

King And Queen Of The Ring 2024: Needed A Pre-Knuck

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Date: May 25, 2024

Location: Jeddah Super Dome, Jeddah, Saudi Arabia

Commentators: Michael Cole, Corey Graves

It's tournament time, as we have the finals of the King and Queen Of The Ring tournaments. That makes the show's title about as appropriate as you can get, but there are some other things going on as well. Cody Rhodes is defending the WWE Title against Logan Paul and Liv Morgan is challenging Becky Lynch for the Raw Women's Title. Let's get to it.

Kickoff Show: Women's Tag Team Titles: Indi Hartwell/Candice LeRae vs. Bianca Belair/Jade Cargill

Cargill and Belair are defending and Cargill sends Hartwell flying with a fall away slam to start. Belair comes in and gets slammed onto Hartwell before firing off the shoulders to LeRae's ribs. LeRae slips out of a gorilla press as Belair's bad knee gives out and the villains have a target. Belair gets taken into the wrong corner so LeRae and Hartwell can take turns on the knee, with LeRae hitting a jumping stomp.

LeRae grabs a half crab (and looks rather bored) but Belair powers out and gets the tag to Cargill. House is quickly cleaned with splashes in the corner, setting up a Batista Bomb for two. Cargill is draped over the middle rope for a Swanton from LeRae and a missile dropkick connects. Unfortunately it sends her into the corner for the tag to Belair, who comes in to clean house. A DDT into an assisted German suplex finishes LeRae to retain at 7:58.

Rating: C. There was a clock airing during this match, counting down the time until the show proper started. They

might as well have had a countdown until the champs retained here, as this was little more than a guaranteed successful title defense. Nothing to see here other than the champs getting in a nice workout over some low level challengers.

The opening video looks at how winning the tournaments can be the start of something big.

Raw Women's Title: Becky Lynch vs. Liv Morgan

Lynch is defending and wearing something close to a tuxedo as she wrestles Liv, looking quite a bit like Britney Spears, to the mat in an image I wasn't expecting. Back in and Liv breaks up the middle rope legdrop before crashing into Lynch for two. We hit the seated armbar for a bit before Lynch fights up, only to get sent into the corner. A double knockdown gives both of them a breather.

Back up and Lynch hits a missile dropkick for two but it's too early for the Disarm-Her. Liv plants her down for two but misses a charge into the corner, allowing Lynch to hit something like a clothesline for two. Oblivion is countered into a reverse hanging DDT for two more and they're both down again. Back up and Morgan hits a running knee for two before it's time to slug it out.

The cross armbreaker is countered into the Rings Of Saturn but Lynch stacks her up, only to get pulled right back in. Lynch gets an armbar but here is Dominik Mysterio, with the distraction letting Liv reverse the Manhandle Slam into a Codebreaker. Liv goes up but gets superplexed back down. With the referee checking on Liv, Dominik slides in a chair, seemingly to Becky, but gets on the apron to distract the referee. That's enough for Liv to hit a DDT onto the chair, followed by Oblivion for the pin and the title at 14:38.

Rating: C+. The story here is the title change, but also the way in which Liv won it. I'm curious to see just how things going, as Rhea Ripley is not going to be happy with what just

happened. Liv getting the title, only to get smashed by Ripley when she gets back, is a smart way to go, as Lynch was little more than a placeholder champion in the first place.

Dominik knows he screwed up.

We recap the Intercontinental Title match, with Sami Zayn (the soul) defending against Chad Gable (the mind) and Bronson Reed (the body). This is mainly about Zayn vs. Gable, with Reed being there as a wrecking ball as a danger to both of them.

Intercontinental Title: Sami Zayn vs. Chad Gable vs. Bronson Reed

Zayn is defending and gets a heck of a reaction while Otis is here with Gable. We start fast with both challengers being sent to the floor, where Zayn hits a slingshot dive onto Reed. Gable jumps him from behind though as the OLE chants are out in full force. Back in and Reed runs Zayn down before release Rock Bottoming him onto Gable. Zayn gets tied in the ring skirt and pummeled by Gable, who missile dropkicks Reed.

Back up and Zayn sends Gable to the floor and hits a big running flip dive onto both of them. A sunset bomb gives Zayn two on Reed but the Blue Thunder Bomb just isn't happening. Reed is back with a superplex to Zayn but misses a moonsault. Gable's moonsault hits Reed for two, with Zayn having to make a save. Zayn's tornado DDT gets two on Reed with Gable making the save and getting an ankle lock.

Reed goes to make a save but gets ankle locked, leaving Zayn to ankle lock Gable at the same time. Another save is broken up and Zayn hits a rather impressive Blue Thunder Bomb for two on Reed. Back up and Reed Samoan drops both of them to the floor, setting up a heck of a suicide dive.

The Tsunami misses Zayn, who rolls some German suplexes to Gable. Reed German suplexes them both at the same time but they get together to put Reed down. Gable is ready for Otis to

interfere but Otis can't bring himself to hit Zayn. Instead Gable slaps Otis and tells him to wake up, only for Otis to clothesline Gable, intentions unclear. That leaves Zayn to Helluva Kick Reed for the pin to retain at 13:48.

Rating: B. There were some rather impressive spots here, with Zayn showing off some nice power stuff against Reed. What matters here though is Otis accidentally (maybe) taking out Gable, which is likely going to be an issue going forward. Zayn retaining is the right call as he only won the title about a month and a half ago, so he very well could be in for a long reign to come.

We recap the Queen Of The Ring finals, with Lyra Valkyria from Raw and Nia Jax from Smackdown.

Queen Of The Ring: Lyra Valkyria vs. Nia Jax

Valkyria can't grab a crucifix to start but can flip out o a whip into the corner. Jax gets sent outside and there's a running dropkick to stagger her. Back in and Jax tries the Samoan drop but gets reversed into a sleeper. That's broken up with a ram into the corner, followed by an elbow to the back for two. Valkyria gets tied in the Tree of Woe and then knocked back out, setting up the chinlock.

The comeback doesn't last long as Jax plants her with the Samoan drop for two more. The Annihilator misses (Jax: "OH THAT HURT!") and Valkyria hits a bulldog on the floor for a breather. Back in and Valkyria grabs a tornado DDT for two, followed by a middle rope Fameasser for the same. Jax splashes her in the corner though and tries a super Samoan drop. That's reversed into something resembling a sunset bomb but Jax hits an Annihilator to the standing Valkyria for the pin and the crown at 9:44.

Rating: C. There was only so much that Valkyria could do here as she doesn't have the size or power to hang with Jax. Valkyria got her big run to the finals before getting crushed

by Jax with that insane Annihilator. There is a good chance that Jax wins the title at Summerslam, but it's a long road to get there.

Post match HHH comes out to crown Jax. With HHH gone, Jax says get ready to get really mad.

Becky Lynch yells at Dominik Mysterio and doesn't know what's going on with anyone. She has a rematch though and she's going to take it on Raw.

We recap Gunther and Randy Orton's paths to the finals of the King Of The Ring.

Tiffany Stratton and Carmelo Hayes are here watching.

King Of The Ring: Gunther vs. Randy Orton

They lock up to start until Gunther backs him into the corner for the clean break. Orton backs him into the corner as well but the break isn't quite as clean with some rather nasty grappling. Gunther grabs an armbar for a bit before Orton is back up with a headlock. A headlock takeover puts Gunther down as we're somehow five minutes into this. Back up and Orton blocks a chop and hammers away but the RKO is blocked.

Gunther starts slowly working on the (taped up) knee before grabbing an armbar to mix things up a bit. The slow beating is on, with Orton being dropped hard to bang up the back even more. They fight over a suplex until Orton gets him over for the double down. Back up and Gunther runs him over with a clothesline for two but Orton snaps off a powerslam. The hanging DDT connects but another RKO is blocked, allowing Gunther to hit the top rope splash for two.

A top rope double stomp misses though and Orton hits the RKO, sending Gunther rolling out to the floor. Orton drops him onto the announcers' table and then hits a backdrop, only to have Gunther dropkick him in the bad knee on the way back in. A

half crab stays on the bad leg but Orton kicks him away and hits another RKO for two (because the knee won't let Orton cover properly), only to be rolled up for the pin at 21:48. Ignore Orton's shoulder being six inches off the mat.

Rating: A-. This was a long and slow paced match with Gunther working on the knee and then tying it together in the end. What matters here is the fact that Gunther got a bit win and gets to move on to Summerslam, where he gets his major title match. The shoulder being up at the end was awful, but the rest of the match was hard hitting enough to make up for the problem.

Post match Gunther brags about winning and promises to win the World Title at Summerslam.

Crown Jewel is in Riyadh on November 2.

HHH congratulates Liv Morgan, Nia Jax and Gunther on their wins. As for a big announcement, Drew McIntyre is cleared to return to the ring and will face Damian Priest at Clash At The Castle for the World Heavyweight Title. That almost had to be set up so at least they didn't wait too long.

We recap Logan Paul vs. Cody Rhodes for the Smackdown World Title. It was originally title vs. title but instead it's just for Rhodes' title as Paul backed out. Rhodes accused him of being self centered and not willing to go further than he has already gotten. There is also the question of whether or not Paul has actually given up his brass knuckles.

Smackdown World Title: Logan Paul vs. Cody Rhodes

Rhodes is defending (Paul's US Title isn't on the line) and Michael Cole has Paul's brass knuckles. A Saudi actor is guest ring announcer and we're ready to go. Feeling out process to start and fight over a top wristlock. Paul trips him down but Cody is back up with a slingshot gordbuster. A crossbody misses for Cody though and he falls to the floor, where Paul

hits a slingshot dive.

Back in and a faceplant gives Paul two, followed by a standing moonsault for the same. Paul goes up but gets super armdragged down (with Cody kind of crashing on the landing), but being able to hit a Disaster Kick to send Paul outside. Paul manages to get a shot of Prime but Cody hits him in the face with it. Hold on though as Paul's Prime goon shoves Cody, which is enough of a distraction for another goon to slip Paul some brass knuckles. Cole: "YOU SIGNED A PRE-KNUCK!"

Paul hits him in the ribs but goes after Cole, allowing Cody to get in a quick shot of his own. Cody hammers away back inside and grabs the Figure Four but Paul gets out. Back up and the Buckshot Lariat misses, allowing the Cody Cutter to connect for two. Paul reverses a Vertebreaker and grabs a Cross Rhodes for two of his own in a nice near fall. Cody puts him down again but the Cross Rhodes is countered. They head back outside with Paul loading up the announcers' table (apologizing to Cole in the process) but takes too long, allowing Cody to hit a Cody Cutter off the barricade.

Cody won't let the referee count though, as Paul "needs to learn". Paul uses the delay to put Cody on the announcers' table and, after a shot of Prime (dig the 360 camera shot), hit the top rope splash through Cody and the table. Back in and a frog splash gives Paul two and, after telling Cody he hates him, he hammers away. The referee gets splashed in the corner and now Cody hits the Vertebreaker for no count. Paul hits him low and loads up the knuckles...but the actor grabs his leg. That's enough for Cody to grab three straight Cross Rhodes to retain the title at 24:16.

Rating: B+. It's been said over and over again but Paul is WAY too good at this for someone who was barely a part timer until just a few months ago. Paul losing due to some shenanigans from an actor is a nice enough way to protect him and he's still US Champion. They had a heck of a match here and managed

to follow the near classic in the previous match.

Cody gets to celebrate with the fans and kiss the mat to end the show.

Overall Rating: B. This show took its time to get going but the last two matches were both awesome, with the Intercontinental Title match being more than good enough to hold its own. As usual, these shows are much better when they're regular WWE events that happen to be in Saudi Arabia and that was the case again here. Summerslam is partially set and now we get to see how things are set up to fill in the rest of the show. I had a nice time with this show and now we get to see where the summer goes, which could be quite the positive trip.

Results

Bianca Belair/Jade Cargill b. Indi Hartwell/Candice LeRae – Assisted German suplex to LeRae

Liv Morgan b. Becky Lynch – Oblivion

Sami Zayn b. Chad Gable and Bronson Reed – Helluva Kick to Reed

Nia Jax b. Lyra Valkyria – Annihilator

Gunther b. Randy Orton – Rollups

Cody Rhodes b. Logan Paul – Cross Rhodes

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King And Queen Of The Ring 2024 Preview

It's time to go back to Saudi Arabia for what will be...well if nothing else the show with the longest title in a long time. The show is built around the namesake tournament finals, plus a few other matches. This week saw WWE add some major stakes to the tournaments by putting World Title shots at Summerslam up for grabs, so they are about more than just the crown. Let's get to it.

Kickoff Show: Women's Tag Team Titles: Bianca Belair/Jade Cargill vs. Indi Hartwell/Candice LeRae

I try to start these things with the Kickoff Show matches, followed by the most obvious results. This one should cover both of them, as even with Belair suffering a knee injury, it is hard to imagine that the titles are in jeopardy. Hartwell and LeRae have been treated as little more than annoyances, so having them be a major threat to the super team is a stretch.

In case you didn't get it, of course I'll go with the champions retaining here as there is no reason to believe anything else will happen. Belair and Cargill are going to lose the titles someday, but they already have Shayna Baszler and Zoey Stark waiting on them. Why should I believe that a far weaker team has any serious chance of beating them in a match made the previous night? The champs retain here without much effort.

Queen Of The Ring: Nia Jax vs. Lyra Valkyria

This is one of those matches where it could go either way and the more you think about the options, the more interesting things get. In this case, I could see either of them getting a title shot at Summerslam. Bayley vs. Jax and Valkyria vs. Becky Lynch both make sense, but now the question becomes which of the paths WWE is going to take. That's more that I would have bet on coming in so well done.

With that being said, I'll go with Jax getting the win as WWE wants her to be a big star and needs to give her an important win of some kind. Valkyria has already been turned into a thing by making it this far and doesn't need the win, so go with what makes sense and give Jax the win. I could see Valkyria winning and it would make me rather happy, but I'll go with Jax winning here to make her that much bigger of a monster.

Intercontinental Title: Sami Zayn(c) vs. Bronson Reed vs. Chad Gable

The more I think about Zayn's mind vs. body vs. soul promo from Monday Night Raw, the more I like it. This is a feud that has gotten a lot of mileage out of something that feels like it should have wrapped up weeks ago and that is heavily due to what Gable has been saying. He has sold me on the feud and that is a great feeling, though it doesn't mean he'll be leaving as champion.

I'll go with the conventional wisdom here and say Zayn manages to retain the title. As much as it would benefit Gable to win the thing, Zayn losing the title, even with potential Otis interference, doesn't feel right here. Zayn retains the title here, likely pinning Reed in the process, but I could see one more big match between Zayn and Gable, hopefully with the latter winning.

Raw Women's Title: Becky Lynch(c) vs. Liv Morgan

This is an interesting one as Lynch is a placeholder champion until Rhea Ripley comes back and rips Morgan to pieces. That opens up an interesting question though, as it could be Ripley coming back for Morgan with the title or Morgan and the title in two separate stories. In theory that would mean Lynch retains here, as Morgan vs. Ripley does not need to be for a championship.

While Morgan needs to win the title to avoid being labeled as a choker, I don't think she does it just yet. There might be a screwy finish here of some kind, but I'll go with Lynch retaining and the feud continuing. Morgan has quite the set of skills and a VERY loyal fan base, but I don't know if that is enough to see her win the title here, as much sense as it would make.

King Of The Ring: Gunther vs. Randy Orton

NOW we're getting somewhere as this could go either way. We would be looking at either Gunther vs. Damian Priest/Drew McIntyre or Orton vs. Cody Rhodes, both of which could make for some awesome moments. Gunther has been waiting to move into the main event scene for a long time now, but Orton has been there for so long that there is always a chance of him sliding right back in. That opens up some interesting options as they both could easily win this.

As much as I could see it being Orton, I'll go with Gunther, who already has his own history with McIntyre, should that be the path they take. Gunther has mostly cleared out the midcard scene and needs some fresh blood, while Orton could lose every night for years and still be fine. I'll go with Gunther winning here, as it's almost hard to imagine him losing again so soon after WrestleMania.

SmackDown World Title: Cody Rhodes(c) vs. Logan Paul

We'll wrap it up here, with Rhodes getting another title match where the result might not be in doubt, but there is something

here to make him look that much better. Paul is just enough of a wild card that he could have a shot at a miracle, but what matters is that he has a chance. That shouldn't be much of a surprise as Saudi Arabia seems to be really big fans.

So yeah of course I'm taking Rhodes to retain here, as there is almost no reason to believe otherwise. Rhodes is still relatively early in his title reign that he needs to have another big match with an almost guaranteed win, which is where Paul comes in. Paul can put on some of the most exciting and entertaining matches in WWE today, so having him as the next designated victim is a smart move and could boost him up as well. But yeah, Rhodes retains here, as he should.

Overall Thoughts

WWE has benefited quite a bit from these tournaments, as they have allowed the company to produce quite the string of solid matches over the weeks. Having tournaments lets WWE map things out for weeks to come and now we've reached the big payoff. The rest of the card is stuff that should be good but they'll have their work cut out for the to beat some previous events.

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