

Impact Wrestling – August 15, 2024: This Show Is Fun

Impact Wrestling

Date: August 15, 2024

Location: Florida State Fairgrounds, Tampa, Florida

Commentators: Matthew Rehwoldt, Tom Hannifan

We're getting closer and closer to Emergence but we have a pretty major title match this week. In the main event this time around, Nic Nemeth defends the World Title against Josh Alexander in another title match that feels like it should have been built up as a bigger deal. Other than that, PCO is going to want revenge on Matt Cardona for ruining his honeymoon last week. Let's get to it.

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

Opening recap.

Chris Bey vs. Riley Osborne vs. John Skyler

Ultimate X Qualifying Match and Osborne is a British high flier from NXT. Hold on though as Frankie Kazarian comes out to join commentary. Skyler drops to the floor to start so Bey is right there to drop him with a dive. Back in and Osborne grabs a running hurricanrana on Bey but gets jumped by the returning Skyler.

A Boston crab has Osborne in trouble so Bey makes the save this time around. Bey is sent outside, leaving Osborne to Falcon Arrow Skyler for two. Back in and the Art of Finesse takes Osborne down but Skyler sends Bey into the post, only to get crucified to give Osborne two more. Osborne is right back up with a shooting star press to finish Skyler at 5:59.

Rating: B-. This was pretty much the definition of "it was fun

while it lasted” but how much can you get out of a match that only runs about six minutes? It’s nice to see someone from NXT getting into a match like Ultimate X as you can throw him in there without needing him to take a loss to avoid making him champion. Nice match and as usual, the X-Division makes for a good opener.

Nic Nemeth arrived earlier today and promised to leave as World Champion.

Here is Santino Marella, who calls out Matt Cardona for a chat. Marella calls Cardona a wedding crasher but Cardona says Marella has no authority because Cardona doesn’t work here. Marella offers him a contract and threatens to prosecute him for attacking PCO last week. Cardona takes the contract and says he’ll look into it, which Marella calls a win.

Eric Young interrupts Frankie Kazarian and tells him he’ll never forget what Kazarian did. Steve Maclin comes in and yells at both of them, with Kazarian leaving.

Post break, Maclin (elsewhere from where he was before the break), says Young is his first step back to the World Title.

Tasha Steelz vs. Gisele Shaw

Shaw charges into an uppercut in the corner to start and gets sent outside for another shot to the face. Steelz grabs what looked like a wrench, which is taken away, leaving her to run Shaw over for two instead. Shaw is back with a spinebuster and Shock and Awe connects for two. The running knee is countered with a superkick and Steelz’s Codebreaker gets two more. A rollup with feet on the ropes gets caught though, allowing Shaw to hit the running knee for the pin at 4:45.

Rating: C. They were rushing through things here due to the lack of time but Shaw getting a win to even the score helps her a lot. It still seems like Shaw vs. Gail Kim is a possibility for Bound For Glory, but at some point it needs to

be Shaw winning a title. She has been around long enough that she needs to win something and that has gotten so close so many times now it has to happen.

Mike Santana has been attacked, with the System and the System standing over him.

We look at Joe Hendry getting put into a #1 contenders match for the NXT Title.

Here are the System and JDC for a chat. Alisha Edwards says Mike Santana is out of his match with Moose tonight...but here is a banged up Santana in the crowd. Santana decks some of the team and gets inside, saying ring the bell.

Mike Santana vs. Moose

The rest of the System and JDC are here too. Moose jumps him to start but Santana forearm his way out of trouble. A hard whip into the corner drops Santana again and Moose fires off some elbows. The release Rock Bottom onto the apron puts Santana down again and we take a break. Back with Santana down on the floor following a posting but he manages to beat the count. Moose whips him into the corner again and stops for some posing, only for Santana to tell say bring it.

Santana fights up and hits a middle rope dropkick but Moose kicks him in the face to cut off the comeback. A rolling cutter drops Moose and a Cannonball in the corner gives Santana two. Spin The Block connects but Santana can't cover due to his banged up shoulder (from the posting earlier), allowing Moose to roll outside. Moose goes after the arm again and hits the spear for the pin at 11:26.

Rating: B-. There is a good chance that Santana is going to need some help to fight back against the System, as he feels like a bit enough name to go after the team but there is only so much he can do on his own. I'm not sure I would have had Santana lose again but at least he had the arm injury and the

numbers game to hold him off. For now though, Santana looked good in defeat, though that shouldn't be happening too often.

Post match the System goes after Santana but Joe Hendry runs in with a chair for the save. Hendry announces that next week, it's Moose/JDC vs. the Hardys.

Spitfire wants another shot at the Knockouts Tag Team Titles.

We look back at Ash By Elegance ruining Jordynne Grace vs. Rosemary last week.

Grace expected Ash to take her loss and move on, which was a mistake. If Ash wants another fight, she can get one.

Ace Austin vs. Rich Swann vs. Jason Hotch

Ultimate X Qualifying Match and Top Dolla is on commentary. They trade headscissors to start until Hotch is sent outside. That leaves Swann to stomp on Austin until Hotch is back in for the save. Back up and Swann kicks Hotch in the back for two, leaving Austin to make the save for a change. Austin's sunset flip makes Hotch German suplex Swann, who flips out to stick the landing but gets rolled up for two more.

Austin superkicks Hotch into a German suplex before planting Swann for another near fall. They go outside where Swann is sent into Doll, who drops Austin onto the apron. Cue Chris Bey to take out Dolla, leaving Austin to kick Hotch down. Cue John Skyler for a distraction though, allowing Hotch to grab a rollup for the pin on Austin at 6:05.

Rating: B-. Like the opener, they didn't have much time to make this work, especially with so much going on other than the action itself. There were two people getting involved in a three person match, which is quite a bit in a match that was only about six minutes. I do like the surprise ending, as it would have seemed Hotch was there to take the fall, but they went the other way instead. Nice stuff, especially given the

situation.

Matt Cardona agrees to sign the contract but wants a six person tag with two mystery partners vs. PCO/Rhino/Xia Brookside. Works for Marella, as long as Cardona faces PCO one on one at Emergence. Cardona signs.

TNA World Champion: Nic Nemeth vs. Josh Alexander

Nemeth is defending. Alexander wrestles him down to start and tells Nemeth to bring it. That's fine with Nemeth, who takes him to the mat and works on the arm. Alexander bails out to the floor and we take an early break. Back with Nemeth getting two off a rollup but getting riven back into the corner. Some forearms to the back have Nemeth down again and Alexander offers some applause.

Nemeth gets forearmed in the face as the fans chant USA, only to have the American dropped with a clothesline. Alexander takes too long to set up a moonsault, allowing Nemeth to pull him down. Nemeth's running DDT is blocked though and Alexander sends him outside as we take another break.

Back again with Nemeth fighting out of the chinlock and grabbing a German suplex for two. The superkick is countered into an ankle lock though, with Nemeth quickly escaping and hitting a Fameasser. Alexander is back with a Regal Roll into a middle rope knee to the back for two of his own. The ankle lock goes on again but Nemeth quickly reverses into a sleeper as we take another break.

Back again with Alexander hitting a powerbomb backbreaker for two and putting Nemeth on top. The belly to back superplex is countered into a crossbody to give Nemeth two, setting up the Danger Zone for no cover. Instead the running DDT plants Alexander for two more but he sends Nemeth shoulder first into the post. The C4 Spike is reversed into the Danger Zone...but we're out of time at 30:00.

Rating: B. They were getting going near the end there and it was a good, back and forth match, even if the ending feels like a way to set up a rematch at Emergence. You're only going to get so much out of seeing them fight for thirty minutes and then wanting to see them do it again on a major show, but Nemeth needs such an opponent. Solid main event here, especially if you accept that Alexander can be a bit dry.

Post match Nemeth wants five more minutes but gets kicked low instead. Alexander holds up the title before walking off to end the show.

Overall Rating: B. This was definitely the wrestling focused show, with two Ultimate X qualifiers, a big match in the middle, and the World Title main event. That is more than you get on the average week and it made for a good show here. The Cardona stuff is interesting as well as he really does feel like a big star. It was a good week around here and Emergence has the potential to be a pretty big show as well. Nice work.

Results

Riley Osborne b. John Skyler and Chris Bey – Shooting star press to Skyler

Gisele Shaw b. Tasha Steelz – Running knee

Moose b. Mike Santana – Spear

Jason Hotch b. Ace Austin and Rich Swann – Rollup to Austin

Nic Nemeth vs. Josh Alexander went to a time limit draw

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Rick Boogs

Aliyah

Mustafa Ali

Emma

Top Dolla

Riddick Moss

Elias

Shelton Benjamin

Dolph Ziggler

Dana Brooke

Mansoor

Mace

Quincy Elliott

Bryson Montana
Yulisa Leon
Dabba Kato
Shanky

Their 90 day no compete clauses would be up on December 20.

Dang. You knew something like this was coming but it is still hard to fathom that it actually happened. At the end of the day though, most of these names aren't surprising, as a lot of them haven't been on WWE TV or used in any meaningful way in a very long time. That doesn't make it any better for them, but it's also not so much of a surprise.

Smackdown – August 11, 2023: And He's Out

Smackdown

Date: August 11, 2023

Location: Scotiabank Saddledome, Calgary, Alberta, Canada

Commentators: Kevin Patrick, Michael Cole, Corey Graves

We're done with Summerslam and the big story is those battling Usos again, as Jimmy returned and cost Jey the World Title against Roman Reigns. That is likely going to set up more than a few issues down the line, but for now we have less than a month to go before Payback. Let's get to it.

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

Long recap of the Women's Title situation at Summerslam, with Bianca Belair winning the title and Iyo Sky cashing in Money In The Bank on her to win the title immediately after.

Asuka vs. Charlotte

They trade shoulders to start with Asuka getting the better of things and kicking away. Charlotte pops back up but gets missile dropkicked back down, allowing Asuka to kick her in the head for two. We take a break and come back with Charlotte diving off the apron to take her down, followed by the spear. The Figure Four is loaded up but cue Damage CTRL to interrupt. The distraction lets Asuka get in a kick to the head and Bayley's distraction lets Asuka hit a Codebreaker. Then Sky missile dropkicks them both for the no contest at 9:15.

Rating: C+. What are you supposed to do with a nine minute match that had a good portion of it in a commercial? The match was the usual nice stuff between these two but this was about the ending rather than anything else. At least Charlotte didn't beat Asuka again, as that has happened enough for a few careers.

Post match Damage CTRL celebrates.

We look at Jimmy Uso returning to cost Jey Uso the World Title.

Video on Santos Escobar vs. Austin Theory.

Escobar is ready to win the US Title but here is Theory to jump him from behind. Theory slams an anvil case on his leg and the LWO makes the save.

Video on Karrion Kross, who wants to hurt AJ Styles and teases gaining disciples.

AJ Styles vs. Karrion Kross

Michin and Scarlett are here too. Styles starts fast and ties up the leg but Kross is back up with a backdrop. Kross sends him hard into the corner but Styles slips out of a superplex. A clothesline puts Kross on the floor but he's fine enough to drop Styles on the announcers' table as we take a break.

Back with Styles firing away but the Phenomenal Forearm is countered into the Krossjacket choke. That's broken up and Styles hits the moonsault into a not so great reverse DDT. The springboard 450 connects but Scarlett puts the foo ton the rope. Michin goes after her and gets dropped, only to pop back up and pull Scarlett over the announcers' table. The distraction lets Styles hit the Styles Clash to finish Kross at 9:52.

Rating: B-. This started to rock at the end, though having Kross lose when he had promised people coming to help him was a little weird. Styles winning felt like the end of the feud but if Kross has people coming, that would suggest it is going to keep coming. For now though, at least they had the best match they've had so far.

Video on Cody Rhodes vs. Brock Lesnar.

Here is Edge in a surprise. Edge knows he has his big moment in Toronto next week, but he wanted to be here in Calgary as well. He wants to have a match next week though, and he wants that to be against Sheamus. What you might not know is that Sheamus is the reason he is here again.

Sheamus is the one who lit the fire under him because they were on his Celtic Warrior Workouts together. Edge got Sheamus onto a mountain bike and Sheamus looked like a goof, but Edge fell off his own bike. He was fine enough off the crash, so he wondered why he couldn't wrestle again. Then he called Sheamus to find out if he was ready to come back so he and Sheamus trained together and became family. So now he needs an answer, so here are the Brawling Brutes.

We see the footage of Edge falling off the bike and getting banged up. Edge puts up a picture of Sheamus sitting on a children's bike, with Sheamus saying Edge has a weird chin. Sheamus talks about working at a bar in 2004 where he met Edge, who was the only wrestler to give him the time of day.

Edge issues the challenge again, even offering post match alcohol. Sheamus agrees, but hopes Edge isn't making a mistake. For a quick story behind a match between two people who are clearly friends, this was as good as it was going to get.

Happy 70th Birthday Hulk Hogan. Yeah you have to mention that.

Top Dolla vs. LA Knight

Ashante Thee Adonis and B Fab are here with Dolla, who chokes on the rope to start. Knight flips out o a Death Valley Driver though and hammers away. Adonis is dropped with a right hand and the spelling elbow sets up the BFT to give Knight the pin at 2:00.

Post match Knight says it doesn't matter where he goes because everyone knows it and everyone says his name.

Santos Escobar is officially cleared but he can bare walk out of the trainer's room.

Bobby Lashley and the Street Profits are having a drink, with Lashley saying he sees talent in them. He won't call it untapped potential but now it's time to see what they can do. The sky is the limit for them and Smackdown is ready to see some new people run this place.

US Title: Santos Escobar vs. Austin Theory

Theory is defending and Escobar is badly limping. Cue Theory during Escobar's entrance to take the knee out again and then says he can't defend the title against Escobar. We have a replacement though and let's do this instead.

US Title: Rey Mysterio vs. Austin Theory

Theory is still defending and gets hammered to the floor before the bell. Rey dives off the apron to take him down and we take a break. Back with the match joined in progress and

Rey getting to the top for the seated senton. A sunset bomb sends Theory into the corner for two and Rey scores with an enziguri. The 619 to the back staggers Theory but the regular version is caught. A Town Down doesn't work due to Theory's back and it's the 619 into the springboard splash to give Rey the pin and the title at 2:39.

Post match Mysterio celebrates, including with the LWO.

Here is the Bloodline so Jimmy Uso can acknowledge Roman Reigns. There's no Jimmy though, and Reigns asks Paul Heyman where he is. Heyman says he spoke to Jimmy this morning and Jimmy was very salty. Cue Jimmy through the crowd and Reigns tells him not to listen to the fans. Reigns says he owes Jimmy one so name whatever he wants. New care? Yacht? Jet? DONE! Heyman doesn't seem sure, but Jimmy says he doesn't want anything from Reigns.

Summerslam had nothing to do with Reigns, which has Reigns thinking means Jimmy wants power instead. If he wants to be the new right hand man...and here is Jey Uso to interrupt. The angry Jey demands to know why Jimmy did it, with Jimmy saying it was because of his love for Jey (that makes Roman laugh). If Jey won, what happens to the Usos? If Jey won, he would become the Tribal Chief and that would have made him just as corrupt.

Jimmy wasn't going to let him turn into something terrible like Roman and understands if Jey is done with him. He closes his eyes and waits for the superkick but Jimmy walks away instead. Reigns cracks up laughing and says Jey is going to screw this up by being a hothead. This is about acknowledging him, but Jey superkicks Reigns.

Sikoa goes after Jey but gets superkicked, allowing Reigns to hit the Superman Punch. Reigns' spear is cut off by a superkick and Jey hits the spear before...superkicking Jimmy in the aisle. Jey says he's out of Bloodline, Smackdown and WWE.

Jey: "Deuces Uces." Well that's...certainly a thing. I'm not sure what kind of a thing it was but it did happen. I can go for Jimmy not being the big bad villain and setting up a blood feud against Jey, but Reigns was kind of right about laughing at Jimmy's lame explanation. It's better than it could have been, but they need to find something fresh besides these same people over and over.

Overall Rating: B-. This was kind of a weird show as other than the title change, a lot of it felt like things were continuing on from Summerslam. Styles vs. Kross seems to be continuing, Knight gets a little win and the Women's Title picture is still featuring a bunch of the same people. Edge is back for a likely one off match next week and the Bloodline...well it's still going. I'm curious about some of these things, but they're going to need to do something to spice it up a bit sooner than later.

Results

Charlotte vs. Asuka went to a no contest when Iyo Sky interfered

AJ Styles b. Karrion Kross – Styles Clash

LA Knight b. Top Dolla – BFT

Rey Mysterio b. Austin Theory – Springboard splash

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Smackdown – January 6, 2023: It Should Have Been Bigger

Smackdown

Date: January 6, 2023

Location: FedExForum, Memphis, Tennessee

Commentators: Michael Cole, Wade Barrett

We are less than a month away from the Royal Rumble as we are officially in the new year. That means we should be in for some fun tonight and there is certainly a big main event. This week, the Usos will be defending the Tag Team Titles against Drew McIntyre/Sheamus in a match that was originally scheduled for last month. Let's get to it.

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

The Bloodline opens things up by throwing chairs from the crowd as Roman Reigns and Paul Heyman come to the ring to join them. Reigns demands acknowledgment and seems to receive it but doesn't seem happy. This week, we are going to hear from Sami Zayn, who says this year belongs to the Bloodline.

Zayn brags about the team winning its matches on Raw but that's not what Reigns wants to talk about. He wants to talk about LAST YEAR when he and Zayn faced John Cena and Kevin Owens. Some people have said they lost, but Reigns doesn't remember his shoulders being on the mat. Nah, Sami lost last week, so why did he call his shot? That's what Reigns does, just like Babe Ruth.

Reigns thinks Sami might want to be the Tribal Chief. Why is Sami doing what Reigns does? Reigns starts screaming at Sami about wanting his job until Kevin Owens interrupts. Owens talks about how Reigns has a KO Problem and can't get rid of him. Maybe he should deal with it in a title match at the Royal Rumble. Reigns: "Yeah sure whatever." Reigns will give him the shot if Owens leaves forever after he loses. Owens seems to agree but the wording is a bit vague on if it's title vs. career.

Earlier today, Kofi Kingston and Santos Escobar got into it backstage over Kofi's Royal Rumble botch last year, meaning we've got something tonight.

Kofi Kingston vs. Santos Escobar

Xavier Woods and the rest of Legado del Fantasma are here too. Escobar gets in a shot to start and Kofi is rocked, allowing him to go up top. That's fine with Kofi, who kicks him to the floor as we take a break. Back with Kofi in trouble but managing to fight his way back up. Woods offers a trombone distraction but Escobar is fine enough to kick Kofi in the head for two.

Kofi slips out of a fireman's carry and gets two off the SOS. Kofi goes up but gets kneed out of the air for two, leaving them both needing a bit of a breather. The brawl starts on the floor though and the distraction lets Escobar hit a jumping superkick. The Phantom Driver finishes Kofi at 10:05.

Rating: C+. You had two talented wrestlers with a bit of time so of course this worked out fairly well. Kingston is the definition of bulletproof in WWE so having him put over a newcomer like Escobar is one of the smarter things to do. It wasn't a classic but for ten minutes on Smackdown, this was quite easy to watch.

Kevin Owens vs. Roman Reigns for the title is set for the Royal Rumble. No words on Owens leaving if he loses so that

doesn't sound like a stipulation.

Sami Zayn tries to talk to Roman Reigns but gets Paul Heyman instead. Heyman thinks this isn't a good time as the Usos go in to see Reigns. Last week Heyman said stay three steps ahead, but that still might be a bad time for Sami.

Liv Morgan enters the Women's Royal Rumble and is willing to go in at #1.

We look back at Uncle Howdy attacking Bray Wyatt last week, which freaked out LA Knight in the process.

LA Knight was walking through Memphis earlier today and after getting over how bad that was, he thought it was great that Bray Wyatt can't keep his freaks in line. At the Royal Rumble, Wyatt is getting what is coming to him, YEAH.

Emma/Madcap Moss vs. Karrion Kross/Scarlett

This is Scarlett's in-ring TV debut and we're joined in progress with the women coming in off double tags. Scarlett shrugs off some right hands and suplexes her for two. Kross comes in to glare at Emma, allowing Scarlett to post her. Emma gets sent over the announcers' table, leaving Kross to hit the Krosshammer into the Krossjacket for the win at 3:08.

Rating: C-. This was little more than a squash for Kross and Scarlett, as Emma and Moss never felt like they were a threat to win. Scarlett is someone who can easily handle herself in the ring and doesn't always have to be on the floor. Kross seems to be ready for a showdown with Rey Mysterio and that means he wasn't going to need to break a sweat here with Moss.

Post match Kross and Scarlett put a Rey Mysterio mask on Moss and says Rey is running out of time.

We look back at Charlotte returning and winning the Smackdown Women's Title from Ronda Rousey in less than a minute.

Sheamus and Drew McIntyre were at Jerry Lawler's bar earlier and fired each other up for their Tag Team Title match tonight.

Here is Charlotte for a chat. She is happy with her title win last week and doesn't really care what people think of her. The one thing she isn't is complacent, so she will face anyone. Cue Sonya Deville, who wants and receives a title shot.

Women's Title: Charlotte vs. Sonya Deville

Charlotte is defending and kicks Deville out to the floor to start. Back from a break with Deville going after the knee and grabbing a chinlock. That's broken up and Charlotte hits some clotheslines, followed by a flipping clothesline for two. A spear cuts Sonya down and the Figure Eight retains the title at 6:46.

Rating: C-. So that happened. Charlotte wasn't going to drop the title this fast but they didn't even bother with anything close to drama. It was all about getting Charlotte in the ring again to clarify that she's all nice and good now, with Deville being a good first victim to the title reign.

Video on Cody Rhodes returning to WWE last year.

Remember how Lacey Evans has been training? She still is.

Royal Rumble Qualifying Match: Ricochet vs. Top Dolla

Dolla powers him into the corner to start and gets Ricochet on top to toss him down. A big boot gives Dolla two but he takes too long dancing, allowing Ricochet to kick him in the head. The standing Sliced Bread drops Dolla and the shooting star press finishes him off at 1:57.

Post match Dolla shakes Ricochet's hand...allowing Ashante Adonis to superkick Ricochet in the face. B Fab adds in a kick of her own as all of Hit Row seems to have turned. Braun

Strowman runs in for the save, which shouldn't have happened as Top Dolla needed to look dominant here.

The Usos go to the ring for their title match. Roman Reigns tells Paul Heyman to bring him Sami Zayn.

Video on Gunther vs. Braun Strowman for the Intercontinental Title next week.

Sami Zayn comes in to see Roman Reigns and Paul Heyman, with Reigns telling him to sit without giving him a look. Sami immediately says that Reigns is the Tribal Chief and no one else is. Reigns doesn't accept because he holds himself to a high standard and no one should be treated like Sami was earlier. He doesn't accept because he should be apologizing, so Reigns says he is sorry.

Reigns understands that he is mad at Kevin Owens and taking out on Sami. That's why he's going to let Sami help him get rid of Owens, when Sami and Owens face off next week. Sami is in but hears the Usos' music and goes towards the ring. Hold on though, as Reigns wants Sami to watch with him.

Tag Team Titles: Usos vs. Drew McIntyre/Sheamus

The Usos, with Solo Sikoa, are defending. Sheamus takes Jimmy down to start and it's off to Drew, who tosses him into the corner. Jey comes in and manages a quick suplex to take over, allowing Jimmy to come in for some choking. Drew gets sent outside and suicide dived into the barricade as we take a break.

Back with Sheamus hitting the ten forearms to Jey's chest but Jimmy gets in a shot to take over again. Drew cuts off the double Uce and it's a double super White Noise for two on the champs. A flip dive off the apron takes the Usos down and it's a Claymore for two on Jey with Jimmy making the save.

We see Reigns/Zayn/Heyman eating popcorn as they watch the

match as the 1D hits Sheamus...for two as McIntyre makes the save. Sikoa goes after Drew but here are the Brawling Brutes to cut him off. Sheamus Brogue Kicks Jey so Jimmy makes the save. A dive takes the Usos out so Sheamus picks Jey up, only to be rolled up with Jimmy giving an assist to retain at 13:19.

Rating: B-. They had a bit of drama when Sheamus survived the 1D but there is only so much of a reason to believe the Usos are losing anytime soon. Sheamus and McIntyre could have gotten the title shot on a big stage and just a Smackdown main event doesn't feel that big. Good TV match, but it should have been a bit bigger.

Overall Rating: B-. Pretty solid show tonight, but the question now is what happens with Sami/Owens/Reigns. That seems like it is about to blow up either in the next few weeks or at the Royal Rumble at the latest. Other than that, the Rumbles continue to loom, but there are only three out of sixty spots filled. That could take up a lot of time over the next few weeks so things could start picking up rather quickly. For now though, a good show that could have been bigger.

Results

Santos Escobar b. Kofi Kingston – Phantom Driver

Scarlett/Karrion Kross b. Emma/Madcap Moss – Krossjacket to Moss

Ricochet b. Top Dolla – Shooting star press

Usos b. Drew McIntyre/Sheamus – Assisted rollup to Sheamus

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Smackdown – December 30, 2022: Up And Down And Up And Up

Smackdown

Date: December 30, 2022

Location: Amalie Arena, Tampa, Florida

Commentators: Michael Cole, Wade Barrett

It's the final show of the year and that means we are going to be seeing more than a few big things this week. First and foremost, John Cena is back for his only match of the year as he teams with Kevin Owens to face Sami Zayn and Roman Reigns. In addition, we have the Women's Title on the line as Ronda Rousey defends against Raquel Rodriguez. Let's get to it.

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

Here's is Bray Wyatt for an opening chat. Wyatt does not see himself as a good person but he does try. Looking back at how he got here, he doesn't regret much, but last week he did something that he did regret. Last week, he apologized a cameraman in cold blood and...here is LA Knight to interrupt.

Knight cannot believe that the master of the mind games is here to apologize because he doesn't buy any of this. Wyatt has been playing mind games and now it is time to pay the check. Knight remembers Wyatt being something around here and he wants Wyatt to be again. The Royal Rumble is coming up and Knight wants to make his first a special one. Wyatt doesn't think much of Knight and accepts the challenge.

Cue Uncle Howdy for a rather slow walk to the ring (with the lights still down so we can't really see him). Howdy and Wyatt stand next to each other and stare down Knight, but Howdy lays out Wyatt. Knight: "What the h*** is going on? None of this makes any sense." Howdy leaves on his own. That's at least another step forward in the story.

Sami Zayn goes to the Bloodline's dressing room and finds Paul Heyman instead of Roman Reigns. Zayn thinks they need to talk strategy before tonight's main event but first Heyman wants to talk about how happy Reigns is with Zayn's loyalty last week. However, it seems that Reigns might not be happy with the fans getting behind Zayn. He hasn't said anything, but the key is to stay ahead of the future. With that, Zayn goes in and Heyman looks a bit worried.

Sheamus vs. Solo Sikoa

As the match starts, Cole offers condolences to the family of Don West, who made an "impact" on the wrestling world. That's a classy thing to do and it's nice to see WWE acknowledge it in some way. A clothesline doesn't get Sheamus very far to start so he knocks Sikoa over the top instead. An annoyed Sikoa grabs a chair but the Usos hold him back as we take an early break.

Back with Sheamus fighting out of a chinlock but getting caught with a Samoan drop. Sheamus fights up again and starts hammering away, including the ten forearms to the chest. The Brogue Kick is cut off with a superkick but Sheamus is right

back with a running knee for two. It's time for everyone to get in a fight on the floor, with Sheamus hitting a big dive off the top. The distraction lets Sikoa Rock Bottom Sheamus on the apron though and it's the Samoan Spike to give Sikoa the pin at 11:07.

Rating: C+. It's kind of impressive how well WWE has done with Sikoa. For someone who felt like a tacked on midcarder since his debut, WWE has turned him into a solid hand who could win almost any match that you put him in. This was another good outing from Sikoa and I'd like to see where he goes in the next few months.

Post match the beatdown is on and Sikoa wraps a chair around Sheamus' neck. Before the running Umaga Attack can connect though, Drew McIntyre returns for the save to clear the ring.

Women's Title: Ronda Rousey vs. Raquel Rodriguez

Rousey, with Shayna Baszler, is defending and goes right after Raquel's bad arm to start. Rodriguez sends her into the corner though and hits an elbow as we take a break. Back with Rousey bending the arm around the rope and then pulling her down for a multiple limb crank (ouch). With that broken up, Rousey throws her down for two but Rodriguez powers up. A slam with the bad arm hurts both of them though and Rousey is right back with the ankle lock. That's broken up as well and Rodriguez hits a flapjack for a breather. The Tejana Bomb is countered into an armbar and they head outside, where the Tejana Bomb onto the apron rocks Rousey as we take another break.

Back again with Rousey caught in a delayed suplex for two. The arm gives out though and Rousey grabs a Kimura, only to be powered up again. The Tejana bomb is countered into a choke but Rodriguez powers out again. This time it's a Baszler distraction but Rodriguez is able to hit the Vader Bomb elbow anyway. Baszler puts the foot on the rope just in time, only to get ejected for some pretty flagrant cheating. With

Rodriguez standing on the middle rope, Rousey climbs onto her and gets the armbar in the ropes. Rodriguez drops her back but lands on the elbow, meaning Rousey's armbar is good for the tap at 16:20.

Rating: B. These two have some great chemistry together as this was their second good match against each other. Rodriguez not winning here is a bit more acceptable as she has the arm injury and Baszler interference to balance things out. WWE has done a nice job with her in recent months and I'd be stunned if she doesn't win the title at some point in the year.

Post match Rousey and Baszler celebrate....and Charlotte is back! She gets straight to the point: she is challenging for the Women's Title TONIGHT. Rousey is in.

Women's Title: Charlotte vs. Ronda Rousey

Charlotte is challenging. Big boot, spear, Rousey armbar, Charlotte rolls her up for the pin at 40 seconds. WWE is in on the CHARLOTTE WINS AGAIN now joke right? They have to be. And yes, Charlotte is the big hero in this.

Sami Zayn asks Roman Reigns if he's cool with the crowd reactions. Reigns doesn't seem thrilled.

We look at Dominik Mysterio being arrested for invading the Mysterios' home on Christmas Eve. Rhea Ripley has since bailed him out.

A bunch of tag teams mock Top Dolla for his not so great dive last week. Dolla takes it well enough before shoving Ricochet. Holding back ensues.

Bray Wyatt vs. LA Knight is set for the Royal Rumble in a Pitch Black match.

Here is Imperium for a chat. Ludwig Kaiser introduces the team and brags about Gunther's Intercontinental Title reign. We see a video on the title reign before Braun Strowman interrupts.

Strowman didn't see himself in that video and he wants his own title shot. Imperium goes to leave instead but Strowman grabs Gunther. The fight is on with Strowman clearing the ring but the run around ringside is sent through the barricade. Gunther wears Strowman out with a chair and they get inside, where Gunther grabs an armbar. Ricochet makes the save with a chair and clears the ring again.

Roman Reigns/Sami Zayn vs. Kevin Owens/John Cena

The rest of the Bloodline is here too. Owens hammers on Zayn to start as Cena does his always good job of playing cheerleader on the apron. With Zayn down in the corner, Owens brings up the SAMI chants, much to Reigns' annoyance. Reigns comes in and stares down Owens, who looks over to Cena. That lets Reigns blast him with a clothesline and a Rock Bottom for two as we take a break.

Back with Owens trying to get the tag but Cena is knocked to the floor. A superkick into the Pop Up Powerbomb gives Owens two, with Reigns making the save. Reigns beats Owens down and tags himself in, only to miss the Superman Punch. Owens nails a superkick and the bullfrog splash gets two.

Reigns counters the Pop Up Powerbomb into a Superman Punch but the spear only hits post. Cena is back up on the apron and there's the hot tag for Cena to beat up Zayn. House is cleaned and Reigns is dropped as well, allowing the tag back to Owens. Stereo Shuffles hit the Bloodline and it's an AA to Reigns, followed by a Stunner to pin Zayn at 10:59.

Rating: C+. This was a question of whether they would do the big angle here or wait for the fallout next week. Cena being back means a lot though, even if it is likely just a one off appearance. He still feels like one of the biggest stars ever and having him back boosted the show a lot. The match felt like something special and that is a sign that they did it right.

Overall Rating: B. The main thing I'll say about this show is that stuff happened here. Between the multiple returns, the surprise title change and Cena being in the main event, this was a show that did not feel boring in any way. Good, fast paced show and Smackdown feels like it is heading for the new year on a bit of a roll for a change.

Results

Solo Sikoa b. Sheamus – Samoan Spike

Ronda Rousey b. Raquel Rodriguez – Armbar

Charlotte b. Ronda Rousey – Rollup

John Cena/Kevin Owens b. Roman Reigns/Sami Zayn – Stunner to Zayn

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