

Payback 2020: At Least Someone Is Happy



IMG Credit: WWE

Payback 2020

Date: August 30, 2020

Location: Amway Center, Orlando, Florida

Commentators: Tom Phillips, Samoa Joe, Byron Saxton, Michael Cole, Corey Graves

We're back on pay per view less than a week after the last one ended, because that's a thing that needed to happen. This time around we have the big main event of the Fiend defending the Smackdown World Title against Braun Strowman and a surprisingly heel Roman Reigns, with Paul Heyman in his corner. That sounds like it could have some serious legs so let's get to it.

Kickoff Show: IIconics vs. Riott Squad

The IIconics promise to expose them as frauds before the match. Riott charges at Royce to start and the chase is on around the ring. That means Riott runs into Shades of Kay and it's off to a neck crank inside. Kay forearm's Riott for two and the trash talk is on in a hurry. Royce knees her in the back a few times and we hit the chinlock as they aren't

exactly tearing the house down with the offense here.

Riott fights up but a Kay distraction lets Royce knock Liv to the floor. Kay tries to convince Morgan that Riott did it and Morgan is rather confused on the floor. Riott knocks Kay away and Morgan convinces herself to get up for the hot tag. Everything breaks down and Morgan slips off a springboard dropkick but manages to make some contact with Royce anyway.

A double stomp in the corner gets two more on Royce but the double STO is broken up. Deja Vu gets two on Riott with Morgan making the save and pulling Riott over for the corner. I'm not sure when Riott was legal in the first place but I can't imagine it matters. Oblivion gets two on Royce so it's the Riott Kick to give Riott the pin at 9:00.

Rating: D+. They had a story to the match and played it up well enough but they were so sloppy throughout and some of the botches and miscommunication hurt it a lot. What matters is that the right team won and the Squad getting a Tag Team Title shot could be a nice story. Just tighten things up a bit and it can be a lot better.

The opening video looks at the major feuds and talks about revenge. That only makes sense in a few of the matches but it fits the theme.

US Title: Bobby Lashley vs. Apollo Crews

Lashley is challenging and has the Hurt Business with him. MVP gets in a quick promo during the entrances, saying that last time Crews got hurt, but this time he gets Lashley. Crews gets taken down with a waistlock to start as Joe compares the Hurt Business to people who show up at your birthday, eat your cake in front of your wife and sing you a song. Crews fights out of the corner and hits a dropkick to the floor, setting up a moonsault from the apron.

The Hurt Business stares Crews down so he gets back inside

rather than dealing with the numbers. Back in and Lashley drops him onto the top rope for another trip to the floor, followed by a ribs first ram into the post. We hit the chinlock and then a waistlock as Lashley keeps using the power. Crews fights up and hits a jumping enziguri but gets caught in the spinning Dominator for two.

The spear misses though and Crews hits a middle rope high crossbody for a breather. The Toss Powerbomb doesn't work so Crews settles for a spinebuster for two instead. Crews can't hit a gorilla press but he can hit a German suplex. A frog splash gives Crews two more but Lashley is right back with a spinebuster. The Full Lashley with a bodyscissors gives Lashley the title at 9:29.

Rating: C. Lashley was going to wind up with the title at some point so giving it to him here made as much sense as anything else. Maybe Crews gets it back at Clash Of Champions but there was no stopping Lashley from getting it either here or there. You can't have the Hurt Business come up short every time so the title change had to take place.

Post match Crews jumps the Hurt Business and promises to get the title back as he runs off.

We look at Roman Reigns becoming a Paul Heyman Guy. Man that needed a live crowd.

Paul Heyman won't answer if Reigns will sign the contract but you would have to ask him for sure. Kayla Braxton: "Can I ask him in person?" Heyman: "No you may not."

JBL comes up to Keith Lee and offers him a shot at some hedge funds for only a million bucks. Lee doesn't have that kind of money, but JBL thinks he will if he wins tonight. What a random cameo.

We look at Big E. getting annoyed at Miz on Talking Smack for suggesting that the rest of New Day has been holding him back.

Sheamus says tonight is Big E.'s time to fall because New Day has been propping him up.

Big E. vs. Sheamus

Big E. goes with the waistlock to start until Sheamus reverses into one of his own. That's flipped away without much effort so Sheamus grabs a headlock on the mat instead. Big E. breaks that up as well and knocks Sheamus down but the apron splash only hits apron. Back in and Sheamus starts in on Big E.'s knee with a shinbreaker and some general stomping. The Irish Curse gives Sheamus two and we hit the half crab.

That doesn't last long so Sheamus goes up, only to dive into a pair of belly to bellies. The Rock Bottom out of the corner gives Big E. two but Sheamus is back with a slingshot shoulder. Big E. fights up again and hits the spear through the ropes to the floor. Sheamus goes back to the knee with a heel hook but Big E. is back up in a hurry. That means a jumping knee to the face but the Brogue Kick is countered into a powerbomb. Big E. hits the Big Ending for the pin at 12:25.

Rating: C. This felt like a slightly bigger than usual Smackdown match and that works fine enough. Big E. needs to rack up some wins, but at the same time, he needs somewhere to go with the wins. Beating Miz, Morrison and Sheamus is fine, but that is only going to get him so far. He needs a story other than "I want to be my own man" over and over again and while this was a nice step, he needs some bigger ones.

Post match a very fired up Big E. shouts at commentary that he's coming.

Matt Riddle is done with King Corbin's tweets and is ready to shut him up tonight. He has no reaction to Corbin's tweets talking about how Riddle is a failure at home. That's your official acknowledgment of SpeakingOut I guess.

Nia Jax and Shayna Baszler argue over who is the captain of

the team. Remember like two weeks ago when Nia attacked Shayna's friends on Raw Underground? Something tells me WWE doesn't.

Matt Riddle vs. King Corbin

Corbin is carried in on the throne and jumps Riddle before the bell to get the early advantage. They fight outside early on with Corbin talking trash as Cole praises his striking abilities. Back in and Riddle kicks away in the corner and grabs a Kimura. That's broken up so Riddle grabs a choke but Corbin throws him off.

Corbin grabs a chinlock but Riddle fights up, leaving Corbin to shout at commentary. Corbin's under the ropes clothesline is cut off with a kick to the head and they head outside again. Riddle is driven back first into the apron but Riddle is back in with the running forearms in the corner.

A running knee gets two on Corbin and they strike it out with Corbin getting the better of things with a shot to the face. Deep Six gets two and the frustration sets in. Corbin hammers away some more but Riddle pulls him into a triangle. That doesn't work so it's the Bro To Sleep into the Floating Bro to give Riddle the pin at 10:53.

Rating: C+. Not too bad here as Riddle gets another win and starts moving up the ladder a bit. He can move up, down, left or right but it's the right way as long as he gets away from Corbin. That's a dead end feud if there ever has been one but at least he got his "feud with Corbin" badge. Just get him somewhere else now.

Post match Riddle is asked about the win but gets jumped by Corbin because this has to keep going.

We recap Sasha Banks/Bayley vs. Nia Jax/Shayna Baszler for the Women's Tag Team Titles. Bayley and Banks have dominated the women's divisions for months so it's time to throw together a

pair who doesn't like each other to go after the titles.

Women's Tag Team Titles: Bayley/Sasha Banks vs. Nia Jax/Shayna Baszler

Jax and Baszler are challenging. Baszler tags herself in at the bell to kick Banks down in a hurry. Banks gets caught upside down in the corner so Baszler can kick her in the face over and over. Bayley comes in and gets taken down by the arm but Banks grabs Jax's leg, allowing Bayley to throw Baszler into her. Back in and Banks grabs a seated abdominal stretch on Baszler before hitting two Amigos.

It's back to Bayley for the sliding clothesline but an angry Jax comes in for the save. Jax gets the tag and slams Bayley down for two but Banks sneaks in for a chop block. Bayley gets Jax down in the corner and hammers away, only to get slammed down again. There's the Samoan drop to Banks, with Jax swinging Banks' feet into Bayley's face for a bonus.

Bayley grabs the leg for a not so great kneebar so Jax drags her over to the corner for the tag to Jax. House is cleaned in a hurry and a gutwrench faceplant hits Banks. It's off to Jax, who says they can win. Everything breaks down with Banks hitting a faceplant on Jax to cut her off. Bayley comes in to drop Jax again and Banks' frog splash barely gets two.

The champs look scared so Banks hits a sliding knee for two more. Baszler tags herself in as the champs hit a double backdrop on Jax. Banks saves Bayley from the Kirifuda Clutch so it's an Indian Deathlock to Banks and the Kirifuda Clutch to Bayley at the same time. Baszler wraps Banks' arm around Bayley's throat to make her tap away the titles at 10:23.

Rating: C+. It's the right way to go as Bayley cost Banks her only remaining title, but sweet goodness it is going to be around to hear Jax and Baszler bicker throughout their entire title run. They had to change the titles sooner rather than later at this point though as the story has cleared its peak

and needs to go somewhere else.

Post match Nia shouts a lot to celebrate and Shayna says they're the champs. My goodness it's already starting.

We recap Randy Orton vs. Keith Lee. Orton attacked Drew McIntyre on Raw so Lee stepped up to face him. McIntyre interfered in the match so Orton attacked him again later in the match. Lee is stepping up for his friend and his first big match.

Randy Orton vs. Keith Lee

Lee has generic rock music but they did fix his gear, putting him in the sleeveless shirt and the same shorts he wore in NXT. Orton goes after him to start but Lee crossbodies him for a trip to the floor. Back in and Orton demands respect before snapping off a chop. Orton does it two more times and Lee is getting angry. Grizzly Magnum drops Orton in a hurry and Lee takes him into the corner.

They head outside with Orton getting in a cheap shot and dropping Lee hard onto the announcers' table. Back in and Orton gets two on off a knee drop, meaning it's chinlock time. Lee fights up and Pounces Orton all the way to the floor, setting up his own drop onto the announcers' table. Orton takes him back inside for the hanging DDT. The RKO is loaded up but Lee counters into the Spirit Bomb finishes Orton at 6:35.

Rating: C-. Well ok then. I didn't see that one coming but points for giving Lee the clean win in his real debut. At some point you need to pull the trigger on someone and that's what they did here in the same vein as Kevin Owens back in 2015. The match itself wasn't all that great due to the time, but Lee got the win and that's a big deal. Orton losing is rather surprising, but he's probably getting the rematch at Clash anyway.

Heyman still won't answer about Reigns signing the contract but you can believe that Reigns is leaving as champion.

We recap Seth Rollins/Murphy vs. the Mysterios. This feud has been going on for months as Rollins has tried to get rid of Rey as a sacrifice for the greater good. They faced off on Raw but Retribution interfered so it's time for a rematch.

Rey Mysterio/Dominik Mysterio vs. Seth Rollins/Murphy

Rollins gets chased to the floor to start and the frustration sets in early. Dominik kicks Murphy in the face and brings Rey in for a Russian legsweep into a dropkick for two. Rey wants Rollins and gets to roll him up for two. Murphy takes Rey down to the floor for a cheap shot and it's Rollins hitting a shoulder to the ribs back inside. Rey gets over for the hot tag to Dominik, who is taken down in a hurry.

Murphy's snap suplex gets two and we hit the abdominal stretch to Dominik's banged up ribs. That's broken up and Dominik kicks Murphy away, allowing the hot tag to Rey. A top rope moonsault press gets two on Rollins but the 619 misses. A basement kick to the head gets two more with Murphy making the save. Dominik's DDT out of the corner hits Murphy but Rollins is back with the Sling Blade.

Murphy and Dominik fight to the floor and Rollins counters Rey's high crossbody with double knees to the ribs for two. Dominik comes back in and sends Murphy outside again, only to be sent back outside by Rollins. Both Mysterios are sent into the barricade and Rollins asks Rey where the family is now. Rollins tells Murphy to kick him in the head but the kick hits Rollins instead. Rey's sliding splash winds up being a sliding sunset bomb to send Rollins into the barricade, leaving Dominik to hit a 619 into the frog splash to pin Murphy at 15:59.

Rating: C+. So yeah that happened, which has been my reaction to every match in this feud so far. It hasn't been an

interesting feud but it keeps going on and on no matter what. They really need to wrap this up sooner rather than later because there isn't much to it at all. Get them on to something else already because they haven't had much of a purpose in a long time now.

The Hurt Business leaves. Nothing more to it than that.

We recap Roman Reigns vs. Braun Strowman vs. the Fiend for the Universal Title. Fiend took the title from Strowman last Sunday at Summerslam and the returning Reigns attacked both of them to end the show. Reigns then revealed Paul Heyman as his new associate, turning heel in the process. Tonight it's No Holds Barred, but Reigns may not have signed the contract.

Smackdown World Title: Roman Reigns vs. Braun Strowman vs. The Fiend

No Holds Barred and Fiend is defending. Fiend does his big entrance and Strowman jumps him from behind, with the powerslam getting two about thirty seconds in. Fiend runs him over and Sister Abigail gets two more as Reigns is nowhere to be seen. Strowman heads outside and they slug it out until Fiend Rock Bottoms him through the announcers' table. With Strowman down, Fiend grabs the big mallet but Strowman throws a chair at him.

A big shot to the chest puts Fiend down on the steps so Strowman grabs the mallet. That's knocked out of his hands so Fiend can pick it up and hit Strowman in the chest. Fiend screams a lot and then twists Strowman's neck, setting up a steps shot to the elbow. We see Alexa Bliss watching in the back as Fiend takes him up the ramp for another neck twist. Strowman sends him into the LED boards but has to fight out of another Sister Abigail.

A running charge knocks Fiend off the stage and through some tables for the big crash. They head back to the ring, where Fiend catches him on top. Fiend superplexes him down and they

break the ring for the even bigger crash. Now, ten minutes into the match, here's Reigns with a chair and Heyman at his side.

Reigns signs the contract (because that's how contracts work in wrestling) and demands another referee but only gets two on each of them. A bunch of chair shots have Strowman down for two more but Fiend is up with the Mandible Claw on Reigns. That's broken up with a low blow to put Fiend on the floor and the spear to Strowman gives Reigns the title back at 12:43.

Rating: C+. They got as close to sticking the landing as this company is capable of doing these days so I'll take what I can get. Reigns came in and basically stole the title, which is quite the heelish move for him. Now do the big promo and explanation on Smackdown and everything should be fine. Fiend vs. Reigns has been the plan for a long time now and for once they can finally get there. Not a great or even good match, but it did the job they needed it to do.

Overall Rating: D+. And thus ends the pay per view that only needed to exist in the minds of the WWE scheduling department. Nothing on here was terrible and the ending worked, but this was a bunch of TV level matches and then the main event. This would have been bad as a regular pay per view but coming a week after Summerslam, it felt like some downloadable content on a game that wasn't great in the first place. Totally skippable show, which shouldn't be that surprising.

Results

Bobby Lashley b. Apollo Crews – Full Lashley with bodyscissors

Big E. b. Sheamus – Big Ending

Matt Riddle b. King Corbin – Floating Bro

Shayna Baszler/Nia Jax b. Sasha Banks/Bayley – Kirifuda Clutch to Bayley

Keith Lee b. Randy Orton – Spirit Bomb

Dominik Mysterio/Rey Mysterio b. Murphy/Seth Rollins – Frog splash to Murphy

Roman Reigns b. The Fiend and Braun Strowman – Spear to Strowman

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Payback 2020 Preview



IMG Credit: WWE

It feels like we just got done with this. It's already time for another WWE pay per view in the form of Payback, which is another one of those generically named pay per views where there are no expectations but they might be able to make it work better as a result. The end of Smackdown gave me a lot of hope for what they could do, but you never can tell around here. Let's get to it.

Kickoff Show: IIconics vs. Riott Squad

This is another match added at the last minute. It doesn't feel like it is going to be the biggest match in the world but it is something that can get the energy going a little bit to start. WWE needs some fresh teams to come after the Tag Team Titles so one of these teams makes as much sense as anything else. I mean, assuming you let one of them get some wins going.

I'll go with the Squad to win here, as the IIconics have had their moments already. They're also the kind of team who can get over again in a hurry after a loss so let the Squad get a little something going for a change. It isn't like you can have the top singles stars in the division holding the Tag Team Titles forever, so mix it up a bit and see what else you have out there.

Sheamus vs. Big E.

This was added on Saturday as another rematch on the card. These guys fought last week with Retribution getting involved so this is likely going to be the clean version. Given how many rematches we already have on this show, it fits in well with the overall theme, even if there wasn't much of an issues that warranted another match. They already took part in a six man this week anyway so I guess this passes for a feud these days.

I'll take Big E. to win as they seem to want to try and do something with him on his own, even if that has so far mainly

consisted of beating up Miz and John Morrison. This is as good as we are going to get at the moment and this might have been better served as a Kickoff Show match. Big E. can get a win against a former World Champion though and that's a good sign for his future, even if it hasn't really gone that far yet.

Matt Riddle vs. King Corbin

I think I've made my thoughts on Corbin known well enough but this is the kind of spot that suits him well. He's in the midcard and can use the legitimate heel heat that he has to make someone new look better. Riddle can shut him up and overcome the obstacle in front of him, which gives him a nice achievement on his way up the ladder. This is something that should be almost impossible to screw up, putting it in WWE's problem area.

I'll give them the benefit of the doubt (because that has never gone badly for me before) and say that they'll get it right and have Riddle go over here. There is a chance that they will stretch it out for another month but I think it's best that you just wrap it up and don't bother messing with anything else. Don't do something stupid here and let them go with whatever makes sense.

Dominik Mysterio/Rey Mysterio vs. Seth Rollins/Murphy

Let's get this one over with because they already have the NEXT match set up as Rey will face Rollins the following night on Raw. This is a feud that doesn't seem to have the most heat but we are still watching it every single week no matter what. They already did this match on Raw and now we get to see it all over again just six days later. Maybe Retribution can interfere the same way they always do to spice things up a bit.

Give me the Mysterios to win here because this needs to keep going for some reason. I'm assuming that the win makes Rollins mad enough that he wants to destroy Rey (again) the following

night, maybe with Retribution getting involved again. Above all else though, I'm just trying really hard to make myself care about the feud and it hasn't happened in months. Get to the end of this already so they can all move on to ANYTHING else (and yes I know how dangerous it is to say that).

US Title: Apollo Crews(c) vs. Bobby Lashley

This is what the entire Crews vs. MVP feud seemed to be building towards and that is a good sign. Lashley is the final boss of the Hurt Business because...well how could he not be? Crews has come a long way in a short time as champion and I could see this one going either way. It's the kind of run that could get him a little higher up on the ladder, but not that much higher based on how hit and miss he is at promos.

Anyway, I'll go with...Crews here, but I don't think he makes it through Clash Of Champions with the title. This could be a good match for both of them but at the same time, Lashley winning would make a lot of sense. The Hurt Business could use a big trophy like the US Title, but I think he slips on the banana peel here and Crews escapes. Lashley will wind up as champion, but it isn't taking place here.

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

Here we have one of the worst kind of teams available: anything involving Nia Jax. Or in this case it is more about the tag partners who don't like each other but are willing to team together, while still reminding us that they don't like each other. This seemed to be set up for Asuka/Baszler but why go for good when you could go for Jax?

I'll take Baszler and Jax to win here as they have been setting up the idea of Banks and Bayley finally coming back down but you've seen me talk enough about how many times I've been burned by the story. I'll just say that it happens again here and the idea of Bayley FINALLY losing her title at the

Clash could work out well enough. Anyway, the champs drop the titles here and continue to fall apart.

Keith Lee vs. Randy Orton

That's such a cool thing to get to put down and I have no idea what they're doing here. This is another rematch from Raw when WWE managed to screw up Lee's solo debut because...well because they're not that bright sometimes. Apparently new music is on the way but if they don't get rid of the horrible looking gear, it doesn't matter. That might be one of Lee's many issues on Sunday.

For the life of me I don't get what they're going to do here but I'll take Orton to win. Orton is gearing up for the rematch with Drew McIntyre, probably also at Clash, which begs the question of WHY you would make this Lee's real singles debut. If you want Lee to be a big star (and of course you should), don't put him in this spot. Give him a nice win to start so he can get over and then go somewhere from there. Don't have him stumble right out of the gate, but given that he is basically wrestling in a skirt, we are long past that point of worrying. Orton wins, as people try to figure out how they expected to get out of this.

Universal Title: The Fiend(c) vs. Roman Reigns vs. Braun Strowman

I had this one mainly planned out and then the world got turned upside down on Smackdown as Reigns was revealed as the new Paul Heyman Guy. I'm not sure what to think of that as it only happened a few hours ago and...dang man what in the world happened? Reigns is suddenly the top heel, Strowman is fresh heel and...I guess Wyatt is going to become the top face?

With all that being said, I'll flip a coin and say Reigns win here, likely pinning Strowman, so that you make Reigns out to be the big monster all over again and have Wyatt chase him for a bit, possibly setting up the Cell. It might not be pretty,

but having Fiend lose the title back this soon wouldn't surprise me. Whatever gets Strowman out of the main event scene will help a bit, but dang it has done some damage to everyone involved. Reigns wins here though, as he almost has to after that reveal (which could have come at the pay per view, and possibly should have).

Overall Thoughts

I really don't know what to think of with this one but I'm curious to see where the Reigns/Heyman thing goes. That could be one heck of a heel run, though I'm not sure how well they are going to make it work. This isn't exactly a major show, but we have four weeks before Clash Of Champions and that means this is feeling more like your traditional B pay per view. Just don't do anything bad and work well with what you have. That is basic for a wrestling promotion, which makes it sound like deciphering hieroglyphics blindfolded for WWE. Please don't screw up Reigns and Heyman though. Please.

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