C+. It was a fairly hard hitting match but the point here was to keep Rollins looking strong. Now you would think that they could find a way to do that other than just doing the same thing that they did on Sunday, but that's not how WWE works. Cesaro vs. Rollins is all but a lock for Wrestlemania and this was a good way to set that up. Just not a way we needed to see twice.

Post match Rollins stays on him but here's the returning Cesaro to suplex Rollins down. The Swing is loaded up but Rollins bails in a hurry.

Jey Uso brings Adam Pearce in to see Paul Heyman and Roman Reigns. Heyman introduces Pearce to Reigns, who seems to have this himself. Reigns does not want Pearce to make the wrong

decision but Pearce will have a decision made by the end of the night. This does not please Reigns.

Rollins has a fit over the idea that Cesaro tried to Swing him and challenges him to Wrestlemania. Cesaro will NEVER Swing him again, but here's Cesaro to Swing him again and accept the challenge.

### Big E./Street Profits vs. Apollo Crews/Alpha Academy

Crews vs. Big E. for the Intercontinental Title is set for the second night of WrestleMania. Dawkins dropkicks Otis to start and hands it off to Ford, who is planted with a powerslam. Back up and Ford tries a sunset flip but Gable reverses it into a northern lights suplex (that was sweet) for two. Crews' delayed vertical suplex is countered though and it's back to Big E. to start cleaning house.

Gable countered the Big Ending into an armbar but the Rock Bottom out of the corner plants Gable again. Everything breaks down and a discus lariat sends Dawkins into a German suplex from Gable. Ford lands on the floor and flips back in, setting up the huge running flip dive to drop the Academy. Crews comes in off a blind tag though and the Angle Slam finishes Big E. at 4:05.

**Rating:** C+. This was certainly energetic and I'm still impressed by what Otis has been doing as of late. He has gone from a goofy face to a pretty solid monster and that is more than I would have bet from him. Then there is Crews though and I can't bring myself to get interested in him again after Big E. has beaten him multiple times. He almost has to win the title, but I can't quite picture that happening. Just find someone else for Big E. to face already.

We look at Sami Zayn attacking Kevin Owens last week.

Edge isn't happy and complains to Adam Pearce, who says his responsibilities are to WWE. He'll make his decision at the

end of the night, so Edge makes some not too veiled threats about how Pearce better make the right decision.

It's time for the Kevin Owens Show. Owens talks about how he has a history with Sami Zayn and will always have his back, even if Sami is a little insane. Cue Sami to say that of course he is sorry but above all else, he wants Owens at this red carpet premiere for the trailer for his documentary. Sami has even been in contact with Logan Paul, as in the Youtube sensation with 23 million subscribers and he's going to be here next week! Owens doesn't care about any of that and challenges Sami for the one on one match at Wrestlemania. Sami reluctantly agrees so Owens beats him up anyway.

Daniel Bryan tells Adam Pearce to make the right decision.

We look at Bianca Belair and Sasha Banks failing to win the Women's Tag Team Titles at Fastlane.

Bianca Belair isn't happy with Banks but knows she is good enough to win the SmackDown Women's Title. As for tonight, she is going to teach Natalya a lesson.

### Natalya vs. Bianca Belair

Tamina is here with Natalya. Belair shoulders Natalya outside in a hurry and the chase goes badly in a hurry. Back in and Belair avoids the basement dropkick and plants Natalya. Cue Sasha Banks for a distraction and Tamina gets in a superkick to send us to a break. Back with Banks on commentary and Belair putting on a surfboard. Natalya is right back up with a shot to the face but the tornado DDT is countered into a suplex.

Banks does not seem to think much of Belair's Royal Rumble performance and NO she is not worried about her spot on Smackdown. Belair elbows Natalya in the face and hits a spinebuster for two. The Lionsault is supposed to miss but lands on Natalya's back anyway. A small package gives Belair

two more and Natalya is right back with the discus lariat for two more. They head outside with Belair whipping Natalya into Banks for a big crash. Back in and the KOD finishes Natalya at 9:47.

**Rating:** C. It's not a good sign when you have to be worried about Natalya stealing a win here or there because WWE likes to add her into things so often. I'm still expecting her and Tamina to be added into the Women's Tag Team Title match (whatever that is going to be) but for now at least Belair beat her. Banks vs. Belair is a fine feud on its own and they really don't need anyone else being added into the thing.

Post match Banks comes in for a Backstabber to Belair.

Edge comes in to Roman Reigns and doesn't like Daniel Bryan trying to take their spotlight. Reigns knows what that is like (with Edge saying it took place in 2014 and only being a year off) so they should take care of him.

Wrestlemania rundown.

### Dolph Ziggler vs. Rey Mysterio

Before the match, Rey and Dominik Mysterio talk about wanting to win the Tag Team Titles. Rey avoids a charge to start but Ziggler picks up the leg. That earns him a hurricanrana to the floor but another one is countered with a powerbomb over the barricade for a huge crash. Ziggler superkicks Dominik and we take a break.

Back with Rey still in trouble but he manages to roll away and kick Ziggler in the head for two. The Fameasser gives Ziggler the same but Rey is right back with a 619 attempt. That draws in Bobby Roode which draws in Dominik, who gets dropped to the floor. Rey loads up a springboard but Ziggler pulls him down with a Zig Zag for a close two. Back up and Rey counters what appears to be a powerbomb into another 619 though and the frog splash is good for the pin at 8:19.

**Rating:** C. I don't have the vocabulary to explain how little I care about seeing the Mysterios vs. Roode/Ziggler in a title match at Wrestlemania. It is hard enough to make myself focus on anything those people are doing when they are in the ring and the idea of seeing them in a Wrestlemania title match makes my head hurt. The wrestling is fine but egads there is just nothing to get interested in there.

Great Khali and Kane are going into the Hall of Fame.

Here's Adam Pearce for the big decision. Roman Reigns, Edge and Daniel Bryan join him and Pearce gets to the point: Reigns will defend the title once at Wrestlemania and it will be in a triple threat match. Then we cut to an ad for the FOX 10pm news and come back with Edge down and Reigns hammering on Bryan.

Jey Uso throws in a chair but Edge spears him down and beats up the other two. Edge lays them out with the chair and drops the agents for trying to break up the Conchairto. The distraction lets Bryan escape so Edge has a seat in the middle of the ring to end the show. That was the only way to go after Fastlane and thankfully they didn't waste time.

**Overall Rating:** C+. The wrestling wasn't the point here as they did exactly what Raw did on Monday: ramped up a lot of things for Wrestlemania and built up the Smackdown side of the card in one night. It wasn't a great show on its own, but it accomplished a lot of things and made me want to see the pay per view a little bit more. That's what they needed to do and it worked out well, with three matches added and the main event adjusted. Wrestlemania still doesn't look great, but at least there is something to look at.

## Results

Seth Rollins b. Shinsuke Nakamura – Stomp

Apollo Crews/Alpha Academy b. Big E./Street Profits – Angle Slam to Big E.

Bianca Belair b. Natalya – KOD

Rey Mysterio b. Dolph Ziggler – Frog splash

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## Fastlane 2021 Preview

I think we've talked enough about how unimportant this show is as even WWE has seemed to acknowledge it. They have gone out of their way to start advertising Wrestlemania already, mainly because it is taking place a mere three weeks after Fastlane. That is nowhere near enough time for a Wrestlemania build but at least they are doing something with it in advance. That means at the cost of Fastlane, but how many people are going to care? Let's get to it.

### Alexa Bliss vs. Randy Orton

Let's get this out of the way early because this story has been awful. Odds are this is going to set up the return of the Fiend, or whatever the latest Bray Wyatt incarnation we're getting, to get us to the final blowoff at Wrestlemania. I've been dreading this since the second they announced it because it is going to have a lot of supernatural shenanigans and that is not a good thing.

Since this is not likely to be a match but is billed as one anyway, I'll take Bliss to "win", as I can't imagine Orton actually doing anything to her. I know it's going to be bad and I don't need to see it, but at least it's better than watching Orton vs. the Fiend again...or at least I think it is. Anyway, Bliss wins the non-match.

### Women's Tag Team Titles: Nia Jax/Shayna Baszler(c) vs. Bianca Belair/Sasha Banks

This is a tried and kind of true method of building towards a singles title match and thankfully we seem to have moved past the point of doing a title change here, as it would be one of the worse things that they could do. What worries me is the amount of Reginald that could be involved, because WWE REALLY wants to do that Jax Likes A Small Guy story for whatever reason.

I'll take the champs to retain here, even though they have no other challengers and have done about all they can with the belts. Banks vs. Belair needs to be a story about the two of them instead of the two of them dealing with other people, so hopefully that is where we go after this match ends. I'm not sure what to expect going forward, but these stories need to be split up already.

### Shane McMahon vs. Braun Strowman

Why? What did we do to deserve this, which very well may set up a rematch at Wrestlemania? I know Shane is a McMahon and that makes him one of the stars of the show, but it does not make him fun to watch in the ring. McMahon has been the face in this story since the beginning and watching him outsmart Strowman and beat him up on Monday didn't help things.

For the sake of my sanity, I'll take Strowman here, but I don't think I have much of a reason to believe that is correct. There is little reason for this match to take place other than getting Shane in the ring again and the green slime

deal did not make things any better. We're pretty much down to hoping for a miracle with this one and that is not a good place to be.

#### US Title: Riddle(c) vs. Mustafa Ali

Redemption almost has to be coming to an end sooner or later as they have been on fumes for the entirety of their run. Maybe they get a boost if Ali can win the title here, but it's not like anything else they have done has worked so far. The team is so far removed from its original identity that they don't really even have characters anymore, so winning a title might give them a little something to focus on.

That being said, I can't imagine they take the title off of Riddle so soon so I'll go with him retaining and furthering Retribution's problems. At the very least it would be nice to see Mace and T-Bar turned into a tag team as they could give New Day some issues in a hurry. That's a little ways off though, as Ali has to lose to Riddle first, which is what I see happening here.

#### Shinsuke Nakamura vs. Seth Rollins

This was added during this week's Smackdown and that means you should be able to see the path to Wrestlemania from here. Nakamura is standing up for Cesaro after Rollins took him out the previous week, like any good friend should be doing. That will likely set up Rollins vs. Cesaro at Wrestlemania, but first we have to get through this one and it should be a fun one.

There is no reason for Nakamura to win here so I'll take Rollins as he gears up for Tampa and Cesaro. Maybe we can get the good Nakamura here instead of the coasting version, but given how he is feeling in this story, can you blame him for not exactly being thrilled? We might even have a great one in there, but I'm not exactly getting my hopes up for it this time.

## Intercontinental Title: Big E.(c) vs. Apollo Crews

I want to like this one and there is a chance that we can get a good match, but everything will fall apart again as soon as Crews starts talking. I know that it is nice for him to have a character, but the combination of Coming To America and Black Panther accent is hurting what would otherwise be an interesting character. Big E. has sold the emotions while still taking a beating, so the potential is there.

I'll take Big E. to retain here as I can't imagine they take the title off of him that soon. Throw in the fact that Crews sounds so out there and it is hard to imagine the title changing hands. Crews is better than he was about a year ago, but I have no idea how far they think he is going to go without some adjustments. The talent is there, but as usual with WWE, they aren't quite hitting the presentation.

## Drew McIntyre vs. Sheamus

This is No Holds Barred and the Raw main event of the show. That's not the worst idea in the world as these two have had some pretty awesome matches so far and I could go for watching them beat the fire out of each other on pay per view. There is a slight chance of throwing a monkey wrench into the McIntyre vs. Lashley Wrestlemania title match but that might be a stretch.

I'll go with McIntyre here, but I can't shake the feeling that they might try something. Lashley interfering would make some sense, though I'm not sure if that would change what they have already announced. We could be in for a heck of a fight here though and these two have shown some outstanding chemistry together. Let them do their thing and have the match of the night though, because that's what they could do here.

## Universal Title: Roman Reigns(c) vs. Daniel Bryan

Now here we have the match where I really hope they do change

something around, because this should be Wrestlemania. Bryan has made me believe in him all over again with those awesome promos on Friday and it would be great to see him get the chance to do his thing one more time on the big stage. Unfortunately we are getting Edge instead, and he will be ringside this time as the outside enforcer.

I really want to say that they'll pull a surprise here (not necessarily a title change, but something that brings Bryan into Wrestlemania) but I don't think they will. Edge will get involved in the finish and I could go for him trying to spear Jey Uso and hitting Bryan to cost him the title. That's pure fantasy booking, but Reigns isn't losing here and he'll retain the title on his way to Tampa.

### Overall Thoughts

The potential is there. This show feels like it could be rather good based on the complete lack of expectations coming into it and that is not a bad thing. There is little reason to care about the show but if the action and storytelling are both there, we could be in for a nice night. Odds are they are going to be in and out quickly as has been the case with most B level pay per views as of late, so for once we can call this cautious optimism.

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# Smackdown – March 12, 2021: The Evidence For Blackmail

## Smackdown

Date: March 12, 2021

Location: Tropicana Field, St. Petersburg, Florida

Commentators: Michael Cole, Corey Graves

We're on the way to Fastlane and that means it's time for a contract signing. You knew this was coming and while it is coming off of a good match, it is still one of WWE's more annoying booking tropes. Maybe they can come up with something more interesting tonight but I doubt it. Let's get to it.

We open with a recap of last week's cage match with Daniel Bryan becoming #1 contender.

Here is Edge to get things going. Edge talks about everyone telling him to acknowledge Roman Reigns, which is what Edge did when he picked him for the match at Wrestlemania. They were on a collision course but then Reigns turned down Daniel Bryan Boulevard. Bryan has been talking about how he deserves the Wrestlemania match more because it means more to him and he wrestles more in the last week than Edge has in years.

Edge thinks it's time to remind people who he is, so we hear about the people he fought over his career, which has taken place in four decades. Cue Bryan to talk about how he thought Edge, as the Ultimate Opportunist, would understand Bryan going into business for himself. Bryan does love this and isn't doing it to get one up on Edge.

Bryan was laying on the mat at Elimination Chamber and knew that this might be the last Wrestlemania of his career. He is

going to do everything he can to get there because he might only have one more chance. Edge talks about winning the Royal Rumble, which included Bryan. Of course Edge likes Bryan, but Bryan isn't better than him.

### Street Profits/Rey Mysterio/Dominik Mysterio vs. Alpha Academy/Bobby Roode/Dolph Ziggler

The villains jump them in the aisle before the bell and we take a break. Back with the opening bell and Dawkins getting co clean house. Ford drops Mysterio down onto Roode for two but Otis comes in to knock Dominick out of the air. It's already back to Roode, who gets caught in a tornado DDT. The hot tag brings in Dawkins as everything breaks down. The spinebuster looks to set up Ford's frog splash but Ford gets shoved out to the floor and we take a break.

Back with Ford in Ziggler's chinlock, followed by a dropkick to make it worse. The sleeper goes on for a good while until Ford gets up for the tag to Dawkins, which the referee doesn't see. Roode comes in for two off a spinebuster but Otis misses a charge in the corner. Gable comes in but can't cut off the tag to Rey as everything breaks down. Rey cleans house and brings in Dominik, whose high crossbody is pulled out of the air. Roode spinebusters Rey for two and we hit the parade of secondary finishers. There's a double 619 to put the Academy on the floor and Ford's spinning Cash Out finishes Roode at 12:49.

**Rating:** C+. They had a nice energetic match here with the finishing sequence picking up even more. The Profits are probably going to get their title shot at Fastlane now and that should work out. Throw in the Academy vs. the Mysterios as a Kickoff Show match and this might have set up a pair of matches in one.

Molly Holly is going into the Hall of Fame. That's overdue.

Jey Uso is going to see Roman Reigns but Paul Heyman cuts him off, saying that Reigns is a bit busy tonight. Uso agrees to

come back later, much to Heyman's relief.

Seth Rollins isn't happy with what Cesaro did to him last week but he is intrigued by the idea of Murphy having a rematch with Cesaro tonight.

We recap Reginald having a crush on Sasha Banks and getting fired, only to have Nia Jax pick up the pieces.

Earlier today, Nia Jax and Shayna Baszler took Reginald (because he needs to be on both shows) shopping for some new clothes. He tries on various outfits and she approves, throwing in a come to Mama. Reginald asks how he can thank her and Nia gives him a big smile. Is this the new version of Nia Love Enzo?

### Cesaro vs. Murphy

Seth Rollins comes out to watch from the stage. Murphy hammers away in the corner to start and they head to the floor where Cesaro takes over. Back in and Cesaro pulls Murphy out of the air for the Swing, drawing in Rollins for the DQ at 2:19.

Post match Rollins hits the Stomp to leave Cesaro laying, saying Cesaro will never be on his level. Rollins wraps the chair around Cesaro's neck but referees come in for the save. After Rollins goes into the back, he runs into Shinsuke Nakamura for a glare off.

Kevin Owens runs into Sami Zayn, who wants him to be in the documentary. Owens says he'll think about it, which seems to be a way to get Sami to shut up.

Edge runs into Jey Uso and asks what he's doing. The Usos were one of the reasons that Edge wanted to get back into this and now Jey is walking around with his shoulders slouched in misery. What does Jey's dad think about this? Jey says don't act like he knows him, because this is a family thing. Edge needs to go enjoy his family now, because after Wrestlemania,

he won't be enjoying anything.

It's time for the Kevin Owens Show. Owens is ready for Wrestlemania and his guests tonight are as well. That would be Bianca Belair and Sasha Banks, with Owens talking about how much more interesting their match would be if they came in as Tag Team Champions. Only John Cena and Shawn Michaels have done that, but in order to join them, they will have to beat Nia Jax and Shayna Baszler.

They couldn't do that two weeks ago, which seems to strike a nerve. Owens brings up Reginald, with Banks saying it isn't her fault that she looks this good. Belair says he is going to be a distraction but Banks calls herself the Michael Jordan of women's wrestling. Maybe Belair can be the LeBron James one day but for now, Banks is the b-e-s-t.

Belair talks about her accomplishments like winning the Royal Rumble, but Banks says would have stopped Belair if she had been in the match. They argue about who is going to win but here are Jax/Baszler/Reginald. Before they can say anything though, Natalya and Tamina cut them off.

### Natalya/Tamina vs. Bianca Belair/Sasha Banks

Jax and Baszler are on commentary as Banks gets knocked into the corner to start. Banks slaps Natalya and walks the corner to take her down. Back in and the stomping is on as Jax implies she is sleeping with Reginald. Natalya can't get anywhere with a chinlock or Sharpshooter attempt and it's off to Belair for a spinebuster. Reginald gets on the announcers' table for a distraction so Sasha gets up there with him. The chase is on, with the distraction letting Tamina roll Belair up for the pin at 3:38.

**Rating:** D+. Does Reginald have blackmail on this company? Belair is on the biggest ride of her life and she just got pinned by Tamina because of the Reginald nonsense. This is such a dumb story with a character who has been passed from

Carmella to Banks to Jax. I'm sure Banks vs. Belair will be fine but could they not come up with something better than this?

Post match Belair rants at Banks for the loss, saying Reginald is here because Banks is entertaining him.

Here's Big E. for his return. He has spent a lot of time thinking about what Apollo Crews did to him and there is no coming back from this. You can't put the genie back in the bottle because Big E. is going to have to go Old Testament on him. Now it's Crews taking one so Big E. is taking two. He has to end Crews because Crews wants what belongs to Big E. They don't need to wait so let's do it right now.

No Crews, so let's do the open challenge. King Corbin, in a suit, interrupts to accept but Sami Zayn pops up to say this is the perfect ending to his documentary and runs into the ring instead. Big E. punches him down without much trouble and the bell is going to be after the break.

#### Intercontinental Title: Big E. vs. Sami Zayn

Zayn is challenging and gets kneed in the ribs to start. A headlock doesn't do Sami much good as Big E. shoves him away and hits an elbow to the jaw for two. Big E. charges into a shot to the face though and Sami hammers away. Back up and Sami sends him into the corner, setting up a top rope elbow to the head for two.

The comeback is on with Sami being knocked to the floor, but Big E. spends too much time shouting about Apollo and misses the apron splash. Back from a break with Big E. making the comeback but Sami reverses a superplex into the sunset bomb. Sami slaps him a few times and that means it's time to get fired up, with the Big Ending hitting to retain the title at 8:12.

**Rating:** C-. This was a way to get Big E. back in the ring

after his injury and that worked out fine. Sami is so annoying that he'll be fine with just a promo or two so the loss isn't going to hurt him. This documentary deal is about as perfect for him as you can get as it's exactly the kind of thing that someone as loudmouthed as he is would want to do.

Post match here's Apollo Crews to jump Big E. with a pair of Angle Slams. A steps show puts Big E. on the floor.

Reginald suggests that Nia Jax win the Women's Title next week so she can walk into Wrestlemania a double champion. Jax is intrigued.

It's time for the contract signing with Roman Reigns, Jey Uso, Paul Heyman and Daniel Bryan coming out to the ring. Adam Pearce asks who wants to go first and, after Reigns has his chair moved to the head of the table, Reigns says Bryan doesn't want to do this. Bryan signs the contract and says last week, he made Uso tap, which Reigns never could. Maybe Bryan should be the self proclaimed Head of the Table!

That's enough for Reigns, who immediately signs and Bryan promises to make Reigns tap too. Jey gets in Bryan's face because he wants to be the enforcer. Cue Edge to say he likes that idea but he should be the enforcer instead. Edge proposes himself vs. Jey for next week with the winner being the enforcer. Pearce says deal and the big brawl is on. Edge shoves Bryan away so he can beat on Reigns himself, but Bryan knees Edge down to end the show. They might be messing with something here if they aren't going to deliver Bryan vs. Edge, which almost has to happen somewhere at this point.

**Overall Rating:** C. They did some good things to build towards Fastlane this week, though there were still some problems with the show (I'll let you guess which was the biggest). Edge wrestling next week is interesting and I want to see Fastlane a bit more now than I did coming in. The show still feels like the most unnecessary event of the year again, but it should be

at least all right.

## Results

Street Profits/Rey Mysterio/Dominik Mysterio b. Alpha Academy/Bobby Roode/Dolph Ziggler – Frog splash to Roode

Natalya/Tamina b. Bianca Belair/Sasha Banks – Rollup to Belair

Cesaro b. Murphy via DQ when Seth Rollins interfered

Big E. b. Sami Zayn – Big Ending

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# **Smackdown – March 5, 2021: They Did Their Job**

## **Smackdown**

Date: March 5, 2021

Location: Tropicana Field, St. Petersburg, Florida

Commentators: Michael Cole, Corey Graves

It's time for a big fight feel as Daniel Bryan vs. Jey Uso is taking place inside a cage. If Bryan wins, he gets the Universal Title shot against Roman Reigns at Fastlane, so I'm not sure how much more they can telegraph what is going on here. I'm curious to see what Bryan can get out of him though so let's get to it.

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

We open with a long video on Edge winning the Royal Rumble and picking Roman Reigns for Wrestlemania.

Michael Cole brings out Daniel Bryan for an in-ring chat. Cole recaps tonight's main event and we see the graphic for the original Fastlane plans: Edge/Bryan vs. Reigns/UsO. Bryan knows that he is the one who will go along with everything and do whatever is asked of him, but that isn't the case anymore. He wants to go to Wrestlemania, even though WWE wants to have Edge vs. Reigns in a battle of the eras.

Bryan throws us to a package on the Elimination Chamber and the ensuing title match against Reigns (plus Edge attacking Reigns later). Back in the arena, Bryan talks about how he has won three Elimination Chambers so you would think he would be cool with this. That's not the case though because he felt like a failure because he did not make it to Wrestlemania.

From the floor, he looked up at the Wrestlemania sign and knew that he should be going there instead of Edge. He should be going because he loves this so much. Bryan has wrestled more matches in the last three weeks than Edge and Reigns have wrestled in the last year. Tonight he steps into a steel cage for the chance to go on to Wrestlemania because this could be his last chance. Cue Roman Reigns and company and we take a break.

Back with Reigns talking about how Bryan said he loved wrestling so much. Bryan doesn't love this though because in reality he needs it. Love is about what you will do for

others, not what you need to survive. Reigns does this because everyone needs him and that shows he loves it. The cameraman, Jey, Paul, the fans, they all need him. Tonight, after Jey beats Bryan, he'll know it too.

Jey takes the mic from Bryan and says tonight, Reigns isn't locked out because Jey is locked in. Jey goes for a cheap shot but gets knocked down so Bryan can stare at Reigns. Bryan was very emotional here and even stumbled over some words. Normally that sounds bad but here it made things feel more real because he was so fired up about everything.

We look back at Sami Zayn and King Corbin arguing to cost themselves a match against the Street Profits.

#### Street Profits vs. Sami Zayn/King Corbin

Before the match, Sami talks about how the Profits won a fluke match last week but here's Corbin to say this isn't a team. If one of the Profits want a singles match, come get one. The Profits like that but Sami says not so fast because he didn't agree to a single match. Too bad apparently.

#### King Corbin vs. Montez Ford

Corbin powers him into the corner to start and whips Ford into another corner for the chest first crash. Ford manages to avoid a shot from Corbin and grabs a spinning DDT. A standing moonsault gets two but Sami offers a distraction, allowing Corbin to hit the End of Days for the pin at 2:40.

Post match Sami says he helped Corbin so Corbin can help him, only to have Dawkins knock him off the apron and into Corbin. That's too much though and Sami is on his own.

#### Angelo Dawkins vs. Sami Zayn

Joined in progress with Dawkins sending him into the corner and nailing a dropkick for two. Sami gets in a shot of his own to take over though and a series of near falls has him

frustrated. Dawkins is right back with a bulldog for two of his own but an exploder suplex is blocked. A neckbreaker gets two on Sami instead but he runs Dawkins over. Hold on though as Montez Ford spills his drink on the cameras to mess with Sami again. That's enough to let Dawkins roll him up for the pin at 4:23.

**Rating:** D+. Just a quick match here which was designed to keep the angle going and there is nothing wrong with that. Sami and Corbin as a weird team is good enough and it keeps Corbin from being near the main event scene so I'm rather pleased. That and at least this was something fresh too, which is always welcome.

Reginald runs into Carmella, who accuses him of being a snake. She knocks the bottle out of his hand and he is officially fired. Good. Now get rid of him.

#### Dominik Mysterio vs. Chad Gable

Dominik starts fast with an armdrag but Gable spins out of a wristlock. A spin into a drop toehold has Dominik in more trouble and it's time to crank on the leg. Dominik fights up but walks into a tiger suplex for two. Gable misses the moonsault though, allowing Dominik to counter a rollup into la majistral for the pin at 2:59.

Post match Rey dives onto a charging Otis and the Mysterios bail.

Seth Rollins talks about how Cesaro tried to humiliate him last week, which he won't forget. Murphy comes up and offers his assistance with Cesaro, but Rollins says get out of his sight.

#### Shayna Baszler vs. Bianca Belair

Nia Jax and Sasha Banks are here too because we're doing the tag match again at Fastlane. Reginald follows, because that

just needs to be a thing still. Belair tries a dropkick but the leg gets caught, allowing Baszler to take over on the arm. Baszler throws her down by the arm and keeps up the cranking so Belair uses the good arm to slam her way to freedom.

A suplex lets Belair nip up but Baszler counters a double chickenwing into a roll to the floor. Reginald offers a distraction though and Baszler kicks Belair in the face...before going down for some reason. Jax shoves Reginald down and clotheslines Banks as well, allowing Baszler to grab the Kirifuda Clutch. That's reversed into the KOD though and Belair gets the pin at 4:32.

**Rating:** C-. Reginald needs to fall in a hole and not be found as soon as possible as this story absolutely does not need a one note character who happens to be an acrobat. It seems that Reginald and Carmella are done, so why is he involved in this whole thing? Just drop him already or let him find a story that might actually need him. Just having Belair beat Baszler to build her for the title match is fine enough. Why mess with that?

Reigns tells Jey Uso not to embarrass himself or the family. Jey says he has this.

### Murphy vs. Cesaro

Cesaro throws him around to start as Seth Rollins joins commentary. Murphy gets over to the ropes and manages to pull Cesaro to the floor, setting up the big flip dive. Back in and Murphy gets two off a top rope Meteora, only to dive into an uppercut for his efforts. The running uppercuts and a running big boot rock Murphy again, setting up the Swing. Rollins says this is about him and the Sharpshooter makes Murphy tap at 3:10.

**Rating:** C-. Not much to this one but it worked out well enough for what they were trying to do. Cesaro is on a roll and will likely be facing Rollins at Fastlane, though I'm not sure what

that is going to leave for him to do at Wrestlemania. This doesn't exactly bode well for Murphy, but that has kind of been the case for a long time now so it isn't that much of a surprise.

Reginald (Roman Reigns isn't getting this much screen time) is leaving but knocks on Banks' door. Banks: "NO!" Shayna Baszler and Nia Jax say he reeks of failure, but Jax thinks he's kind of cute.

Big E. is back next week.

Here is Apollo Crews, carrying a spear and flanked by two guards in camouflage. He now has a rather thick accent (think Black Panther) and says this is how he talks because he is a real African American. These men are the Nigerian Elite Guard who have protected his family's wealth for a generation.

For years he was made fun of because people thought he was from the jungle. Now Big E. is trying to do it again so he is going to listen to his ancestors telling him to take what is his. Crews wants a rematch for the Intercontinental Title and promises to conquer Big E. This was a step away from Apollo Crews and a step closer to Saba Simba.

Natalya and Tamina want to know why they aren't in the Women's Tag Team Title match but are told to get over it.

Daniel Bryan jumps Jey Uso in the back.

It's time for Ding Dong Hello with Bayley reading some tweets. These are Sweet Tweets though because no one could hate her. She reads the first two about how great she is but the third gets on her nerves and makes her storm off.

Corey Graves is inside the cage to explain the rules, which isn't something you see very often these...well probably decades actually.

Jey Uso vs. Daniel Bryan

If Bryan wins he gets to challenge Reigns (here with Paul Heyman) for the Universal Title at Fastlane. They slug it out to start until Jey sends him into the cage early on. It's way too early to get through the door though as Bryan grabs the leg, only to get pummeled in the head for his efforts. It's time to go up the cage but Jey crotches him down in a hurry. Bryan catches his climb as well and nails a missile dropkick, setting up a running kick to the arm. Jey's arm is sent hard into the cage and then does it again for a bonus.

Bryan goes up but Jey knocks him into the Tree of Woe and kicks away at the leg. It's too early for Jey to get out though as Bryan catches him as well, only to have Jey hit a super Samoan drop for the double knockdown as we take a break. Back with the two of them sitting on top of the cage until they get back in and onto the top rope.

Bryan gets knocked down and Jey hits the Superfly Splash for two but it's too early to escape. An enziguri sends Bryan down and there's a superkick for two more. Bryan elbows away but Jey knocks him down again, setting up a catapult into the cage. They both climb up again with Bryan getting in a shot to the arm, setting up a butterfly superplex to the mat. The YES Lock goes on and, since the rope break doesn't count, Jey has to tap at 12:04.

**Rating:** B-. They beat each other up for a good while here and the arm stuff was set up at the beginning and paid off in the end. That's how you do a match like this and it makes perfect sense for Bryan to go that way. It wasn't exactly a surprise as Bryan winning was all but a guarantee, but they had a good match to get there so it worked out rather well.

Bryan poses on the cage as Reigns glares to end the show.

**Overall Rating:** C+. This show was all about setting up Fastlane and I think you know where the card is going from here. I'm still not entirely sure that the event is going to

mean much in the long run but it's nice to see WWE focusing on it for a change instead of Wrestlemania every single second. There wasn't much in the way of top level wrestling here but it did its job, which is the more important thing from a show like this.

### Results

King Corbin b. Montez Ford – End of Days

Angelo Dawkins b. Sami Zayn – Rollup

Dominik Mysterio b. Chad Gable – La majistral

Bianca Belair b. Shayna Baszler – KOD

Cesaro b. Murphy – Sharpshooter

Daniel Bryan b. Jey Uso – YES Lock

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# Smackdown – February 26,

# 2021: Nice And Easy

## Smackdown

Date: February 26, 2021

Location: Tropicana Field, St. Petersburg, Florida

Commentators: Michael Cole, Corey Graves

We have a big announcement this week as women's Royal Rumble winner Bianca Belair is going to announce her opponent for Wrestlemania XXXVII. Granted it should be pretty clear who she is going to face, but at least they are going to announce the match so we can start the proper build. Let's get to it.

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

Here are Roman Reigns, Jey Uso and Paul Heyman to get things going. After a long look at Reigns beating Daniel Bryan and then being attacked by Edge on Sunday night, Reigns says Smackdown needs him. He's so good at everything that it has to be perfect, but there is one person standing in his way. That's the guy who jumped him on Sunday and then pointed at the Wrestlemania sign. Edge has a beautiful family and is a father and husband. Reigns respects the comeback and everything Edge is about but he doesn't want to hurt him.

Cue Daniel Bryan to say that absolutely Sunday was perfect for Reigns. Why wouldn't it have been? All Reigns had to do was face Bryan just after the Elimination Chamber. That doesn't sound like a Head of the Table spot to Bryan, who thinks Reigns should have been in the main event slot. Reigns can silence the comparisons, and there have been a lot of them, by defending the title against him at Fastlane, with no conditions. Uso doesn't want to hear that because Bryan goes to the back of the line. Bryan asks again but Jey jumps him and the trio leaves. Everything here made sense.

Edge comes in to see Adam Pearce and Sonya Deville about Bryan possibly getting a title shot first. Post break, Pearce tries

to calm Edge down and says tonight it's Bryan vs. Uso, with Bryan getting the Fastlane title match if he wins.

### Alpha Academy vs. Rey Mysterio/Dominik Mysterio

Rematch from last week when Otis turned to the dark side and crushed Rey's ribs. Otis starts fast by throwing Rey into the corner and hitting a shoulder to the ribs. Rey gets away and brings in Dominick to pick up the pace against Gable. A headscissors sends Gable into the corner and a middle rope diving tornado DDT gets two. Everything breaks down and a double 619 hits Gable and Rey hits the top rope splash. Otis breaks up the cover and it's a World's Strongest Slam into the middle rope splash to pin Rey at 3:39.

**Rating:** C-. I can go for these two doing something and again, it's kind of amazing how nicely Otis is sliding into this role. Gable not so much because he was great for years and was just stuck with a horrible character, but Otis is a rather nice surprise. It's going well enough and that splash looks good.

We look back at Apollo Crews destroying Big E. last week to put him on the shelf.

Here's Apollo Crews for a chat. Some people have not been happy with what he did but this is who he is. He is a real African American because he is from Nigeria. Crews comes from a lineage of Nigerian royalty and he wears the country's colors with pride and power. That's what Big E. learned last week when he was taught a lesson from his grandfather about showing power. Last week, Crews showed Big E. the steel and tonight, Shinsuke Nakamura will see the same thing.

### Apollo Crews vs. Shinsuke Nakamura

Crews jumps him before the bell and we take a break. We come back joined in progress with Crews whipping Nakamura hard into the corner and running him over. Crews' release German suplex

is countered though and Nakamura kicks away at the chest. The sliding knee gives Nakamura two and there's the sliding German suplex for the same. Crews heads to the floor and manages to sucker Nakamura in for a whip into the steps. Back in and Nakamura grabs a sleeper but gets sent into the buckle. An Angle Slam finishes for Crews at 4:37.

**Rating:** C. That's the best Crews has looked in a long time, if not ever (the new tights helped a lot), and that is a good sign. I was a bit worried about Crews' promo but it went in a fine direction and this could work out well for him. Big E. vs. Crews should be a heck of a fight when we get there and this was a good way to debut Crews' new side.

Paul Heyman tells Roman Reigns about the Bryan vs. Uso match with the Fastlane implications. The "IF Bryan wins" part is emphasized.

### Tamina vs. Liv Morgan

Natalya and Ruby Riott are here too as Tamina runs Liv over to start. Morgan gets sent into the corner as we hear about Natalya and Tamina's history and legacy in wrestling. Tamina even has a catchphrase: "From reliable to undeniable." I'd like to point out how many people Smackdown has sitting on the sidelines while TAMINA AND NATALYA are getting regular TV time. Morgan gets knocked down again but does manage an enziguri. A middle rope dropkick knocks Tamina down but she's right back with the Samoan drop. The swinging Rock Bottom (which was more laying her down than a slam) finishes Morgan at 3:57.

**Rating:** D. There's something about Tamina that just takes the life out of any match. That problem was on full display here as there is no reason to be interested in anything she or Natalya are doing. They've both been around for so long and having them as a ticked off team isn't going to get people interested. Well maybe in what is on another channel, but not

in the two of them.

Adam Pearce and Sonya Deville are in the ring for Bianca Belair's pick. We see a video on Asuka and another on Sasha Banks and now Belair is ready to make her pick. Well actually she's ready to talk about making choices...but here is Reginald to interrupt. He wants her to know what a loser she will be if she picks Sasha, who is here to interrupt as well. She tells Reginald to never speak for her and tells Belair that if she wants to make a statement, her choice is clear. Banks is the best, which makes Belair second best. Belair makes the pick and the match is set. At least they didn't drag it out, but drop Reginald already.

Sami Zayn's film crew gets some shots of King Corbin before their tag match tonight. Corbin doesn't like the attention but Sami thinks they could be the new Can-Am Connection. I don't think Corbin is convinced.

### Sami Zayn/King Corbin vs. Street Profits

Corbin starts with Dawkins as Sami yells at the documentary crew. Dawkins gets punched down and sent into the corner but the crew is in the way of Corbin as he tries to slide underneath the bottom rope. That lets Ford dropkick him down and we take a break. Back with Ford in trouble as Corbin knees him into the corner. Ford fights over and brings in Dawkins to clean house. Corbin is knocked outside where the crew keeps filming him, much to Corbin's annoyance. Ford hits the big flip dive and it's a double underhook swinging neckbreaker to Sami. The frog splash finishes for Ford at 8:07.

**Rating:** C-. This was more about the antics with the film crew but it worked out well enough. I'm guessing we're going to be getting more with Zayn/Corbin, which isn't the worst idea in the world. Hopefully it gives us some more entertaining stuff like Corbin getting annoyed at the film crew and keeps Corbin from sniffing the main event scene because no one needs to see

that.

Daniel Bryan is ready to move on to Wrestlemania but here's Edge to seem not so happy about the idea. If they were to meet at Wrestlemania, who wins that match? Bryan won't answer, but he seems to like the possibility.

Here's Seth Rollins to talk about the letter he sent to WWE last week...and here's Cesaro to cut him off. Rollins cuts him off and praises Cesaro's greatness, saying he has always been one of the best around. For some reason though, there has always been something missing. Why hasn't Cesaro ever been the Universal Champion?

Rollins says he is missing that killer instinct and Rollins can teach him. Take a week or two to think about it and come back with a good answer. Cesaro grabs the legs (Rollins: "NO! PUT ME DOWN!") and swings him (out of his jacket), followed by a second for a bonus. The uppercut leaves Rollins laying.

### Daniel Bryan vs. Jey Uso

If Bryan wins, he gets Reigns for the title at Fastlane. Bryan works on the wrist to start and moonsaults over Jey (with a quick touch to his banged up knee), setting up the running clothesline. A top rope hurricanrana gives Bryan two and Jey is sent outside, where he knocks a dive out of the air. The bad knee is dropped onto the announcers' table and then sent into the post as we take a break. Back with Uso still working on the knee before hitting a Samoan drop.

The Superfly Splash misses though and Bryan knocks him to the floor, setting up the running knee off the apron. Back in and Bryan comes off the top but bangs up the knee again, allowing Jey to kick it out. The half crab goes on but Bryan slips out and tries the running knee, only to get chop blocked down. A butterfly superplex brings Jey off the top though and the threat of the YES Lock sends him over to the rope. They roll outside to keep up the brawl with Bryan's knee going into the

steps, setting up the double countout at 12:47.

**Rating:** B-. The ending was a surprise and that's a good thing. They have a few different ways to go for Fastlane now and the combination of possibilities have me rubbing my chin. I can't imagine Bryan doesn't get a straight shot at Reigns, but now they are going to have to go in a different direction to get there, which is not a bad thing.

Post match Bryan gets the YES Lock on Uso but Roman Reigns makes the save. Uso has to save Roman from the YES Lock and it's a spear to Bryan. The guillotine choke knocks Bryan cold to end the show.

**Overall Rating:** C+. This show dragged a bit in the middle but aside from the book ends, I love that they move from story to story pretty fast. You have two hours of Smackdown a week and it's nice to see them using it to get a lot of things over. You don't have five segments or interviews from one story and it makes the show move around that much more smoothly. The show might not be that much better than some others, but it's a lot easier to watch and that's more important.

## Results

Alpha Academy b. Rey Mysterio/Dominik Mysterio – Middle rope splash to Rey

Apollo Crews b. Shinsuke Nakamura – Angle Slam

Tamina b. Liv Morgan – Spinning Rock Bottom

Street Profits b. Sami Zayn/King Corbin – Frog splash to Zayn

Daniel Bryan vs. Jey Uso went to a double countout

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# Smackdown – February 19, 2021: Put It On The List

## Smackdown

Date: February 19, 2021

Location: Tropicana Field, St. Petersburg, Florida

Commentators: Michael Cole, Corey Graves

It's the go home show for Elimination Chamber and I'm really not sure how much more there is to add to the show. Most of the matches would seem to be set, but there is always room to add one or two more things. The main event this time around is a six man tag featuring all of the Elimination Chamber participants. Let's get to it.

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

Here's Edge to open things up. He has a big decision to make and this Sunday, things are going to get a lot clearer. You have the two World Titles on the line but Roman Reigns is being the smart one by facing the winner of the Elimination Chamber. That means there are thirteen possible opponents for Wrestlemania so he needs to start evaluating things.

Cue Roman Reigns, flanked by Jey Uso and Paul Heyman, for a pretty long entrance. Roman says there aren't thirteen possible opponents because there is one main event. You have

Drew McIntyre who is a main eventer, but Roman Reigns is the main event. Edge thinks Reigns is sounding insecure because he needs to face Edge to be in the main event of Wrestlemania. Whomever Edge faces is the main event, be it anyone from Raw or Smackdown.

Cue Sami Zayn to say he's the real champion because he's the champion of the people. As Sami asks his camera crew to film him pointing at the sign, Jey superkicks him down. Reigns stares Edge down and hands the title off to Heyman before opening his hands, seemingly in peace. Reigns walks over to Edge and whispers something in his ear (which we can't hear) before leaving with Heyman and Uso.

### Apollo Crews vs. Shinsuke Nakamura

Big E., on his couch, is on commentary. Before the match, we get a quick interview from Apollo, talking about how he doesn't like being told to go back to catering. Nakamura runs him over for an early two to start but Crews nails a dropkick to send Nakamura outside. That's enough to send him into Big E.'s snack tray, which means the big staredown to send us to a break.

Back with Nakamura hitting his sliding German suplex out of the corner for two. Crews grabs a spinebuster for two but gets pulled into a cross armbreaker, which Nakamura turns into a rollup for the pin at 5:58. Not enough shown to rate but it was just a quick match to have Crews and Big E. out there.

Post match Crews jumps Nakamura again and goes for the steps but Big E. says that isn't happening. Big E. tells Crews to go to the back but Crews jumps him from behind with the steps. Crews isn't going back to catering and throws the steps and Big E. back inside. The referee intervenes and Big E. rolls to the floor, with Crews throwing the steps onto him (with the camera not showing the crash of course) to leave Big E. laying. Medics come out immediately and, after the break, Big

E. is taken out on a stretcher.

I'm sure this sets up a title match, but wouldn't it be better to have Crews win, get denied a shot because Big E. has beaten him time after time, and then attack anyway? This made him feel like even more of a loser than he was when Big E. beat him over and over and that's not the best way to go.

As Big E. is wheeled out, here's Seth Rollins to say that was a tragedy, just like what happened last week. We see everyone walking out on Rollins last week, which earned Cesaro a big beating after the segment. As a result, Rollins has written a formal protest to WWE because everyone ruined last week out of fear. There are already millions who have embraced the vision for a better future, but the biggest loser is Cesaro. That's why Cesaro was taken out last week. Everyone should embrace the vision, unlike that loser Cesaro. Embrace the vision. This is really the best they have for Rollins?

Edge comes up to Kevin Owens in the back and says that he understands what it's like to have to keep getting back up. Owens appreciates that because he has come close to winning the Universal Title time after time over the last few months so now it is all he can think about. They appreciate the idea of facing each other at Wrestlemania.

Big E. is taken to the ambulance.

### Riott Squad vs. Tamina/Natalya

Neither gets an entrance, as they shouldn't for the sake of saving some time. Riott chops away at Tamina to start before handing it off to Liv for some kicks of her own. Morgan's springboard something is knocked out of the air so it's off to Natalya to strike away. Riott comes back in for a Codebreaker into an STO for two as Billie Kay, in a Tamina shirt with Natalya ears, comes out. That's enough of a distraction for Tamina to hit a swinging Rock Bottom to finish Riott at 3:03.

**Rating:** D+. This was the latest match between one team thrown together and another team who isn't likely to make it to the title scene anytime soon. Instead, The Riott Squad is the kind of team that only exists for the sake of putting other teams over. The women's tag division is awful right now, but that has been the case for a pretty long time now. Just keep throwing teams together I guess, because it's not like the division is going to mean anything anytime soon.

Billie comes in to celebrate with them and gets laid out.

Edge runs into King Corbin, who says he's the main event of Wrestlemania. Corbin talks about a \$39,000 watch but Edge holds up a phone, which tells the time and takes pictures.

It's time for Ding Dong Hello with Bayley, who says it's episode dos, which means two in case you're like Michael Cole and don't speak Spanish. Nia Jax and Shayna Baszler are the guests and come in through the door, with Jax talking about how Bayley shouldn't be upset that they took the titles from her. They're glad Bayley got rid of Sasha Banks, because Banks is such a waste of time. Like, almost as bad as Bianca Belair.

Cue Reginald, who says Banks is like a fine wine and the two of them are like a boxed wine. He thinks Belair and Banks could take the Tag Team Titles so here's Banks to interrupt. Banks doesn't like Reginald speaking for him but promises to beat Belair at Wrestlemania. Cue Belair to say not so fast and issue the six person tag challenge.

Bianca Belair/Reginald/Sasha Banks vs. Nia Jax/Shayna Baszler/Bayley

Banks strikes away at Baszler to start and manages to take her down, but Reginald comes in for the stretching and then leaves. Jax takes Banks down so Bayley, in street clothes, comes in to stomp away. Baszler starts working on the leg but Jax misses a running splash in the corner. We settle down to Nia yelling at Reginald about how she isn't the boxed wine.

Reginald starts picking up the pace with the dodges, only to get run over again. Bayley and Baszler beat on Banks outside as Nia catches Reginald's crossbody. A double dropkick to the back puts Reginald on top of Jax for the surprise pin at 5:05.

**Rating:** D+. I'm still not sure where they're going with this whole thing but it's still weird to see men and women in the same match. Jax losing doesn't mean anything anymore after how things have been going for her in recent weeks, but this was certainly a strange way to go with everything. Throw in the fact that it might be a one off deal and it's even weirder.

Cesaro feels sorry for Seth Rollins, who had the chance to come back as someone new but then did the same thing he did before he left. There is time to deal with Rollins later, because Cesaro need to go win the Elimination Chamber and then the Universal Title. Edge comes up and Wrestlemania is teased.

#### Rey Mysterio/Dominik Mysterio vs. Alpha Academy

Dolph Ziggler and Robert Roode are on commentary, where they insist that they are not ducking the Street Profits. Dominik can't get very far by trying to wrestle Gable so it's off to Rey vs. Otis. That goes badly for Rey as well as it's a World's Strongest Slam into a big splash. Instead of covering, Otis hits a splash, followed by a few more, which is a DQ at 1:30 when Otis won't listen to the referee telling him to stop.

Post match Rey is destroyed some more, including a middle rope splash.

Edge and Daniel Bryan bond over bringing their careers back to life. Bryan appreciates that and thinks Edge can thank him by challenging him after Bryan wins the title on Sunday.

Post break, Rey is very slowly helped to the back.

Daniel Bryan, Cesaro and Kevin Owens discuss how often Kevin

Owens has turned on people. Bryan: "There have been so many times. I should have made a list." Owens says they won't have to worry about a Stunner tonight. Just worry about it on Sunday. Or maybe two, three, four. Cesaro: "At least he's honest." Bryan: "Is he?"

Reginald brings Carmella some wine and tries to hide the fact that he was in the match earlier. She's not mad, because she knows he'll do the right thing. Or else. Carmella drinks the wine, deems it disgusting, and throws it in his face.

Sasha Banks and Bianca Belair are getting a Women's Tag Team Title match on Sunday.

Sami Zayn/King Corbin/Jey Uso vs. Daniel Bryan/Kevin Owens/Cesaro

Edge is on commentary as Bryan forearms Uso into the corner. Cesaro comes in for a double slam so Jey bails over to Corbin for the tag. A few shots to the face mean it's off to Bryan to uppercut Sami into the corner as well. Corbin comes back in for some knees to the ribs but it's right back to Cesaro to clean house. Some uppercuts put Sami on the floor but Corbin throws him back in like a good partner. That's fine with Cesaro, who can't quite get the Swing. Instead Corbin comes back in and gets Swung into a commercial.

Back with the Swing continuing (now that's a well done editing trick) but Cesaro gets sent outside and thrown over the announcers' table. Paul Heyman has joined commentary as Cesaro gets beaten up in the corner, including some choking from Corbin. Uso comes back in and hammers away, allowing the tag back to Corbin to continue the hammering away.

Cesaro finally gets in a shot to Corbin and the hot tag brings in Bryan, which Cole and Heyman ignore to keep bickering. Everything breaks down with Owens hitting the Cannonball off the apron to Uso. Zayn rolls Bryan up for two and hits the Blue Thunder Bomb for two with Cesaro making the save. Corbin

knocks Cesaro outside as Bryan butterfly superplexes Zayn down, setting up the YES Lock for the tap at 13:07.

**Rating:** C+. This was fun, though it wasn't like it means anything other than some minor momentum for Sunday. I like Bryan getting a little push, as they really could go in a bunch of different ways for the Chamber. Bryan is certainly one of them, but it's not like there is any secret to the fact that this is all about Edge vs. Reigns at Wrestlemania in the end.

Post match the Parade of Finishers is on, with Edge getting in a spear on Uso but getting speared down by Roman Reigns to end the show (note that Reigns just sticks his hand out so Heyman can hand him the title, because that's what Reigns sees him as being good for).

**Overall Rating:** C. The reason this show worked out so well was that it didn't drag. They kept things moving and got to the point, even if they are still trying to hide the fact that Reigns vs. Edge seems all but carved into stone for Wrestlemania. I'm not sure what a lot of the other people are going to get to do, but they had a nice build up to Sunday, which is a nice start on the way there. Good enough show, and it did a nice job of advancing a lot of stories.

### Results

Shinsuke Nakamura b. Apollo Crews – Cradle

Natalya/Tamina b. Riott Squad – Swinging Rock Bottom to Riott

Bianca Belair/Reginald/Sasha Banks b. Nia Jax/Shayna Baszler/Bayley – Crossbody to Jax

Rey Mysterio/Dominik Mysterio b. Alpha Academy via DQ when Otis continued attacking Rey

Daniel Bryan/Cesaro/Kevin Owens b. Jey Uso/King Corbin/Sami Zayn – YES Lock to Zayn

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# Smackdown – February 12, 2021: The Not So Subtle Difference

## **Smackdown**

Date: February 12, 2021

Location: Tropicana Field, St. Petersburg, Florida

Commentators: Michael Cole, Corey Graves

We're less than two weeks away from Elimination Chamber but you might not realize it around here. There has not been a single Smackdown match announced for the show but that might be changing this week. Roman Reigns apparently has a big announcement and that could be a good thing. Seth Rollins is back too so let's get to it.

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

Here are Roman Reigns, Jey Uso and Paul Heyman for a chat with Adam Pearce, who is already in the ring. Reigns tells Pearce

that he isn't waiting on him so let's get on with this. Pearce doesn't call any shots around here and Reigns isn't waiting on Pearce or Edge. Reigns knows that Edge hasn't announced his Wrestlemania match because he knows Reigns will beat him all the way onto a Legends contract.

No one is taking the title from him so Edge is holding out hope that someone pulls a miracle before Wrestlemania. Speaking of contracts, Pearce has one in his hand and that is for Reigns' title defense inside the Elimination Chamber. Reigns hands Heyman the mic, who says Reigns' contract says he has to defend the title AT Elimination Chamber rather than INSIDE the Elimination Chamber. Instead, the winner can receive a title shot on the against Reigns, who won't be in the Chamber itself.

Pearce seems to laugh it off but Heyman asks what he's going to do about it. Fire Reigns this close to Wrestlemania? Last year's show didn't have Reigns and it was the lowest attended Wrestlemania of all time. Pearce says it's time to start the qualifying process, and there are going to be two names who don't need qualifying matches. Those would be Jey Uso and Kevin Owens, the latter of whom has Reigns outside the ring and in Pearce's face. Reigns doesn't think Pearce gets this but Heyman says it's going to be on Reigns' time.

Post break Pearce is freaking out over having to get all of the qualifying matches together but Sonya Deville has an idea: a tag team qualifying match with the winning team both getting into the Chamber. Pearce likes the idea, which is good because Sonya has already booked it.

Commentary confirms that the winner of the Chamber match will face Reigns that night.

Elimination Chamber Qualifying Match: Rey Mysterio/Dominik Mysterio vs. King Corbin/Sami Zayn

Before the match, Sami talks about how he and Corbin don't get

along but tonight they're working together so WWE can't give the Mysterios the spots in the Chamber. Rey and Dominik start fast by sending them to the floor for the double dives and we take a break. Back with Dominik rolling Sami into the corner and hitting a running elbow. Sami is right back with the Blue Thunder Bomb for two and it's off to Corbin. Everything breaks down and the double 619 hits Corbin, with Rey taking him to the floor. That leaves Dominik to be suplexed into the corner, setting up the Helluva Kick for the pin at 7:33.

**Rating:** D+. I'm not sure how much drama there was to this one and that's ok. The Mysterios continue to have problems and a showdown at Wrestlemania wouldn't surprise me. Zayn and Corbin inside the Chamber should work out well as they're the perfect kind of midcarders who could beef things up a little bit.

Dolph Ziggler and Robert Roode come in to see Deville and Pearce. They want in the Elimination Chamber, and are even willing to be in different pods. Sonya gives them a chance, in another tag team qualifying match, against Cesaro and Daniel Bryan.

We look back at Bianca Belair talking to Sasha Banks last week when Carmella and Reginald interfered, earning Reginald a whipping.

Reginald brings Sasha Banks some wine but Banks isn't buying it. She takes the drink anyway and keeps talking to Kalisto.

Here's Big E. for a chat. He is going to be a fighting champion and, after a Gorilla Glue reference, he mentions being past the Apollo Crews chapter...and here's Crews to interrupt. Crews accepts the challenge, but Big E. was going to issue the challenge to anyone here except Crews you see. Big E. was looking forward to Michael Cole accepting the challenge but Crews implies Big E. is scared. Big E. lowers the mic and says he has beaten Crews time after time so go back to catering and get your paycheck. Crews gets in his face

and a lot of arguing ensues, with Big E. saying they're done so bring out the next challenger.

### Intercontinental Title: Big E. vs. Shinsuke Nakamura

Nakamura is challenging and Big E. powers him around to start. That earns him some kicks down and the champ is in some trouble. It's already time for the Kinshasa but Big E. pulls him into the Big Ending. That's broken up and Nakamura kicks him in the back of the head. Another Kinshasa is loaded up but Crews runs in to dropkick Big E. for the DQ at 3:24.

**Rating:** C-. No time for much here as we continue to build towards Crews' final showdown, likely at Elimination Chamber. That should work out well as Crews at least has a bit more of a background after that US Title reign. I liked how serious Big E. got, but saying Crews can't have a match isn't the most heroic thing to do. I don't think there's a turn coming or anything, but it didn't quite feel right.

Video on Seth Rollins.

The locker room comes to the ring for Rollins' return. After a break here's Rollins, with BURN IT DOWN again. He's still in the suit with the one glove though so I'm getting mixed messages here. Rollins is glad to be back and knows that things have changed since he sacrificed himself at Survivor Series. The thing that has changed the most though is him though, because he has become a parent for the first time. He is now the father of a beautiful, perfect baby girl, who has changed his life in ways he never dreamed of.

Rollins sees the talent around here and he wonders where he fits in. Now he knows where that is: Rollins is the great leader that Smackdown needs to push it into the future. Leadership isn't about what they can do for him but what he can do for them. Everyone walks out as Rollins talks about being a leader and a mentor. Rollins says all you have to do for a better Smackdown is embrace the vision. The lights come

back up and he realizes that only Cesaro is left at ringside. Then Cesaro shakes his head and leaves as well, only to have Rollins run to the floor and chop block him. The beatdown is on until referees break it up.

Video on the Elimination Chamber.

### Bayley vs. Liv Morgan

Ruby Riott is here with Morgan, who starts fast and hammers away. Bayley misses a clothesline and Morgan hits a middle rope dropkick to the floor, meaning it's time for a trip to the floor. A dive off the steps takes a bit too long for Morgan and Bayley sends her hard into the barricade instead. Back in and Bayley hits a shoulder breaker to rock Morgan but it's an enziguri to give Morgan two. Cue Billie Kay to offer Riott her resume, which Riott throws away. The referee gets rid of them though and it's the Rose Plant to finish Morgan at 3:45.

**Rating:** D+. The story continues and that's one of the things I really wish WWE would stop. Bayley beat one half of the Riott Squad thanks to Billie messing up last week and now she did it to the other half this week. It was no secret that they were going in this direction after last week and that's because WWE is pretty repetitive. That's not good and it wasn't even much of a match in the first place.

The Street Profits were at Daytona Motor Speedway this week.

### Street Profits vs. Otis/Chad Gable

During the entrances, the Profits say they want the titles back and Otis/Gable train for the smoke. Gable takes Dawkins to the mat to start but Dawkins manages to reverse. They send each other into opposite corners for a standoff so Ford comes in instead. An armdrag into an armbar has Ford flailing around but it's back to Dawkins to take Gable down. That doesn't last long as Otis gets the tag and starts to throw Profits around.

Ford low bridges Otis to the floor to break up a clothesline though and it's the Cash Out to finish Gable at 4:50.

**Rating:** C+. This was a pretty snappy match and that was a nice surprise. Gable and Otis work well together and I could go for seeing them develop a bit more in the future. The Profits continue to be great and you know the rematch for the titles has to be coming sooner rather than later. Everyone was working here though and the pretty short amount of time flew by.

Here's Sasha Banks to talk about Wrestlemania. She has been dealing with Bianca Belair, who is like a little sister. Cue Belair to say Banks isn't the boss of her. Those are fighting words so here are Nia Jax and Shayna Baszler to interrupt. Jax can't believe how big their egos are and asks Shayna if she cares about Belair's pick. Belair shows us the MY HOLE clip from Raw so the brawl is on. Baszler is knocked down so Jax is tripped onto the apron, meaning she has to stop herself from shouting about...well you get the idea. Belair and Banks take out Baszler as well and the two stand tall.

Elimination Chamber Qualifying Match: Bobby Roode/Dolph Ziggler vs. Daniel Bryan/Cesaro

Non-title. Ziggler takes Bryan down for an early two but Cesaro comes in for a double slam. It's off to Roode, who has to avoid the YES Lock, and gets sent outside. Cesaro is right there and is whipped into the steps. Sami Zayn and King Corbin come out to watch and we take a break.

Back with Bryan in trouble as Roode snaps off a suplex for two and hands it back to Ziggler. Bryan takes Ziggler down but Roode decks Cesaro, allowing Bryan to grab a rollup for two. Roode's spinebuster gets two more on Bryan but Ziggler misses a charge in the corner, allowing the hot tag to Cesaro. Everything breaks down and Bryan hits Roode with the running knee. The Fameasser gets two on Cesaro but he's right back up

with the Swing into the Sharpshooter to make Ziggler tap at 11:04.

**Rating:** C+. Another good match between talented teams, even if the Tag Team Titles get their annual smack in the face for the sake of some qualifying matches. In this case I'm not sure who else could have taken the loss, but I would have preferred it not to be the champs. Bryan and Cesaro winning was mostly but not entirely obvious and that's a nice feeling.

Post match Jey Uso, Sami Zayn and King Corbin all come in for the brawl. Everyone goes at it until Kevin Owens runs in for the Stunnerfest. Roman Reigns watches from the back as Owens sits down, saying that he's coming for Reigns to end the show.

**Overall Rating:** C. This show worked well for me for one reason: those tag team qualifying matches. Both of them were pretty good, but the real reason they were nice to see was they were different. Instead of the usual four singles matches, they actually threw in something fresh for a change and that's nice to see. Not so much the idea was brilliant, but it was a change from the norm and I can absolutely go for that over the same old stuff that they do all the time. The rest of the show was fine enough, but I like that they're actually taking some different paths week to week.

### Results

Sami Zayn/King Corbin b. Rey Mysterio/Dominik Mysterio – Helluva Kick to Dominik

Big E. b. Shinsuke Nakamura via DQ when Apollo Crews interfered

Bayley b. Liv Morgan – Rose Plant

Street Profits b. Chad Gable/Otis – Cash Out to Gable

Cesaro/Daniel Bryan b. Dolph Ziggler/Robert Roode – Sharpshooter to Ziggler

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# Smackdown – February 5, 2021: We're In A New Reality

## **Smackdown**

Date: February 5, 2021

Location: Tropicana Field, St. Petersburg, Florida

Commentators: Michael Cole, Corey Graves

The Royal Rumble has come and gone and, should the men's winner Edge take the blue route, he will be challenging Roman Reigns, who retained the Universal Title. He has about nine weeks to decide where to go, as does Bianca Belair, who won the women's Royal Rumble. Let's get to it.

[Here's the Royal Rumble if you need a recap.](#)

We open with a recap of the Royal Rumbles.

Here are Roman Reigns (Cole: "The ever aloof."), Jey Uso and Paul Heyman to get things going. Reigns says he doesn't says he doesn't like talking about the past and would rather look to the future, because the future seems to be Edge. Reigns goes on a rant about how he's the best (including calling

himself WWE Champion) and asking why Edge is wasting time on Raw and NXT. Why not come here and bring yourself to the island of relevancy?

Now why is he out here first anyway? Edge is making the head of the table wait? Heyman says Edge is here so he needs to get out here right now. Heyman: "Music and entrance for Edge please. PYRO FOR EDGE PLEASE!" No one shows up and Heyman whispers something to Reigns, who does not seem pleased. Reigns isn't happy with Edge disrespecting him and gets serious, saying Edge is going to give him his decision by the end of the night.

### King Corbin vs. Dominick Mysterio

Rey Mysterio is here with Dominick but Corbin jumps both of them on the way to the ring, including launching Rey off the stage. We start after a break with Dominick firing off a dropkick but getting knocked down in a hurry. Rey is having his knee examined as Corbin continues to hammer away and grabs a chinlock. Corbin elbows him down again and asks if Rey has been training Dominick.

Back up and Dominick manages to send him outside for the dive as Rey drags himself to ringside. We take a break and come back with Dominick hitting a neckbreaker for two. Deep Six plants Dominick for two but he sends Corbin outside again. Rey has gone underneath the ring and grabs Corbin's leg, setting up the 619. The frog splash gives Dominick the pin at 9:23.

**Rating:** C-. Well that was pretty nefarious. I'm not exactly feeling what is coming off as a bit of a Dominick heel leaning but Dominick vs. Rey could be somewhat interesting if that is where we wind up going. That being said, having Corbin involved is not exactly the best way to go with anything, but that hasn't stopped WWE before.

We look at Sami Zayn interfering in the Intercontinental Title match two weeks ago.

Big E. talks about being ready to fight tonight to defend his Intercontinental Title. Much like Lady Liberty, bring him your tired, hungry, bearded and bald because we are going to fight for this prize.

### Daniel Bryan vs. Cesaro

They start fast with Bryan going after the arm and then backdropping Cesaro out to the floor. The dive takes Cesaro down again but he blasts Bryan with an uppercut back inside. We see Shinsuke Nakamura watching from the back before Bryan kicks the springboard corkscrew uppercut out of the air. A YES Kick gets two but Cesaro (who has been cut open on the side of his head) is back up with a torture rack into a backbreaker. The Swing sets up the Sharpshooter...and Bryan taps at 4:14.

**Rating:** C. I wouldn't have bet on that one but dang if they aren't giving Cesaro a nice something as of late. I'm still far from believing that any of this is going to matter in the long run after being burned far too many times, but it's nice to see for a change. If nothing else, who would have expected such a clean and easy win?

Respect is shown post match.

We look at Bianca Belair winning the Royal Rumble.

We see Bianca Belair's parents watching her win live, including her dad climbing onto the coffee table and then falling over the back of the couch.

Belair is asked who she is going to face but she is so excited and can't listen to everyone telling her what to do. She is going to do it her way and announce her decision soon.

Seth Rollins is back next week. Again.

### Bayley vs. Ruby Riott

Liv Morgan is at ringside and Billie Kay is on commentary,

where she insists that she was only allegedly thrown out of both the Riott Squad and Royal Rumble. Riott nails an early Riott Kick for two but Bayley throws her face first into the top turnbuckle. It's time to work on the armbar but Riott fights up and sends her face first into the buckle to even things up.

Riott's rollup gets two so Bayley sends her throat first (a lot of firsts in this one) into the bottom rope. A Stunner over the middle rope sets up another armbar so Billie gets up to shove the ropes closer to Riott. Morgan doesn't like that and gets in an argument with Billie, leaving Riott to get caught with the bulldog driver for the pin at 3:59.

**Rating:** C-. This was more about the Riott Squad than anything else and that's not the worst thing. Billie continues to be an absolute gem and has come miles after going I guess what you call solo. The resume thing is hilarious and now I'm not sure she even needs to rejoin Peyton Royce. At this point, she's far more entertaining on her own and that's great to see.

Post match Billie offers Bayley a resume.

Edge is here.

Here's Bianca Belair for her big interview after winning the Royal Rumble. Everything has blown up since she won the Royal Rumble and she has had to ask who a lot of people are with all of these texts. Now she has a decision to make because Asuka and Sasha Banks are both interesting opponents. Cue Reginald to say Belair can't beat Sasha or Carmella, which draws out Carmella to say the same thing.

Now it's Sasha coming out to say she isn't looking at Carmella anymore because that's in the rear view mirror. Belair has her attention now because she has seen what Belair can do in the Royal Rumble. Yeah Belair can be the strongest and the fastest but the best? Belair may have it all, but she doesn't have the title. Reginald says Belair will lose if she picks Sasha so

Belair whips him out with the hair to wrap things up with no decision.

Roman Reigns is told Edge is here.

Sami Zayn can't believe how unfair everything has been to him but tonight it's time for some happy footage when he gets the Intercontinental Title back.

### Otis/Chad Gable vs. Robert Roode/Dolph Ziggler

Non-title and the Street Profits are doing commentary in a window in the corner of the screen. Gable easily outwrestles Ziggler and takes him into the corner, where a dropkick puts Gable down. The Profits try to figure out why they can't get a rematch as Roode suplexes Gable for two. Gable kicks him away though and the hot tag brings in Otis to start throwing people around. The Caterpillar (with the Profits bouncing along with Otis) hits Roode and it's Gable hitting the Rolling Chaos Theory on Ziggler. Roode is back up though and the Glorious DDT finishes Gable at 3:31.

**Rating:** C. I know the Profits probably got on people's nerves here and that's understandable. However, the thing that made this work was it was different. If there is one thing that WWE really needs to fix, it is how stale their presentation feels. Just throwing something in there like this made the match at least feel different and that's a good thing. WWE needs some fresh ideas and if they are actually trying something, good for them.

We look at the first ever Main Event, thirty three years ago today.

Hulk Hogan (with Jimmy Hart in the background) talks about the match and hypes up Edge's decision. Hogan had absolutely nothing to say here and it was obvious.

Edge meets Shinsuke Nakamura.

## Intercontinental Title: Apollo Crews vs. Sami Zayn vs. Big E.

Big E. is defending and Sami is chased outside early. Crews rolls some German suplexes for two on Big E. with Sami coming in for the save. Sami is sent outside though with Big E. following him, allowing Crews to hit the big flip dive onto the champ. Crews nails a great looking apron moonsault to crush Big E. again but Sami dives off the steps to take him down.

We come back from a break with Sami choking on the ropes but Big E. fights up and snaps off the suplexes to Crews. Sami gets put down as well and there's the double Warrior Splash. With Sami on the floor, Crews hits an enziguri on Big E. but gets dumped to the floor. The release Rock Bottom out of the corner plants Sami for two more but Crews knocks Big E. down again.

Crews' frog splash gets two on Sami, only to have Big E. suplex both of them at the same time. With that crazy power display taken care of, Big E.'s spear through the ropes is cut off by a knee to the face. The Helluva Kick hits Big E. for two with Crews making the save this time. Now Sami is frustrated again so Crews hits him in the head over and over. Crews throws Sami over the timekeeper's table but walks into the Big Ending for the pin at 11:54.

**Rating:** B. This felt like a really nice B level house show main event. There wasn't a ton of drama about Big E. winning but they had him break enough of a sweat that it felt like a title change could have been a remote possibility. I wouldn't have bet on that in this one, which felt like it went a lot further than it should have. Nice job.

Post match Big E. is all fired up but Crews glares at him from behind.

Seth Rollins is still back next week.

Here's Edge for the big closing segment. Edge talks about how he spent the last seven months dreaming. He was dreaming every mile he logged because he wanted to get back something that was his. Then he outlasted twenty nine of the best in the world today to win the Royal Rumble. Now he isn't sure who he should face at the Royal Rumble. He asks his family and gets one answer, then he asks his friend and gets another answer. Then he was on his way here tonight and asked someone on the corner and got another answer. Edge: "His name was John. He was a nice guy."

Cue Roman Reigns and company to cut things off though as we get a bit more serious. Edge thinks it's funny that Reigns already needs backup, but Reigns promises that Paul won't make a move. Reigns sends Jey to the bus because he has this himself. Edge has one chance to acknowledge him as the main event of Wrestlemania...but here's Kevin Owens with a Stunner to Reigns before Edge can say a word to end the show. I don't think anyone was really expecting a decision from Edge here and they still have time to set things up in the future, but we're really not done with Owens vs. Reigns?

**Overall Rating:** C+. Unlike Raw, this show actually had some energy and that's one of the best things that can be said about a big follow up show. They have time to announce the Rumble decisions later, so this was more along the lines of setting up the new reality. We now have Wrestlemania coming up a heck of a lot sooner than later and that is going to dominate everything. It certainly dominated Elimination Chamber, which wasn't even mentioned despite being in just over two weeks. Overall, good show here, with some solid action and a nice feeling that the stakes are being raised.

### Results

Dominick Mysterio b. King Corbin – Frog splash

Cesaro b. Daniel Bryan – Sharpshooter

Bayley b. Ruby Riott – Bulldog driver

Robert Roode/Dolph Ziggler b. Otis/Chad Gable – Glorious DDT to Gable

Big E. b. Apollo Crews and Sami Zayn – Big Ending to Crews

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# Smackdown – January 22, 2021: Fun Times

## **Smackdown**

Date: January 22, 2021

Location: Tropicana Field, St. Petersburg, Florida

Commentators: Michael Cole, Corey Graves

We're just over a week away from the Royal Rumble and that means it is time to start the last push towards the pay per view. Tonight features a title match of its own with Big E. defending the Intercontinental Title against an upgraded Apollo Crews, but Roman Reigns is not going to be happy and that could be great. Let's get to it.

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

We open with a recap of last week's show with Adam Pearce being set for the Royal Rumble title match against Roman Reigns but then having it switched out to Kevin Owens through some trickery.

Here are Roman Reigns and Paul Heyman for an opening chat. Reigns laughs off the idea of Card Subject To Change because Adam Pearce swapped himself out of the title match. You won't be seeing Kevin Owens here tonight Reigns doesn't want him here. Reigns comes here and goes to work because that's what he does. He even put his health in danger, but what if he gets hurt? Man his back and neck have been bothering him lately. His ankles have been messed up since college. What if he just said his back was hurting too badly to wrestle at the Royal Rumble?

Cue Pearce to say this has gotten out of hand. Reigns doesn't want to hear it and says Pearce needs to make his way back into the title scene. Pearce doesn't buy that but Reigns says that Pearce can't handle this. He hasn't had a match in six years because he doesn't have the heart. Maybe that's why he never made it to the WWE.

Reigns and Heyman take this as disrespect, which means Pearce is disrespecting the family. Therefore, Heyman wants to do something about it and challenges Pearce to a fight. Heyman, citing his status as a New Yorker, says he will whip Pearce's a\*\*. Pearce says it's on and Reigns promises Pearce is getting whipped too. See, I think we all know where this is going, but it's still fun to see how it goes down the obvious path.

Here's Sami Zayn to handcuff himself to the barricade for a protest, while declaring his entrance in the Royal Rumble.

Women's Tag Team Titles: Charlotte/Asuka vs. Riott Squad

Charlotte/Asuka are defending, Billie Kay is here with the Squad,

and Asuka seems fine after being terrified of Alexa Bliss on Raw. Charlotte beats on Ruby Riott to start as Natalya and Tamina are watching backstage. Asuka comes in for a few shots but a Kay distraction lets Riott bring Liv Morgan in. A high crossbody hits Charlotte and we take a break. Back with Morgan snapping off a headscissors on Charlotte and Riott sending her face first into the corner for two.

Charlotte finally kicks Riott away and nails the fall away slam to send Morgan into the corner. The Downward Spiral into the top turnbuckle allows the tag off to Asuka. The sliding knee gets two as everything breaks down. Asuka German suplexes Morgan but Riott comes back in to roll her up. Billie accidentally distracts the ref though meaning no count. Instead it's a running hip attack to Morgan and Charlotte hits Natural Selection to finish Morgan at 8:32.

**Rating:** C. The wrestling was fine, but are we really just going to ignore Asuka being scared of Alexa Bliss and losing to her clean? Or everything with Charlotte and Lacey Evans/Ric Flair? Nothing at all? You might think that was worthy of a mention on this show but this was a run of the mill match with the titles being a backdrop to Billie screwing up again.

Post break, Billie tries to make amends by having the Squad in the Royal Rumble. She offers to help them practice by being Bianca Belair and Carmella (with impressions included) but the Squad, being as nice as they can, say Billie is out.

Here is a dressed up Daniel Bryan for a chat. He is VERY happy that the Royal Rumble coming up because it is all about the drama and the questions of what number you will have and when you are coming out. It makes him feel alive because he is ready to win and move on to main event Wrestlemania. Cue Cesaro to say that was a nice explanation, but he could have done it better (and in five languages).

Cesaro talks about being the first ever Andre the Giant battle

royal winner so he will know how to win the Royal Rumble. Bryan is ready to fight right now but Cesaro says that since Bryan isn't dressed to wrestle, he'll issue an open challenge. Cue Dolph Ziggler, to say he can do anything in the ring and Cesaro is one of the few who can match him (Ziggler: "Sorry DB but it's not 2014 anymore."). The challenge is accepted.

### Dolph Ziggler vs. Cesaro

Daniel Bryan is on commentary as they go to the grappling to start. Ziggler's sleeper doesn't work and Cesaro hits him in the face, setting up a rather long Cesaro Swing. They go to the pinfall reversal sequence with Ziggler getting two but having his superkick blocked. The Fameasser gives Ziggler two and we hit the sleeper again. That's reversed into the Neutralizer and Ziggler is done at 3:43.

**Rating:** C+. They didn't have much time here but Cesaro getting momentum is nice to see, even if there is no reason to believe that it is going to go anywhere. I've been burned by Cesaro's pushes being canceled too many times now but at least we're getting a little something here. It's better than nothing after all these years.

We recap Sasha Banks challenging Reginald to a match before she is willing to face Carmella again.

### Sasha Banks vs. Reginald

Reginald gives Sasha a flower to start so Sasha slaps the taste out of his mouth (even Carmella's mouth drops open for that). Sasha climbs the ropes for a hurricanrana but Reginald flips forward to land on his feet. A waistlock doesn't work for Sasha as Reginald backflips out and lands on his feet outside. Banks hits a baseball slide and whips him into the steps...where Reginald front flips off of them and sticks the landing. Back in and Reginald dives over a monkey flip attempt and then counters a sunset flip.

A Rey Mysterio sitout bulldog works better but Banks seems to tweak her knee. Reginald flips away from a basement dropkick but a powerbomb is countered into an armdrag. Banks manages to send him outside for the Meteora off the apron. Back in and Banks grabs his hands while still on the mat, only to pull herself up for another Meteora. Something like La Mistica is completely messed up but Banks pulls him into the Bank Statement for the tap at 4:00. Cole: "Now the sommellier has something to whine about!" Graves: "I can't even with you."

**Rating:** C-. I have no idea what to think here as this was much more of a gymnastics routine that made Reginald look like a star for reasons I don't quite understand. Banks vs. Carmella is set up, but I'm not sure why they went this way to get here. The match was fun, but how does this make me want to see Carmella get a title shot?

Paul Heyman compliments Roman Reigns for setting up the match with Adam Pearce because he knows Reigns has a plan. Reigns says he just handed Heyman a microphone and now Heyman has to deal with this. Heyman panics.

We recap Apollo Crews cheating to become #1 contender last week.

### Intercontinental Title: Big E. vs. Apollo Crews

Crews is challenging and charges into a belly to belly to start. The apron splash connects but Crews is back with a pump kick into the standing moonsault for two. Big E. hits the Rock Bottom out of the corner for the same and Crews heads outside with Big E. saying Crews made a mistake with the slap. Crews gets in a shot on the floor and heads back inside to go up top. Hold on though as Sami, still handcuffed, unlocks the cuffs as Crews hits a missile dropkick. Sami runs in for the Helluva Kick to Crews for the DQ at 2:55.

Post match Sami hits a Helluva Kick for Big E. as well.

Kevin Owens is in his car because he isn't allowed in the ring tonight and says this is all going to end with Roman Reigns at the Royal Rumble. Owens talks about his tattoos telling a story, including his grandparents' initials on his knuckles. They always supported him but they passed away before he could make it to WWE. Both of them had horrible illnesses but they kept fighting, just like he'll do at the Royal Rumble when he becomes champion.

The Street Profits bring Sonya Deville (talking to Dolph Ziggler, who leaves before they get there), a fruit basket to congratulate her on her new job. They don't get why she is hanging out with Ziggler but they get to the point: they want their rematch. Sonya isn't sure though because they held the titles for a long time and Ford's knee is still banged up. Some more teams need a chance and once the Profits are healthy, they can be back in the title scene. That seems to be cool, but the Profits are not happy after she leaves.

We recap the debut of Bayley's talk show last week where she challenged Bianca Belair to an obstacle course race.

Bayley and Belair come out to go over the obstacles with Bayley going first. She takes her time and walks around some of the walls she is supposed to climb, and then drops the Chad Gable she is supposed to carry. Bayley finishes with a time of 1:12 and then says let's EST this course for Belair, meaning it's a lot harder. Belair starts fast but has to fireman's carry Otis instead of Gable....which she promptly does, and then dunks a basketball to win with 17 seconds left. Well that was impressive. Bayley pelts the basketball at Belair's stomach though and the beatdown is on, including Bayley throwing her into the basketball goal.

Dominick tells Rey Mysterio that he has this, despite what Rey thinks.

Dominick Mysterio vs. King Corbin

Corbin starts fast by knocking Dominick to the floor, setting up a heck of a clothesline. Dominick fights back but the 619 is countered. A big right hand knocks Dominick silly and the End of Days finishes at 2:11. Well that was abrupt.

### Paul Heyman vs. Adam Pearce

Pearce is in workout gear and Heyman, in his suit, tapes his fist on the way to the ring. Hold on though as Heyman tweaks his ankle on the steps and goes down. The referee checks on him but Heyman says "CARD SUBJECT TO CHANGE." And yes indeed here's Roman Reigns to hit the Superman Punch to send Pearce to the floor.

Reigns hits him low and sends him into the fan screens before taking him up to the stands like he did to Kevin Owens. Speaking of Owens, here he is in a hoodie to beat on Reigns. Owens is sent into the barricade and they head inside, where Owens nails a Stunner. Referees come out as Owens takes him outside again and beats on Reigns some more. A Stunner on the floor drops Reigns again and the Pop Up powerbomb puts him through the announcers' table to end the show.

**Overall Rating:** C. I know we go over this every week but Smackdown continues to be so much better than Raw for one major reason: the show feels fun. This show didn't have a ton of great wrestling but some angles were advanced and a hot ending angle made up for some of the weaker points. The pay per view is all but set on the Smackdown side and they did what they needed to do here for one of the last shows. It's nothing great, but it's not like Raw left the bar that high.

### Results

Charlotte/Asuka b. Riott Squad – Natural Selection to Morgan

Cesaro b. Dolph Ziggler – Neutralizer

Sasha Banks b. Reginald – Bank Statement

Apollo Crews b. Big E. via DQ when Sami Zayn interfered

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