

Payback 2015: They Did It Again!

Payback 2015

Date: May 17, 2015

Location: Royal Farms Arena, Baltimore, Maryland

Commentators: Michael Cole, Jerry Lawler, John Bradshaw Layfield

We continue the rapid fire pay per views with one of the lower level yet often surprising shows of the year. The main event tonight is Seth Rollins defending the World Title in a four way against Dean Ambrose, Roman Reigns and Randy Orton with Director of Operations Kane's job on the line. Let's get to it.

Pre-Show: Stardust vs. R-Truth

Bonus match because we're just that lucky. Truth slaps him in the face to start as the fans chant for Cody and the announcers talk about the main event. Back up and Truth knocks him out to the apron as Cole isn't sure if Truth says he'll "make you disappear like your favorite" magician or mortician. Truth gets two off a jackknife cover but Stardust hits him in the face. Stardust eats the release gordbuster but nails a knee to the head for two. Off to a cravate on Truth followed by Matt Hardy's Side Effect for two. We get a slap to the face with a glove to set off a duel before Little Jimmy ends Stardust at 6:49.

Rating: D. What a boring match. There was no reason for this to take place other than "Hey, let's have another match!" Neither guy has anything going for them at the moment and thankfully this didn't have any plastic spiders involved. Nothing to see here but to be fair it was a bonus so it's not like anything is taken away.

There will be a new Steve Austin Podcast with Paul Heyman on June 1.

Pre-Show: Mega Powers vs. Ascension

That would be Curtis Axel as Hulk Hogan and Damien Sandow as Macho Mandow

in case it's Thursday and this gimmick is already dead. They were listed as the Meta Powers until tonight's show. JBL thinks they look like Nacho Man and the Huckster for you mid-90s fans out there. Konnor kicks Axel in the ribs to start but it's already time for HULKING UP. Curtis gets two off a legdrop and it's off to Viktor for a chinlock. That goes nowhere so the hot tag brings in Mandow as the Powers clean house. The big elbow doesn't work though and it's the Fall of Man for the pin at 2:55. Thank goodness.

The opening video talks about Rollins trying to keep the title and Cena vs. Rusev in their final battle.

Sheamus vs. Dolph Ziggler

Ziggler looks utterly ridiculous in his cutoff jean vest and pink bandana. He goes right after Sheamus to start and knocks him to the floor where Sheamus comes up holding his knee. Back in and a cross body gets two but Sheamus takes his head off with a running ax handle. A suplex puts Ziggler down again and we hit the chinlock. Back up and Ziggler sidesteps a charge to send Sheamus into the post. Some forearms and a cross body put Sheamus in the corner and the jumping DDT gets two.

Ziggler sends him back to the corner and there's something resembling a Stink Face to make up for Sheamus bailing on the stipulations last month. A livid Sheamus misses the Brogue and eats the Fameasser for two. Now Sheamus gets all fired up and slugs Ziggler down for some two counts and White Noise sets up the Cloverleaf. Ziggler makes it to the ropes and Sheamus is livid again, demanding that Ziggler give up. Instead Dolph headbutts Sheamus (busting himself WAY open) and superkicks him down for two. Ziggler is dizzy from the blood loss though and the Brogue Kick ends this at 12:27.

Rating: B-. I had a good time with this and that blood came out of nowhere. Sheamus needed this win more than Ziggler did as Dolph can bounce back no matter what. Maybe that kick can knock Ziggler out of the 80s and into the late 90s for a change because he looks ridiculous in that attire.

Kane and Rollins bicker some more with Kane implying he wants Rollins to

lose the title and doesn't mind getting fired. Rollins threatens Stogge violence and gets laughed off. There was zero reason for this to be on pay per view.

Tag Team Titles: New Day vs. Cesaro/Tyson Kidd

2/3 falls with New Day defending after taking the belts from Cesaro/Kidd at Extreme Rules. New Day comes out and suggests positive thinking for everyone here, including the Baltimore Orioles in the audience because they haven't won a World Series in over 30 years. Kidd slams Kofi (teaming with Big E. here) down to start and it's quickly off to the power guys.

A powerslam gets two on E. but he comes back with a gorilla press to put Cesaro down. Back to Kofi who gets caught in a delayed vertical suplex with Kidd coming off the top to drive him down. Kidd catapults Kofi into a spinebuster and the Swing into a dropkick mostly misses but gets the pin and the first fall at 2:50.

Woods wants in via the Freebird Rule but eats a cannonball off the apron for his efforts. Kofi and Big E. officially start the second fall but Big E. misses a spear through the apron for a big crash. Kidd gets greedy though and dives over the top into a release overhead belly to belly to give the champions control. We hit the bearhug on Tyson as Woods shouts that he's the mastermind of the team.

Kidd escapes and makes the hot tag, but Big E. spears Cesaro through the ropes and into the barricade for a big crash. Fans: "THIS IS AWESOME!" Woods: "WE KNOW THAT!" Kofi goes up top but dives into a dropkick. Kidd kicks as fast as he can but gets caught in a mostly missed (notice the trend) Midnight Hour (Kofi's DDT was more like an elbow to the back) to tie it up at 8:14 total.

We start the third fall with Cesaro finally getting back on the apron to take another hot tag. He starts cleaning house but can't get Big E. up for the tiger bomb and just drops him in a bad looking spot. Instead he hits a running European uppercut followed by a kind of Demolition Decapitation with Kidd springboarding into the elbow drop. Big E. is whipped over the announcers' table. A huge uppercut drops Kofi again but

E. dives in for the save. In the melee, Woods sneaks in and small packages Kidd for the pin to retain at 13:20.

Rating: B. Good stuff here but the botches hurt it for me a bit. Still though, this was the awesome stuff you would expect from both teams. They even left the door open to continue it, as one day Kidd and Cesaro will get a clean shot against these two, which is exactly what they're shooting for here. Also this could have been five minutes longer for three falls.

Elimination Chamber ad.

Ryback promises to prove himself to Bray Wyatt tonight.

We recap Wyatt vs. Ryback. This still doesn't explain why they're fighting.

Ryback vs. Bray Wyatt

Ryback stomps him down to start and easily clotheslines Bray out to the floor. He grabs him by the beard to bring him back in but Bray hits his running cross body to take over. We hit a bad looking chinlock (Bray's arm is nowhere near Ryback's throat) before he sidesteps a charging Ryback to send him into the post.

Bray sends him into the apron and hits a nice backsplash off the apron to crush Ryback's ribs. The countout is barely beaten so Bray hits a running charge in the corner, only to get powerbombed off the middle rope. They both head to the floor with Ryback circling around, only to walk into a hard clothesline.

Back in again and Ryback kicks the arm away to block another clothesline. A spinebuster has Bray in trouble but he pops up and sets Ryback on the ropes for a superplex. Ryback headbutts him down and hits a top rope splash of all things, causing his injured ribs (from the backsplash) to flare up. Both finishers are countered and Bray pulls the turnbuckle pad off. The referee looks at the pad, allowing Bray to drive the bad ribs into the exposed buckle, setting up Sister Abigail for the pin at 10:29.

Rating: B-. They're rolling with these matches so far tonight. This was

the power brawl they needed to go with and the ribs helped them out a lot. Bray getting the pin is a nice touch for him and Ryback has a complaint for a rematch (notice the trend tonight). Good stuff here and I had a better time with it than I was expecting.

Money in the Bank ad, with a Home Shopping Network theme. The show is June 14, which is two weeks after Elimination Chamber, which is two weeks after Payback.

We recap Rusev vs. Cena. Rusev won at Fast Lane but Cena won the title at Wrestlemania XXXI and the rematch at Extreme Rules. Tonight is the final battle in an I Quit match.

US Title: John Cena vs. Rusev

Cena is defending in an I Quit match. Rusev gives Cena a chance to quit before the match to please half the fans but Cena wants to get on with it, earning him a kick to the ribs. The fans want Lana so Rusev makes her sit in a chair near Lawler. Back in and Rusev stomps away as the fans carry on the dueling chants. Rusev dropkicks him into the corner for a no and a spinwheel kick puts Cena down again.

The fans chant for Lana so Rusev goes outside to yell at her. Cena has had no offense so far. It's time to wave the Russian flag before a fall away slam sends Cena out to the floor. Cena goes into the steps but won't quit so Rusev puts the steps in the corner for two more hard whips. The steps go down and Cena finally hits a backdrop for his first offensive move. Then, like a schmuck, he tries a cross body and gets caught in a swinging Rock Bottom onto the steps.

The big stomp hits the steps though and Cena nails a quick AA onto them as well but Rusev can't speak. Cena sends him into the post for a no and then threatens to put him through the barricade if he doesn't quit. Rusev says no so Cena does what he promised. That's another no so they fight up to the technical area with Rusev gently laying Cena on a table with an Alabama Slam.

Cena pops up and puts the table against the wall before hitting Rusev with a monitor. Still no from the Russian so Cena hits him with a laptop

for the same result. The AA is countered into a better Alabama Slam through the table but Cena still says no. Rusev finds the pyro controls but Cena AA's him onto the fireworks, causing them to go off. Somehow that's still a no so Cena finds a piece of a barricade and nails Rusev in the face.

The barricade is put up against the apron but Rusev suplexes Cena halfway through it for another no. The stunned look on Rusev's face is perfect. Back inside the ring and we hit the Accolade but Cena is out cold, meaning he can't say he quits. With nothing left to do, Rusev unhooks the top rope and pours water over Cena to wake him up. Rusev pulls back the hook but Cena takes him down into the STF with the rope over Rusev's face. He rants in Russian and Lana quits for him at 28:49.

Rating: A. Oh yeah this was awesome. They had built up Rusev as never quitting but you knew Lana was going to be involved somewhere in there. Really fun stuff here though as they just let the guys beat the tar out of each other. This should have been the match they did last month and cut out the chain match as this was WAY more extreme than anything last month.

The kickoff panel chats while the ring is repaired.

The New Day toasts their win (with milk!) and ask who are the five greatest teams of all time. "New Day! New Day! New Day! New Day! New Day!" They're role models who don't curse, spit or complain. Kofi: "Toast, toast. Oh pinkies!" Byron tells them that they're defending the Tag Team Titles inside the Elimination Chamber and Big E. spits out his milk while Woods curses.

Bella Twins vs. Tamina/Naomi

Nikki takes Naomi down to start and it's off to Brie for the BRIE MODE running knee. Tamina superkicks Brie onto the apron to take over before standing on the hair. Back to Naomi for a front facelock but Brie crawls away (falling on her head in the process) for the hot tag. Everything breaks down and Nikki cleans house but takes the Rear View for a near fall. Tamina drives Brie into the barricade to distract Nikki on the top, allowing Naomi to slam her off the top for the pin at 6:13.

Rating: D+. This didn't have time to go anywhere and it was one of the most obvious endings you could have imagined. Allegedly this gets Naomi into the title hunt, despite the fact that there are eight active Divas on the roster (not counting Rosa, who is nowhere near the title and shouldn't be), including the Bellas. Nothing you wouldn't see on Raw here but Nikki looked good, as always.

Ad for the WWE prank show. They can advertise this, but not "YOU CAN WATCH EVERY PAY PER VIEW EVER!" Such are the priorities in WWE.

Rusev throws Lana out.

We look back at Daniel Bryan vacating the Intercontinental Title on Raw.

King Barrett vs. Neville

Neville starts fast with the front flip out of the corner into a cross body off the middle rope to send Barrett to the floor. He loads up the headstand into the headscissors but Barrett throws the feet into the air for the kick to the ribs. I love it when they adapt like that instead of just doing the same spots in the same places. Back in and we hit the chinlock for a bit before Barrett hits the knees and big boot in the ropes.

Neville comes back with his own kicks and a standing shooting star press for two. The Bull Hammer misses but Winds of Change gets two. Neville heads to the apron for a springboard but has to turn it into an armdrag and cradle to counter another Bull Hammer. Barrett rolls away to avoid to avoid the Red Arrow so Neville dives on him, only to come up holding his knee. He gets back inside but Barrett intentionally takes the countout at 7:26. Neville is able to stand on his own so the knee doesn't seem that bad.

Rating: C+. I had a good time with this as these two have chemistry together. Neville's strong push continues as he even gets to win a pay per view match this time. They're developing a nice midcard these days and it's actually working really well. The countout was another good idea as they've really tightened up the booking tonight for the losers.

Post match Barrett comes back in and decks Neville before putting on the robe and crown. He misses a sceptor shot though and eats a German suplex, followed by the Red Arrow.

Tough Enough videos.

Kane wishes Rollins good luck.

We recap the World Title match. Kane set up a fan vote which made the match a triple threat, but when Rollins complained, Kane made it a four way with Ambrose involved as well. If Rollins loses, Kane is out of a job.

WWE World Title: Seth Rollins vs. Dean Ambrose vs. Roman Reigns vs. Randy Orton

Rollins is defending and it's one fall to a finish. Kane comes down to watch from the beginning. Everyone zeroes in on Rollins to start but the Stooges are here to save the day. Ambrose dives onto Orton and Rollins but Reigns dives onto all of them plus the Stooges. Reigns and Rollins are the only ones in the ring for a bit and the champ hits a quick Downward Spiral into the middle buckle.

Ambrose and Orton take their places and the slug it out with Dean getting two off a powerslam. Reigns comes back in and counters an RKO before Randy and Dean fall to the floor. The champ stomps Reigns down in the corner but Dean comes back in to help his buddy. Kane finally gets involved (a full five minutes into the match) by decking Ambrose and throwing him back in to Rollins.

The springboard knee to the head gets two on Dean but Ambrose fights back with an attempt at Dirty Deeds, drawing in Kane for a chokeslam to break it up. Orton pulls Kane to the floor and slugs away at him before going back inside to t-bone suplex Rollins for two. They head outside with Randy loading up the table....and eating a TripleBomb for a quick Shield reunion. Note the MONSTER pop for that.

Rollins puts his arms around Reigns and Dean before putting out his fist. We'll skip ahead a few seconds to Ambrose loading up Rollins for another

powerbomb with Kane having to make a save. Rollins is laid on the table for a DoubleBomb to Kane but the table doesn't break. Fans: "ONE MORE TIME!" They get their wish here and now Kane is driven through Rollins through the table. Reigns: "Not much else to do." Ambrose: "No there's not." Reigns: "Loser buys the beers?"

They slug it out in the ring with Reigns missing the clothesline and eating a cross body for two. Reigns gets a rollup of his own but lifts Dean up into a sitout powerbomb for two of his own. The Superman Punch connects for a very close two but the spear hits knee. Reigns spins out of Dirty Deeds though and nails the spear, only to have Rollins dive in for the save.

There's a Superman Punch to Rollins but Dean clotheslines Roman down. Dirty Deeds lays out Seth but Kane pulls him to the floor. Kane chokeslams Reigns onto the stairs but Orton is back up to lay Kane out. Mercury breaks up the elevated DDT so both Stooges get RKOs. Now the DDT works but Kane has to eat an RKO, allowing Rollins to hit a Pedigree of all things to retain the title at 20:52.

Rating: A-. Loved the match but can we please have Rollins stop acting like HHH is his great and mighty father who must be pleased at all times? It's beyond old already. Anyway, they made the exactly right call by having this be pure chaos and the Shield tease was awesome. Those three are going to headline a show someday and it's going to be a huge deal. Really funny stuff here and a great way to cap off the show. Hopefully this doesn't set up Rollins vs. Kane though.

HHH comes out to celebrate with Rollins to close the show.

Overall Rating: A. Why is Payback always so awesome? I'd really like an answer to this. It's clearly meant to be a B show and has a stupid name but this is the third year in a row that it's been one of the best shows all year. Only the Bellas match was kind of lame but other than that, this show was really fun match after really fun match. I had a blast with this and somehow that's becoming less and less of a surprise every year, which is a very good thing.

Results

Sheamus b. Dolph Ziggler – Brogue Kick

New Day b. Tyson Kidd/Cesaro – Small package to Kidd

Bray Wyatt b. Ryback – Sister Abigail

John Cena b. Rusev – Lana quit for Rusev while Rusev was in the STF

Naomi/Tamina b. Bella Twins – Slam off the top

Neville b. King Barrett via countout

Seth Rollins b. Roman Reigns, Randy Orton and Dean Ambrose – Pedigree to Orton

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