

# Wrestler of the Day – September 7: Ryback

Today is a guy who could have ruled: Ryback.

Sheffield started in 2004 and we'll pick things up with him as OVW Champion on October 25, 2008.

OVW Title: Anthony Bravado vs. Ryback

No DQ. Ryback is defending after taking the title from Bravado last week and is basically the Terminator. Bravado is used to being the strongest guy around but can't shove Ryback. His shoulder block has no effect so they fight over another lockup with Ryback taking over. A test of strength goes nowhere so both guys head outside to slug it out for a double countout.

**Rating:** D. This was a really quick feud as Ryback was taken down to FCW soon after this. They would have another match the next week where Bravado would take the title in a last man standing match. There isn't much to talk about here as this was more angle advancement than anything else.

Off to FCW with this match on February 15, 2009.

Mia Mancini/Dylan Klein vs. Skip Sheffield/AJ Lee

Mancini is better known as Serena Deeb and Klein never went anywhere. The girls get things going and fight on the mat with Mancini taking over. Off to the guys with Sheffield cleaning house. Mancini slaps him in the face to break up the Over the Shoulder Boulder Holder and Klein gets in a few shots to take over. We hit the chinlock on Sheffield before the guys fight to the floor. Mancini tags herself in but gets caught in a headscissors followed by a Shining Wizard for two. A standing Sliced Bread #2 is good for the pin on Mancini.

**Rating:** D+. This was just a quick TV match but that's almost all you can expect from something down in developmental. It wasn't bad or anything

but with just four minutes and a bunch of rookies, there's only so much you can do. The girls were way ahead of the guys here, though Sheffield's cowboy character never worked for him.

Sheffield would be one of the first rookies on NXT. Here's his first match from NXT on March 2, 2010.

#### William Regal/Skip Sheffield vs. Matt Hardy/Justin Gabriel

The rookies start us off. Power vs. speed never stops working for me and this works just fine. Fujiwara armbar by Gabriel and here's Hardy. Poetry in Motion to Sheffield as we take a break. Regal is in when we get back against Gabriel. Regal sends both Gabriel and Hardy to the floor as not a lot is going on in this match.

Sheffield is giving Regal advice which is rather amusing. Back to the power guy who struts before hitting a splash on Hardy. The fat of his stomach helps protect him I guess. Hardy gets beaten down for a good while. I'm sure he'll blog about it later on and make a video under a false name.

Regal keeps the tag to Gabriel and yells at Sheffield to stop doing stupid stuff. Twist of Fate out of nowhere sets up the debut of the 450 which blew the LD to pieces when it hit. The match was boring but the ending more than made up for it I think.

**Rating:** C. The length hurt it here but the idea was to show that Gabriel could hit one big move and it worked very well. That's still one of the best moves in the company nearly a year later and it worked very well here. Not a great match and the tag from last week was better, but this was a good debut for both of the rookies here.

And another on April 27, 2010.

#### Skip Sheffield vs. Daniel Bryan

Bryan gets a running dropkick as Sheffield is reeling early on. A heel hook has Skip in real trouble. And never mind as Sheffield just beats the tar out of him and hits the Over the Shoulder Boulder Holder to end it in maybe 90 seconds.

Sheffield would snap his ankle and be out for nearly a year. He would return as the unstoppable monster Ryback, who participated in a bunch of squashes, such as this one at Extreme Rules 2012.

#### Aaron Relic/Jay Hatton vs. Ryback

The Jobbers combine to weigh 340lbs. Santino and Khali are watching in the back. I like this "let's watch Ryback" idea. They give a pro-Math promo to start the match. They keep saying 2 is greater than 1 and even Cole is ripping on them. The fans chant Goldberg and I can't really argue. Let's say Hatton starts with a pair of kicks that do NOTHING. A forearm does nothing. There's a big boot to put him down and Ryback throws him into a powerslam. He drags Hatton to his corner and pulls the other jobber in. There's the huge clothesline and the Over the Shoulder Boulder Holder kills jobber #2. MuscleBuster for the pin at 1:50.

His competition would pick up a bit on Raw, August 27, 2012.

#### Jack Swagger vs. Ryback

Ryback takes him down almost immediately and slams Swagger's head into the mat over and over. A charge misses though and Swagger shoulder blocks Ryback down. Vader Bomb hits feet but Swagger counters into an ankle lock attempt. Ryback escapes and pounds him in the corner. A BADLY botched backdrop results in Swagger being dropped on his head ala Sabu vs. Benoit in ECW. The clothesline sets up Shell Shock for the pin at 2:12.

Around this time Ryback would stand up to CM Punk, throwing himself into the main event scene. Here's one of his bigger matches after that on Raw, October 22, 2012.

#### Ryback vs. The Miz

Miz looks worried about getting in the ring. Ryback finally pulls Miz into the ring and the beating begins. A big boot puts Miz down but he

avoids the clothesline. Ryback hits the Vader body attack, a spinebuster, the clothesline and the Shell Shock ends this at 2:30.

Here's Ryback's chance at the title at Hell in a Cell 2012.

#### Raw World Title: Ryback vs. CM Punk

I honestly don't know who is going to win here and I love that feeling. The Goldberg chants start before the music hits. Ryback has a red singlet tonight. Not much of a pop for him though. The big match intros inform us that this match will indeed be taking place inside the Cell. You know, in case you're REALLY FREAKING STUPID. The fans get fired up for the Feed Me More chant at least.

Punk immediately heads to the floor and we're in the big Cell where there's almost no room at ringside. Punk gets back in and immediately runs to the floor again. After almost a minute and a half Ryback gets his hands on Punk and chokes him in the air. Ryback kicks him in the chest and Punk is in trouble early. Punk gets a boot up in the corner but a tornado DDT is easily countered.

Punk is sent back to the floor where he tries to get out of the door. Ryback throws him into the Cell wall and then does it again. The Goldberg chants start up and Punk hides under the ring. Heyman distracts Ryback, allowing Punk to spray him with a fire extinguisher and knock Ryback into the cage. The champ finds a chair but Ryback knocks it into Punk's head. Back in and Ryback hits a Warrior gorilla press drop.

Ryback misses a charge into the corner and Punk hits a springboard clothesline to take him down. A top rope double ax only kind of hits so Punk hits a second to stagger Ryback. A third attempt is caught in midair but Punk hits a leg lariat to take Ryback down again. Punk sends him to the floor and hits the suicide dive but Ryback is slammed into the cage instead of being knocked down. Ryback easily breaks up a neckbreaker on the floor but his spear hits the steps.

Back in and Punk puts on a chinlock. We're over eight minutes into this and it's been pretty good stuff so far. Another Ryback charge hits the post and Punk smiles. Heyman: "HE'S STILL ALIVE!" Punk hits the running

knee in the corner and a clothesline to set up the Macho Elbow for no cover. Punk brings in a kendo stick and mocks the FEED ME MORE chant.

Ryback Hulks Up and takes the stick out of Punk's hands. Ryback is all fired up now and Heyman is panicking. The fans are getting into the chant now and there's the Meathook (clothesline). Ryback loads up Shell Shock...and the referee hits Ryback low and fast counts a Punk rollup for the pin to retain at 11:45.

**Rating:** B-. This is one of those what the heck was that endings but it was a good match until we got there. I don't like the screwjob ending and I wanted Ryback to win, but this sets up another match down the line I guess. I don't recognize the referee but I'm sure we'll find out who he was later on. The fans went silent after the pin which is a good thing...I think?

His rematch was in a triple threat match at Survivor Series 2012.

Raw World Title: John Cena vs. Ryback vs. CM Punk

Punk bails to the floor to start and gets chased by both guys. Ryback finally catches him in the corner but Cena is all like "dude, my arch nemesis" and pulls Ryback away, allowing Punk to get in shots on both guys. Ryback kicks him in the chest and Cena adds a bulldog before Ryback clotheslines Punk to the floor. It's the battle of the heroes with Cena pounding away but Ryback escapes the AA and knocks Cena to the outside.

Punk is back in now and scores with a snap suplex on Ryback, but the monster pops right back up and gorilla presses the champion into a fallaway slam. Cena comes back in with a belly to belly for two on Ryback before putting on a chinlock. Punk breaks it up with a top rope ax handle and Cena falls to the floor. Another ax handle attempt is caught in midair but Punk takes Ryback down with a neckbreaker. Cena sneaks in with a rollup for two but Punk DDTs him down for two more.

With Cena down, Punk channels his inner Austin Aries and puts on the Last Chancery but Ryback lifts Punk into the air for a powerslam. Cena grabs the ProtoBomb on Ryback but Ryback pops up, leading to a slugout. The shoulder blocks look to take Ryback down but Punk pulls John to the floor

and sends him into the steps. Punk's springboard clothesline gets two on Ryback and we hit the chinlock. Ryback fights up and slams Punk down followed by the Meathook. Cena breaks up the Shell Shock and puts Ryback in the STF but it's Punk with the Macho Elbow for the save.

Everyone is down now and Punk might have hurt himself on that elbow. He's up first though but can't hit the GTS on Cena. Punk and Cena slug it out but Ryback clotheslines both guys down to take over again. Ryback sends both guys to the floor for some reason but they double team Ryback down as a result. A double suplex puts Ryback through the table and they head inside for the real showdown.

Punk grabs a GTS out of nowhere for two and Heyman is livid. The AA gets the same result other than Heyman being relieved. Punk comes back with the running knee but the bulldog is countered into the STF. Ryback makes the save and throws Cena into the barricade to put him down. The Meathook and Shell Shock lay out Punk but Cena makes a diving save. The Shell Shock lays out Cena as well.....but here are three guys in black to destroy Ryback. They pound away on Ryback and take him to the floor for a TripleBomb through the table. Punk crawls over and pins Cena to retain.

**Rating:** C+. It's probably the best match of the night but that's not saying much at this point. Obviously the three guys were Reign/Ambrose/Rollins which Cole tells us during Punk's celebration. Punk winning was a good idea and set up more stuff down the line which is the best possible outcome. You could feel the wind blowing as Ryback fell down the card though and he hasn't recovered yet. Fairly good match but nowhere near enough to save the show though.

Ryback was scheduled to face Punk for the title in a TLC match at TLC but Punk was legitimately injured. This was his other option.

#### Ryback/HELL NO vs. The Shield

It's a TLC match but you can win by pin/submission because there's nothing to hang above the ring. Shield comes through the crowd of course. The brawl starts on the floor of course with Bryan vs. Rollins, Kane vs. Reigns and Ambrose vs. Ryback. Ryback and Ambrose get in the ring and the smart aleck fans just have to chant Goldberg. Shield gets Ryback 3-1 but

he shrugs them off. Kane tries to bring in a ladder but Rollins dropkicks it into the monster's ribs.

Bryan takes a ladder to the face as well but here's Ryback to beat them all up. Reigns takes Kane down with a chair but Kane makes the save. I think Ryback is busted a bit. Bryan kicks Reigns in the corner and the fans are WAY into Danny boy. Reigns is thrown into a ladder which gets two for Kane. Bryan saves Ryback and the fans want tables. Rollins jumps into a Kane uppercut for two before getting put inside a ladder. Kane beats on the ladder with a chair for a bit but Ambrose takes Kane out with a DDT onto the chair.

Ryback rams Rollins and Ambrose into the corner and there's another Goldberg chant. The fans still want tables. Ryback blocks a beat into the ladder in the corner and pounds Ambrose and Rollins down again. A splash crushes both of them against the ladder, followed by a suplex from Ryback to put both of them on the ladder. Reigns breaks up the double Shell Shock and it's another three on one beating. Where did HELL NO go?

Shield loads up the triple powerbomb...and it actually works. Seriously, no save from the champions until a few seconds later. Bryan goes off on everyone but gets caught in the numbers game. Kane finally comes back but gets beaten down as well. Back into the ring and it's time for the chairs portion of the match. Bryan gets beaten down before being double superplexed off a table on the top. Kane barely makes a save but he gets beaten down by the chair as well.

Ambrose and Rollins try the double superplex on Kane as well but he shoves Rollins to the floor and clotheslines Ambrose down. The side slam puts Reigns down but Dean makes the save. Instead of I think a DDT on Kane though, it's a chokeslam for Dean through the chair for two. Back to the floor and Reigns spears Kane through the barricade to a BIG reaction. Kane gets buried under a bunch of stuff, but in the chaos, Bryan grabs the NO Lock on Ambrose. He eventually gets it on all three guys but the numbers catch up to him.

Bryan fights back AGAIN with a bunch of kicks but eventually he falls prey to the Blackout (running curb stomp) onto the EDGE OF THE CHAIR from

Rollins. FREAKING OW MAN!!! Ryback is up though and house is cleaned. Rollins is thrown onto Ambrose and it's chair time for Reigns. Ambrose comes back AGAIN but gets speared down. There's a Meat Hook for Dean followed by Shell Shock for two as Rollins saves. Ryback goes to the floor but gets caught by some chair shots. Ryback charges at Reigns to tackle into whatever is in his path in a cool visual.

The Shield and Ryback are all up by the entrance and Ambrose chairs him in the back to take him down again. They shove a ladder onto Ryback and destroy him with some chair shots and put him on a table. There's a HUGE, as in bigger than the usual HUGE ladders, and Rollins climbs up. Ryback fights up though and Rollins is in trouble. Ryback throws Seth through a big stack of tables, but Ambrose and Reigns are double teaming Bryan in the ring. Reigns superbombs Bryan through the table for the pin at 22:55.

**Rating:** A. AWESOME brawl here with a great story being told throughout. Ryback gets two do the big spot to look strong and the Shield's pack mentality worked very well too. Great match here and definitely better than I was expecting. Shield looked like they could more than hang in there, and that was the main thing they had to worry about. Great stuff.

Ryback would finally get this TLC match on Raw, January 7, 2013.

#### Raw World Title: CM Punk vs. Ryback

TLC match which was supposed to happen last month but had to be changed due to Punk's knee injury. The fans don't seem impressed by Ryback at all here. Ryback shoves Punk around to start until we head to the floor where Punk kicks him in the head. Punk slides in a ladder but Ryback hammers on him before anything can be done. Back in and Ryback hits a delayed spinning suplex onto the ladder, sending the champion to the floor.

Punk almost gets crushed by the steps before using them as a launching pad to knee Ryback in the face. Punk chairs Ryback down a few times and we take a break. Back with both guys down in the ring and Ryback getting up first. Ryback loads up a table on the floor but Punk blasts him in the ribs with a chair and sets up a table of his own. Ryback shoves Punk onto the announce table but another chair shot slows him down.



Back in and Punk works over Ryback's leg with a chair but can't Pillmanize it. The jump off the ropes might have hurt the champion's knee again. Ryback pounds away and hits the Meat Hook but Punk escapes the Shell Shock. They head to the floor and Ryback launches himself through a table by mistake. Punk climbs up the ladder but Ryback goes up to stop him, knocking the champ to the mat.

CM shoves the ladder over but Ryback lands on his feet. He picks Punk up and drops him onto the ladder, bending it to the point where it can't be used anymore. Punk kicks Ryback in the head again to slow him down but can't use the ladder to climb anymore. A knee in the corner slows Ryback down but when Punk tries the bulldog, Ryback LAUNCHES him to the floor through the table Punk set up.

Ryback finds another ladder and goes up but there go the lights. The lights come back up and the Shield is on the ladder. Ryback punches two of them down but has to get down to stop the third one. The numbers catch up with Ryback and he gets destroyed by chair shots and the Triple Bomb through a table onto the steps. The Shield leaves and Punk slowly climbs up to retain the title at 18:50.

**Rating:** B-. This was exactly what people expected, right down to the interference. Ryback continues to look like someone that can't win the big one, which is why that pop he got at the beginning of the match might as well have been a group of mice cheering. We get it: Shield goes after Ryback. They've done that for months now and Ryback has lost to them every time. There were some good bumps in this but it was exactly the match you expected to happen.

After not winning the title, Ryback would turn heel after Wrestlemania XXIX and get another title shot at Extreme Rules 2013.

Raw World Title: John Cena vs. Ryback

Last man standing, which means you have to keep your opponent down for a ten count to win. Also Cena is defending if that wasn't clear. Ryback shoves Cena down to start and the fans chant Goldberg at the challenger. Cena's ankle is strong enough to survive a leapfrog and there's a bulldog to take Ryback down. After Ryback hits some shoulders in the corner, he

catches Cena diving off the middle rope in a powerslam for a six count. A gorilla press puts Cena down for eight.

Cena pulls himself to his feet and then pulls the top rope down, sending Ryback out to the floor. With Ryback up at six, John slides a table into the ring. Ryback escapes the AA though and hits his over the shoulder Stunner for an eight count. The table is set up in the corner now but Cena takes Ryback down with some shoulder blocks. Ryback catches him in mid-air though and hits a fallaway slam through the table. Cena makes it up at nine and avoids a charging Ryback, sending him shoulder first into the post.

The ProtoBomb sets up the Shuffle but Ryback again counters the AA. A weak spear puts Cena down but Cena pops back up and hits a powerbomb of all things for an eight. Back up and Cena puts him in a kind of choke hold, only to be countered into a spinebuster. That and the Meathook are enough for a seven but Cena grabs the STF out of nowhere. Ryback is out but Cena is pulling in another table just in case. He's up at eight and Ryback is all fired up.

Ryback loads up the Shell Shock but Cena escapes and hits the AA through the table to put both guys down. Both guys get up at nine and Cena goes up, only to get caught in a Shell Shock. Cena gets up at nine and they head to the floor where Cena plows Ryback through the barricade but only for a nine. They head into the crowd where Ryback rips up what looks like a hockey board and knocks Cena senseless with it. It's still not enough though and Cena puts on a sleeper.

After choking Ryback for a good while the monster stays down for nine. Cena puts Ryback on a conveniently placed table and dives off a balcony with a splash through said table. Ryback is again up at nine so Cena sprays him with a fire extinguisher. They head up to the stage with Cena hosing Ryback down again and again before hitting Ryback in the face with the fire extinguisher.

Ryback again gets up at eight but the AA is countered, allowing Ryback to drive Cena through a the set (as in through the electrical light grid and off camera). Both guys are out behind the set with a bunch of glass under

them. The referee asks for medics and Cena is out cold as Ryback is helped to his feet. Shouldn't that count as Cena not being up and Ryback winning? The match is thrown out at about 24:00.

**Rating:** B. That's a pretty cheap (yet good looking) ending as Cena couldn't keep Ryback down and now we're going to get a rematch at Payback. It was certainly entertaining though, which is mostly because of how much more time it got than any other match. That's the problem with a lot of the matches tonight: they've been WAY too short.

Here's the rematch at Payback 2013.

#### Raw World Title: Ryback vs. John Cena

The first fall is a lumberjack match with pretty much any wrestler you would name at ringside. Ryback powers Cena into the corner to start and counters the bulldog into a belly to back slam for two. Cena comes back with a fisherman's suplex and some elbow drops as Cole talks about the "historic" extreme lumberjack match in 2006. Who even remembered that thing back in like 2007? It was against Sabu at Vengeance 2006 if I remember correctly but dear goodness who thought of that match and thought Cole should bring it up?

The AA is countered into the over the shoulder Stunner for two for Ryback. Cena is thrown to the outside and pummeled by the lumberjacks (JTG still has a job. Who knew?) before Ryback gets to destroy him a bit more. The lumberjacks get another crack at Cena but he gets back in fast enough to send Ryback to the lumberjacks as well. Ryback gets back in unscathed so Cena can initiate his finishing sequence, only to be sent into the other lumberjacks this time. Back in and Ryback is sent to the floor again but not touched this time either.

We get the required lumberjack brawl but Cena DIVES onto all of them at the same time in a huge crash. Back in and Cena hooks the STF but Ryback powers out and gets the Shell Shock for the first fall at 7:32. We're at the tables match now with the lumberjacks all gone. Ryback immediately tackles Cena down and has early control of the second fall. Here's the first table of the night but Cena escapes the powerslam. A spinebuster puts Cena down and the fans chant Goldberg.

Cena escapes a gorilla press into the AA but Ryback reaches down and flips the table over while still on Cena's shoulders. We head to the floor and Cena is whipped into the steps to give Ryback control again. Ryback sets up the table in the corner before knocking Cena down with the steps in the ring. Cena staggers up next to the table but the steps go through the table instead of the champion.

Cena puts Ryback down with a belly to belly suplex and some steps to the head to put Ryback down. Here's another table in the ring but Cena is placed onto it instead, only to get back off of it when Ryback drops the steps through the table. Ryback launches the steps at Cena but they go out to the floor, allowing Cena to hit the shoulder blocks and the Shuffle. Ryback comes back with a spinebuster and the Meat Hook before getting another table. The Shell Shock is loaded up but Cena counters into a quick AA to tie it up at 16:10.

The third fall is an ambulance match, meaning the first person to be placed inside an ambulance to the doors shut loses. Ryback takes Cena down 25 seconds after the AA and loads up the announce table. More Goldberg chants abound as Cena is powerbombed through a table. The third fall officially begins with Ryback dragging Cena to the ambulance, only to be shoved into it by the champion.

Cena pulls a crutch from the ambulance but Ryback knocks it out of his hands. A punch misses Cena and goes through the glass but Ryback doesn't seem to mind. Cena rams him back first into the ambulance doors but can't follow up. They open the driver's door so Cena can whip Ryback into it so hard that the door breaks off. An ambulance door to the face staggers Ryback but he throws Cena into the front of the ambulance.

The bumper is ripped off the front of the ambulance and Ryback wraps it around Cena's back. Cena blocks a powerbomb into a backdrop onto the hood and starts climbing up to the top. An emergency light to Ryback's shoulder knocks him back to the floor but Ryback is right back up. Cena stares down at him and they brawl on top of the ambulance until Cena hits an AA through the roof to retain at 24:38.

**Rating:** B-. This was good but by the end it was a spot fest. It was

certainly entertaining but I don't think anyone bought Ryback as a real threat to the belt. The fact that he hasn't won a major PPV match since at least August might have something to do with it but I'm not quite sure. It's good stuff but nothing I'll remember three days from now.

Here's a one off match between two guys not in the show's namesake match. From Money in the Bank 2013.

### Chris Jericho vs. Ryback

The fans go back and forth from Jericho to Goldberg chants. Ryback bails to the floor because he's a coward now and Jericho takes him down with a baseball slide. Back in and Jericho hits a forearm to the back of the head but Ryback drills him with a shoulder. Jericho goes after the formerly bad leg but gets his neck snapped across the top rope for two. We hit the chinlock before Ryback gets two off a middle rope splash. Jericho is punched off the apron and lands between the two announce tables.

Back to the chinlock but Jericho escapes into a northern lights suplex and a failed Walls attempt. A top rope ax handle is caught in a Ryback belly to belly overhead suplex. The Meathook puts Jericho down and the Codebreaker is countered into a kind of spinebuster. A powerbomb gets two on Jericho but he comes back with an enziguri for two.

Ryback rolls to the apron and gets caught in a Codebreaker but he's back in at nine. A high cross gets two for the Canadian but he walks into a gorilla press. Ryback drops him down into a fireman's carry but Jericho counters into a DDT for two. Jericho misses the Lionsault and Ryback grabs a quick rollup for the pin at 10:20.

**Rating:** D+. The match wasn't terrible but man alive it's pathetic what they've done to Ryback. They took everything good and interesting about him and turned it completely around to make sure the fans didn't care about him at all. This was also the first match he's won on PPV since last year's MITB, yet WWE still wonders why no one cares about him.

Ryback would help his mentor Paul Heyman in his war with CM Punk. From Hell in a Cell 2013.

## CM Punk vs. Ryback/Paul Heyman

And there's no Heyman. Ryback gets in the Cell before pointing towards the entrance where Heyman rides out on a cart. It's actually a lift which takes Paul up to the top of the Cell with Heyman talking about how he's risen from the depths and ascended to the top of the world. The fans are all over Paul as Punk pounds away on Ryback and knocks him out to the floor. Now the fans chant for CM after he hits a suicide dive to send Ryback into the Cell wall. It's kendo stick time but Ryback drives Punk's spine into the steel to stop him.

Ryback blasts Punk with the stick and takes him back inside to beat Punk down even more. Punk's back is targeted with a reverse waistlock before Punk fights free and low bridges Ryback out to the floor. A forearm off the top puts Ryback down again and it's table time. Punk can't get it set up though and Ryback suplexes him back first into the Cell wall. Back in and a belly to back suplex gets two more as we hit the reverse waistlock again. Punk fights out again and hits a spinning cross body for two followed by the running knee in the corner.

Some kendo stick shots drop the big man and there's the Macho Elbow for two. More stick shots keep Ryback down and now the table is set up in the ring. It falls onto its side though, allowing Ryback to crotch Punk on the side. The Meat Hook is good for two but Punk hits him low to block the Shell Shock. Ryback lays on the table for no apparent reason, allowing Punk to drop another Macho Elbow for no cover. Instead a cane to Ryback's head sets up the GTS for the pin at 13:55.

**Rating:** C-. If this had been a regular match it would have been fine, but it was inside the Cell which means it has a higher standard. Putting Heyman out of the match was probably the best idea, but there really wasn't much to this that made me care. Punk beating Ryback in a hardcore match is nothing special, but it certainly wasn't a terrible match. The Cell was a prop here though, which is what I hate about this show.

Here are the former Heyman guys getting a Tag Team Title shot at TLC 2013.

Tag Titles: Real Americans vs. Big Show/Rey Mysterio vs. Cody

## Rhodes/Goldust vs. Ryback/Curtis Axel

Rhodes and Goldust are defending and this is elimination rules. Ryback and Axel have both beaten the champions in the last few weeks while Big Show and Mysterio have teamed together I believe once. Ryback shoves Rhodes around to start but gets caught in a half crab, allowing Goldust to come in with an elbow to the back of Ryback's head. Off to Axel for a nice dropkick, only to get caught in a wristlock.

Axel fights up but Goldust makes a tag off to Big Show who keeps up the arm work. There's the skin ripping chop and the fans want it one more time. Show does it a third time and Axel sells it like he got shot. Mysterio comes in for some forearms but Axel sends him into the corner. Ryback gets the tag and pounds Mysterio down, only to bring Axel back in for something resembling stereo cross bodies to put both guys down.

Double tags bring in Ryback and Goldust with the champion scoring off the uppercut and a spinebuster. Ryback loads up a powerbomb but gets rolled up for the pin by Goldust, getting us down to three teams at 6:12. Cesaro comes in to pummel Goldust in the corner before it's off to Swagger for a front facelock. The fans start chanting WE THE PEOPLE as Goldust is sent to the floor for a clothesline from Swagger.

Back inside and Cesaro gets two off the gutwrench suplex and we hit the chinlock. Off to Jack again for a bearhug as Big Show plays cheerleader for Goldust. Goldie fights back with right hands and a springboard elbow to the jaw. Cesaro easily takes him down and we get a short version Cesaro Swing. A Swagger belly to belly suplex puts Goldust down again and we get the Vader Bomb/double stomp sequence from the Real Americans for another two.

Antonio puts on another chinlock but this time Goldust escapes with a jawbreaker. Cesaro can't break up the tag but Swagger runs around the ring and pulls Cody off the apron. Cody is holding his knee as Big Show throws Swagger into the barricade and Goldust catches Cesaro with a hurricanrana. A powerslam puts Cesaro down again and the hot tag brings in Big Show. Cesaro is thrown all over the ring and a shoulder block turns him inside out. Both Americans get punched in the jaw and Big Show

pins Cesaro for the elimination at 14:42.

So we're down to the two good guy teams but Big Show waits for the champions to get on their feet. A hard shoulder block puts Goldust on the floor and Cody gives him a somewhat angry pep talk. Goldust comes back in for a top rope cross body with Big Show waiting on the impact for about eight seconds. The chokeslam is countered into a DDT for two and it's off to Cody for a double suplex on Big Show for two. The fans are rapidly losing interest.

Big Show swats a Disaster Kick out of the air and it's off to Mysterio (remember him?) for a springboard seated senton to Cody. Now the Disaster Kick connects for two on Mysterio and Cody is getting frustrated. Cross Rhodes is countered into the 619 to both champions. Goldust is sent into the barricade by Big Show but Cody sends the giant into the post.

Cody tries a springboard dropkick but gets caught in a powerbomb by Rey (how often do you hear that?) for two. Cross Rhodes are countered again but the 619 is countered into an Alabama Slam which is countered into a sunset flip for a VERY close two. The third attempt at Cross Rhodes FINALLY connects for the pin to retain the titles at 21:06.

**Rating:** A-. This dragged a bit in the middle but man alive that ending was great. Cody and Goldust are just awesome right now and I'm so glad they didn't give the titles to another thrown together team. I have no idea why the Usos weren't in there somehow other than putting in two bigger names. Really good match here though.

Ryback and Axel would get another title shot on Raw, April 28, 2014.

#### Tag Team Titles: Usos vs. Ryback/Curtis Axel

Usos are defending and the challengers now have team music. We even get Big Match Intros before it's Axel vs. Jey to start. Cole suggests that the Usos are in trouble here, despite being on fire for months and beating this team before. A quick cross body puts Axel down and it's off to Ryback who misses a splash, allowing for the tag off to Jimmy. The challengers are sent to the floor and there are the double dives to put them down. Jey is holding his ankle though as we head to a break.



Back with Axel cranking on Jimmy's arm as the trainer is checking on Jey's ankle. A running knee to the head puts Jimmy down and it's off to Ryback for a series of covers and two each. Jey is able to knock Ryback down and suplexes Axel down onto him, allowing for the tag to a taped up Jey. The injury doesn't seem to matter as Jey comes in with a cross body for two on Axel and a superkick to Ryback. There's a Samoan drop and the running Umaga attack for two but a blind tag brings in Ryback.

A spinebuster gets two on Jey and Ryback pounds on his own chest. The Meat Hook is blocked by another superkick and Jey fires off some chops, only to be taken down by a regular clothesline. Shell Shock is countered into a sunset flip for two but Ryback takes him down again. The Usos make their own blind tag though, so as Axel hits the PerfectPlex, Jimmy dives in with the Superfly Splash for the pin on Curtis at 11:16.

**Rating:** C-. So what was the point of the injury? It didn't change a thing about the match and Jey barely sold the thing at all, so why bother having it except for some drama that was broken up about three minutes later? The division is very thin at this point and we have a bunch of talent with nothing to do. Why this isn't a layup for WWE's creative team.....really doesn't surprise me.

We'll wrap it up with one more win for the team on Raw, July 21, 2014.

#### Ryback/Curtis Axel vs. Kofi Kingston/Big E.

Ryback and Big E. get things going with Ryback hammering away against the ropes. Big E. runs him over but walks into a spinebuster and gets double teamed in the corner. A side slam gets two for Ryback and he throws Big E. down with a belly to belly. The Meat Hook is countered by a clothesline from Big E. and he makes the hot tag to Kofi. Kingston speeds things up and gets two off the SOS as everything breaks down. Ryback rolls through a high cross body and pins Kofi at 3:25.

**Rating:** C-. This was mostly Big E. vs. Ryback for a few minutes before the ending came out of nowhere. Big E.'s collapse continues and it's really kind of sad to see. Kingston only got to jump a few times and it wasn't much to see. At least they're building up another team to fight the Usos.

Ryback is a guy that has talent but the run against Punk was doomed from the start as everyone knew that Rock was the one taking the title from him at Royal Rumble and everything else was just filler. He has the look and potential with a Goldberg style push, but once he had that first loss and was treated as just another guy, the magic was gone. That being said, he's only 32 so it's not like he's out of chances to make it work.

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