

Monday Night Raw – April 18, 2016: What's The English Word For Good Show?

Monday Night Raw

Date: April 18, 2016

Location: O2 Arena, London, England

Commentators: Michael Cole, John Bradshaw Layfield, Byron Saxton

It's the annual post Wrestlemania European tour so we're in England for a big change of pace. The show is also taped tonight which can often lead to some less interesting TV. We're less than two weeks away from Payback where AJ Styles will be challenging Roman Reigns for the WWE World Title. Let's get to it.

Opening sequence.

Here's Dean Ambrose to open things up for the Ambrose Asylum. Dean actually treats it a bit more like a traditional talk show with a joke about a monster in the Thames River ("I didn't know Braun Strowman could swim."). He brings out Shane McMahon as his first guest and that means it's time to dance.

Dean talks about all the crazy stuff he's done over the years and then shows us a clip of Shane diving off the Cell at Wrestlemania. That made Dean ask what Shane could have been thinking, which Shane sees as a compliment. Shane's plans are about giving new talent a chance.

Names like AJ Styles, Sami Zayn and Sasha Banks (two of which had title shots at Wrestlemania before Shane was in power of course but that's just over thinking things) have gotten a chance and that's why we have arrived. Cue Kevin Owens to ask why Shane threw him out last week. Shane brings up Owens wanting to cost Sami the title shot last week but Owens says that just means he's an honest man. Sami has been riding his coattails for years now because he's just not good enough.

This brings out Sami to accuse Owens of trying to stab him in the back, which brings out Chris Jericho for some reason. Jericho and Shane are about to get into it when Dean yells at them to be careful around the plant. Shane makes Jericho vs. Ambrose and Zayn vs. Owens for Payback and it's nearly a brawl.

Chris Jericho vs. Sami Zayn

Sami cranks on an armdrag into an armbar to start before a back elbow sends him out to the floor. Back in and Sami can't pull off the corner walk wristdrag as Jericho crotches him to keep control. A dropkick sends Sami outside again and we take a break. We come back with Jericho suplexing Sami on the floor and hitting the chinlock. Some clotheslines and a high cross body put Jericho down so he grabs the bulldog to stop Sami's comeback.

A quick Blue Thunder Bomb gets two as you can tell these two aren't exactly going at full speed. Another high cross body is dropkicked out of the air and it's off to the Walls. Sami makes the rope and gets Jericho outside for the diving tornado DDT. Back in and Jericho pokes him in the eye (becoming the top choice for heels in recent weeks) to set up the Codebreaker for the pin at 12:47.

Rating: C+. Like I said you could tell that they were just doing signature stuff here which is a trademark of these overseas shows. These two could do something very entertaining with more time and less fatigue so we'll call this more of a "what could have been" than a disappointing match.

AJ Styles is in the back for a chat when Karl Anderson and Luke Gallows come in. Apparently AJ gave them their recommendations to get jobs in WWE and he's very glad to see them. Gallows wants to go find a spot to catch up because he can't quite remember their last night in Japan.

Tag Team Tournament Semi-Finals: Enzo Amore/Colin Cassady vs. Dudley Boyz

Enzo says there's a dud in the Dudley Boyz because they're a couple of haters instead of a couple of studs. Enzo: "We're like A-cups because we're real whether you like us or not." D-Von and Enzo get things going

and we take a very quick break. Back with Bubba slowly beating on Enzo before it's off to D-Von for a big slam. The middle rope backsplash misses though and the hot tag brings in Big Cass. Some splashes have Cass in control and he shrugs off the reverse 3D. A big boot sets up the Rocket Launcher for the pin on Bubba at 8:35.

Rating: D+. This was a bit disappointing but they were probably smart to just give Enzo and Cass a win. I'm really not sure if they should give Enzo and Cass the tournament as it's a big jump to have them be Tag Team Champions so soon and you don't want them to lose their first big match.

Here's Roman Reigns to a lot of booing for the "I'm the guy" line. Reigns says that anyone who thinks they're part of this new era of WWE can come out here and get punched in the mouth. The fans call him boring so here's AJ to interrupt. Styles praises Roman's talents and admits that he'll have to have the match of his life to win the title. The thing is that's what AJ has done to become a champion everywhere.

Reigns is ready to take him apart but AJ says he'll make a phenomenal champion. Styles leaves and here are Gallows and Anderson to beat Reigns down. AJ didn't see them at first but does see them lay Reigns out with a running boot/spinning flapjack combination. They leave the ring and join AJ, who doesn't seem pleased with what he just saw.

Post break Roman is walking through the back when AJ comes up to say that he had nothing to do with that attack. Roman doesn't buy it after Anderson and Gallows attacked the Usos last week. AJ admits they've been friends for a long time but he doesn't need them to win the title. That's fine with Reigns who wants it to be one vs. all.

Baron Corbin vs. Fandango

Ziggler is on commentary. Corbin shrugs off the chops and takes it outside where he throws Fandango over Ziggler. A kick to Dolph's ribs leaves him laying, followed by End of Days to Fandango for the pin at 1:29.

Baron kicks Ziggler in the face and gives him End of Days on the floor.

Greetings from Puerto Rico.

Here are Miz and Maryse for MizTV. Miz insults Prince George, saying he's plain and simple looking while the Intercontinental Title is perfect. Cue Cesaro to say the only kind of royal that Miz would ever be is a royal pain. The fans call Miz boring so he does a modified monologue from the movie Taken where he promises to beat Cesaro at Payback. Cesaro is ready to fight now and does Roddy Piper's bubblegum line from They Live, only to have Miz say Cesaro already has a match right now.

Rusev vs. Cesaro

Cesaro sees Del Rio and Sheamus out there but it's worried because he's already had a chat with Shane McMahon. Instead, we'll be having this match.

League of Nations/Miz vs. Cesaro/New Day

To make this even better, Cesaro has a New Day shirt under his suit. We start joined in progress with Woods taking over on Miz and bringing in Kofi for a kick to the chest. The Warrior splash gets two for Big E. and it's time for some gyrating. Del Rio comes in and gets beaten down as well, setting up a little tromboning. Sheamus gets the tag and stomps Woods down in the corner before knocking him outside as we take a break.

Back with Rusev splashing Woods in the corner and knocking the other good guys off the apron. Woods gets in a tornado DDT and the hot tag brings in Cesaro for the running uppercuts. The uppercuts go outside as well, followed by a high cross body for two on Sheamus. Miz gets in a cheap shot though, allowing Sheamus to hit a sitout powerbomb (that's a new one for him) for two on Cesaro. We hit the parade of finishers with Big E. hitting the Big Ending on Miz, followed by the Neutralizer for the pin on Sheamus at 13:30.

Rating: C+. This got better at the end but again it was a lot of standing around before we got to the entertaining stuff. New Day and Cesaro is a very fun combination though and beating up the League is an easy layup win. The League needs to go somewhere soon or just split up because you can only beat them so many times before it stops meaning anything.

Charlotte and Ric Flair laugh off Natalya making her tap out last week. Natalya comes in to say she's getting a rematch at WWE Payback (as opposed to Botswana Payback) where Bret Hart will be in her corner.

Natalya/Becky Lynch/Paige/Sasha Banks vs. Tamina/Charlotte/Summer Rae/Naomi

Charlotte is nice enough to let Summer start with Natalya, who calls Summer pathetic. It's off to Sasha, who eats an elbow to the jaw to actually let Summer take over. Everything breaks down and the good women stand tall over the villains as we take a break. Back with Becky throwing Naomi into the corner before eating a superkick from Tamina.

Summer comes back in and chokes in the corner for a bit before handing it off to Naomi for some kicks (thankfully minus the dancing). Becky finally sends Naomi through the ropes, setting up the diving tag off to Natalya. The basement dropkick puts Summer down but she gets in a quick spinning kick to the face. Charlotte comes in as everything breaks down with Natalya getting the Sharpshooter on Charlotte for the submission at 10:45.

Rating: C-. I wasn't feeling this one but there's only so much you can do with eight people in there at a time. The key thing here though is they're keeping this serious and the matches are working much better. This feels like a division with depth instead of the normal two people fighting for the title and a minor side story going on at the same time.

We recap Anderson and Gallows laying out Reigns earlier and AJ saying he had nothing to do with it.

Styles is with Gallows and Anderson again.

Greetings From Puerto Rico.

Tag Team Tournament Semi-Finals: Vaudevillains vs. Usos

Jimmy gets beaten into the corner to start and English slaps on a chinlock. A kick to the head allows for the tag to Jey for some house cleaning. The running Umaga attack hits English and a superkick knocks him out of the air for two. Everything breaks down with Jimmy being sent

into the barricade, only to have Jey dive on both of them. Jimmy's bad shoulder goes into the post though and it's the Whirling Dervish to send the Vaudevillains to the finals at 3:24.

Rating: D+. Again no time to go anywhere but Vaudevillains vs. Enzo/Cass is the best possible option so this makes sense. It's not like the Usos need the win so let one of the new teams get a title shot somewhere down the lines. The ending being mostly clean is a good sign too, especially since the Vaudevillains don't seem to have the longest shelf life.

Video on Apollo Crews.

Heath Slater vs. Apollo Crews

There's no Adam Rose in sight due to the suspension. Earlier tonight, Crews agreed to join the team if he loses here but they'll leave him alone if he beats Slater. Crews starts with the AJ Styles dropdown into a dropkick and a delayed vertical suplex for no cover. Slater sidesteps a charge into the corner though and Slater grabs a chinlock to keep control. Back up and Crews moonsaults onto the other Outcasts, followed by a jumping enziguri and the lifting powerbomb to pin Slater at 4:28.

Rating: D+. That chinlock stopped them cold so this could only be so good. Crews finishing the mini feud with the Outcasts is a good idea but now he needs to have a match that actually matters. If nothing else it might help him develop a much needed personality because right now he's just a smiling goon.

As Crews leaves, Kevin Owens comes out for his match and we get a quick staredown. That's quite the upgrade for Crews and quite the downgrade for Owens, though to be fair Owens feuds with half the roster most weeks.

Kevin Owens vs. Dean Ambrose

They start slugging it out until Owens elbows him in the face to take over. Ambrose forearm him in the head but the fight quickly goes outside for a real brawl. Owens is sent over the announcers' table and we take a break. Back with Ambrose getting caught in a chinlock and then being sent out over the top.

A frog splash off the apron crushes Ambrose again but he somehow gets up top back inside. Owens gets knocked to the floor and there's the standing top rope elbow to put both guys down. Back in and the rebound lariat gets two, only to have Dean run into a superkick for two. The spinning superplex gets the same for Owens but his second frog splash gets two. The Cannonball misses though and Dirty Deeds gives Dean the pin at 17:21.

Rating: B-. Pretty strong main event style match here with both guys trading big shots near the end. I could go without Owens losing another big match as he should definitely lose to Sami at Payback but at least he can bounce back from losses faster than almost anyone else on the roster.

Post match Jericho comes in and gives Dean a Codebreaker to end the show.

Overall Rating: B. The youth movement continues around here and that's exactly what needed to happen after the really weak Wrestlemania build. AJ vs. Reigns took a nice step up tonight and is starting to feel like something that could be a really strong pay per view main event. The rest of the show was fun as well, despite there being a lack of energy, possibly due to traveling. Raw continues to be on a roll though and that's a good sign leading into a big pay per view.

Results

Chris Jericho b. Sami Zayn – Codebreaker

Enzo Amore/Colin Cassady b. Dudley Boyz – Rocket Launcher to Bubba

Baron Corbin b. Fandango – End of Days

Cesaro/New Day b. League of Nations/Miz – Neutralizer to Sheamus

Natalya/Becky Lynch/Sasha Banks/Paige b. Charlotte/Tamina/Naomi/Summer Rae – Sharpshooter to Charlotte

Vaudevillains b. Usos – Whirling Dervish to Jimmy

Apollo Crews b. Heath Slater – Lifting powerbomb

Dean Ambrose b. Kevin Owens – Dirty Deeds

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Ring of Honor TV – April 13, 2016: If You Build It, The Fans Will Stay Through The Taping

Ring of Honor

Date: April 13, 2016

Location: Sam's Town Hotel and Gambling Hall, Las Vegas, Nevada

Commentators: Kevin Kelly, Mr. Wrestling 3

It's a very big show this week with the Tag Team Titles on the line, a major star from New Japan making an appearance and a Fight Without Honor for the first time ever on ROH TV. I know these staggered shows get annoying but they've actually got a big card here and that's a rare sight on an hour long TV show. Let's get to it.

Tag Team Titles: War Machine vs. Roppongi Vice

Vice (Trent Barreta and Rocky Romero) is challenging and knocks Hansen and Rowe off the apron before the bell. Rowe says ring the bell but gets

beaten down in the corner to start. A standing moonsault doesn't have much effect though and it's Hansen back in for rights and lefts of his own. Romero is kicked out to the floor as Wrestling 3 tells stories of "joysting" (not jousting but joysting), whatever that is.

We take a break and come back with Hansen taking Rowe's shotgun knees by mistake, followed by Romero kicking Rowe in the face. A quick Superman punch puts Romero down but Trent dropkicks both champs down to save his partner in a nice spot. Two double knees to the face drops Hansen but War Machine gets tired of these pests and lifts them up for powerbombs, only to slam the challengers into each other. That's a new one. The Path of Resistance is broken up though as Romero hurricanranas Hansen down. A flip dive is countered into an apron bomb though and Fallout puts Romero away at 9:56.

Rating: C+. This was fine despite me not being a big fan of Barreta and Romero. There wasn't much of a surprise here as they had been setting up the Briscoes challenging for the titles over the last few weeks but at least we had something other than a squash to get us there. Nice little match here.

Prince Nana brings out Donovan Dijak, in a Jay Lethal shirt, for something to say. Let's get right to it with the envelopes: you're not going to find out because you don't need to know. Nana talks about how Dijak is enlightened while Donovan talks about being tired of spending the last year guarding Jay Lethal. This brings out Lethal for a brawl that security has to break up.

Dalton Castle says his goal is different again tonight because this time he wants to hurt Silas Young.

ACH vs. Kenny Omega

Omega, whose Intercontinental Title isn't on the line here, is the head of the Bullet Club in New Japan and he has some awesome entrance music. Kenny is called the Cleaner so of course he comes out with a broom, along with the Young Bucks. As expected, the fans are almost entirely behind Omega.

Feeling out process to start with ACH doing all his flips as the announcers explain the latest issues in New Japan. An elbow to the head drops Omega and a dropkick puts him out on the floor. Naturally the numbers become an issue though as Omega distracts the referee, allowing a superkick to put ACH down. In a funny bit, Matt throws out a banana peel to offer an explanation.

We take a break (and get a promo from Adam Cole about how he created the Kingdom, meaning Matt Taven has no right to reform the team) and come back with ACH holding Omega in a headlock, only to be countered into what looked like a one man More Bang For Your Buck. That goes nowhere and ACH gets up a boot in the corner, followed by another kick to the face to put Omega on the floor.

The Jordan dive takes out the Bucks and Omega to a nice reaction as it's not all Omega fans for a bit of a surprise. Back in and a top rope double stomp to the back gets two on Kenny and a brainbuster is good for the same. A 450 misses though and Omega gets in a hard knee to the ribs to take over. ACH comes back again and gets in a Stunner, giving us a Rock style sell job. The Midnight Star misses though and the One Winged Angel (electric chair into a forward piledriver) puts ACH away at 13:31.

Rating: B. I'm not a fan of ACH but this was pretty easily his best Ring of Honor match to date. I've heard a lot of great things about Omega over the last few months and he was definitely entertaining here but not quite as great as he's been made out to be. I can go for ACH far more easily if he's acting like a wrestler instead of a guy doing scripted out flips.

Dalton Castle vs. Silas Young

Fight Without Honor, basically meaning street fight. Castle has the Boys with him but they go to the back before he hits the ring. That's the right idea for something like this. The fans are behind Castle as he clotheslines Silas to the floor while the streamers are still all over the ring. A suicide dive takes Young out again but Castle misses a running knee on the apron and gets shoved out to the floor. This hasn't gotten violent yet but you can feel a different vibe.

Back up and Castle chops the post by mistake to give Young his first

target. Castle tries another chop but fakes Young out and sends him into the barricade for a smart move. We take a break and come back with Young setting up a table on the floor to go with the ladder already in the ring. Neither of those are good enough for him though as he powerbombs Castle onto two open chairs instead.

A slingshot elbow gets two on Dalton and it's time for some simple choking. For some reason Young lets him loose though and tries his slingshot moonsault but only hits ladder. They slug it out from their knees and then their feet with Castle getting the better of it until Young grabs a cutter for two. Misery gets the same so it's time for a trashcan lid and some yelling on the mic.

Silas wishes the Boys were out here to see this beating so here they come, only to have one of them jump on Young's back. That ticks Castle off all over again but he misses a running knee to send him outside. The Boys take a suicide dive to protect Dalton, who slides into the ring for a hurricanrana to send Young onto the floor again.

Back in and the Bang A Rang is countered so Dalton throws him over the top and down through the table for a YOU JUST KILLED HIM chant. Somehow that only gets two, followed by Silas hitting him low for the same. Not that it matters as the Bang A Rang onto the chairs gives Dalton the pin at 16:42.

Rating: B. This would have been a lot better if it had happened back in say.....December. It was a good brawl and a very strong win for Castle but this story went on WAY too long to have the impact they were going for. I still like the feud and it's a good blowoff match this could have been so much more if they had done it a long time ago.

Overall Rating: A-. A one hour show having two strong matches is about as easy of a layup as you're going to get. This was the first time in a long time that a show felt like something big and a lot of that is due to how much time they spent building up Young vs. Castle. No they didn't have amazing promos that made me want to see it, but just saying "it's in three weeks" made me want to see where the match was going. You don't get that in most promotions and it was a really nice change of pace which

wound up working. Well done ROH, which isn't something I've been able to say lately.

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Mayhem 2000: A New Way To Suck

Mayhem 2000

Date: November 26, 2000

Location: Wisconsin Center Arena, Milwaukee, Wisconsin

Attendance: 3,800

Commentators: Tony Schiavone, Stevie Ray, Mark Madden

We're running out of pay per views here with just four more after this one. Things are about as bad as they've been since Russo left, including a rather uninteresting main event of Booker T. defending his World Title against Scott Steiner (again) in a match that really isn't the biggest secret. Let's get to it.

We open with Booker arriving and being mobbed by the fans that are always allowed backstage near where the wrestlers enter the building.

Steiner arrived and destroyed a table for no logical reason.

The opening video focuses on Booker vs. Steiner (with the latter in a straitjacket), Goldberg vs. Luger and Nash/Page vs. the Perfect Event.

Earlier today, CEO Ric Flair promised us great wrestling tonight. That lying scumbag. Madden: "I don't trust him."

Cruiserweight Title: Kwee Wee vs. Mike Sanders

Sanders is defending after Kwee Wee won a six man match to earn the title shot. The entrance really shows how tiny the title belt is. That thing looks like a cheap toy. Sanders slaps him in the face before the match and eats a Thesz press. Tony: "He's going to fight Angry Alan instead of Kwee Wee here!" Stevie: "He's going to fight WHO???" Tony: "That's his alter ego! Don't you pay attention?"

Sanders gets knocked to the floor in frustration so here are the Thrillers for a cheap shot. Stevie doesn't understand how the referee didn't care that Kwee Wee was laid out when Sanders was in front of the referee's eyes. We get the double beat into a powerslam from Sanders (sweet spot) so here's Meng (accompanied by Paisley in a Meng afro wig) to go after the Thrillers, who can't beat him down.

Ric Flair brings out security to pull Meng off as the match continues to be completely ignored while this goes on. We actually pay attention again with Sanders dropping a dancing knee for two. Off to a chinlock as Madden says Paisley is out here because of the size of her chest. Kwee Wee springboards into a sunset flip for two as we hit the lame comeback. Madden: "This never happens to Paul Tagliabue."

Kwee Wee actually tries a sunset bomb over the top of the floor but gets hurricanranaed (kind of) for a counter. Paisley slaps Mike in the face so he rips off her afro, earning himself a handspring elbow and not a DQ for no logical reason. The referee sends her out, allowing Mike to get in the 3.0 (Orton's backbreaker) to retain.

Rating: D. WAY too much going on but what else are you supposed to do when you have a match that no one is interested in and two guys who

aren't the best workers in the first place? Sanders is a fine talker but he's killed that title worse than anyone I've seen in a very long time. Just bad in general here and not a great way to fire up a crowd.

Flair says no wrestlers are allowed at ringside unless you're in the match, valets excluded of course.

The Boogie Knights try to buy Kronik AGAIN but Disco doesn't have enough money. They're in the ballpark though so Kronik will work for half of a fifteen minute match, which Disco thinks is eight minutes. Apparently it was going to be a handicap match but since Konnan isn't here and Disco is hurt, we're getting Rey Mysterio/Kidman vs. Alex/Kronik. So was it originally Konnan/Mysterio/Kidman vs. the Knights? That's what they booked?

Evan Karagias sounds like a moron but it turns out that he used to date Jamie Noble's sister.

Crowbar arrives with two women and sings some Bee Gees. Someone has sent him flowers and promises to be watching. No word on why the Hardcore Title was in his dressing room before he arrived.

Noble and Karagias vs. 3 Count vs. Jung Dragons

3 Count is left in the ring while the other four brawl in the aisle before Noble and Karagias are stuck on the floor while the Dragons fight with 3 Count. It's time for a dance off because of course it is and Madden isn't sure if he should cheer for Evan or not. We settle down to Evan chopping Kaz before it's off to Jamie for a wristlock on Helms. Moore comes in for a spinwheel kick to help Shane's German suplex.

Jamie pops back up with a powerbomb though and Yang tags himself in for a quick double team on Shannon. It settles back down to Kaz beating on Moore before we trade some rollups which the referee misses. I'm not sure what the point of that was but it was long enough to be a segment of the match. Kaz kicks Shane in the head and brings in Yang to clean house.

Shannon plants Yang with a sleeper drop for two as everything breaks down. Noble tombstones Yang but the Nightmare on Helm Street gets two on

Jamie with Evan making the save. Now it's time for the dives with Leia diving on five guys at once. Jamie pulls out a ladder because of course he does but it gets left outside as Noble crotches Yang on the top.

Evan ducks a dive which hits Shannon instead, setting up a double two count. Well it was called a double two, even though only Kaz kicked out and the referee should have counted a fall on Shannon. Thankfully Stevie is right there to rip on the referee for being so horrible, as he's been doing all match. Back up and 3 Count grabs a Samoan drop/swinging neckbreaker combo on Yang for the pin.

Rating: B. There's your match of the night and it wasn't even anything all that great. WCW clearly wants these guys to be their Edge and Christian/Dudleyz/Hardyz but instead of elevating them, these six guys are stuck in an eternal hamster wheel of having the best match on the show but going nowhere. At least this was fun though and at least it didn't open the show, even though it probably would have been a better option.

The announcer suggest that 3 Count deserves a Tag Team Title shot (they do but of course that would never happen) but instead we cut away to Bam Bam Bigelow beating down Mike Awesome.

Alex Wright insults Pamela and we recap the Boogie Knights buying Kronik for seven and a half minutes. In other words, the story hasn't changed in the last fifteen minutes.

Jimmy Hart insists that he has a bad leg. Okerlund: "That cast looks about as real as Major Gunns'....." Jimmy: "It's real!" Somehow this is a rematch from earlier in the spring because of reasons.

Reno says he's got the Hardcore Title on his own tonight.

Mancow vs. Jimmy Hart

Mancow seems to have some fans here tonight and he's allowed to have his sidekicks around tonight because this isn't a sanctioned match. We get a quick recap (Hart insulted Mancow on his radio show) and Mancow says Jimmy is the Al Gore to his George W. Bush. Of course the injury is a

fraud and Jimmy hits him in the back with a crutch. Cue 3 Count to make a save for no logical reason, allowing Mancow to take off the cast and hit Jimmy for the pin. I wonder who didn't make the show for the sake of this mess.

Mike Awesome is taken away by medics.

The Misfits want to help General Rection tonight but he says Flair has banned them. They do however get new shirts as a consolation gift. Flair comes in and asks to talk to Sgt. AWALL.

Bam Bam Bigelow and Lance Storm are talking about something.

The Filthy Animals aren't worried about Kronik.

Hardcore Title: Crowbar vs. Big Vito vs. Reno

Crowbar is defending. Vito and Reno slug it out to start and here's Crowbar (apparently with an injured abdominal muscle) to join them a few moments later. Vito throws the champ through the ropes and onto Reno before busting out the kendo stick. Of course Vito has his own bag of Italian flag themed weapons to beat on both guys as this is already going nowhere.

Everyone beats on everyone as Madden thinks you should just bring a gun in. Stevie: "The way the referees are working around here that might work." Reno and Crowbar start double teaming Vito before Reno baseball bats him in the back. Tony wonders what goes through your mind when you swing a bat at a man's back. All three fight backstage with Reno powerslamming Vito through a table. Cue Reno's sister Marie to break up a chair shot, allowing Crowbar to hit Reno with a chair of his own to retain.

Rating: F. Either get rid of the division or let Crowbar and Smiley do goofy stuff with it because this serious stuff (including Reno vs. Vito) is just so freaking boring. It's just brawling with nothing interesting going on and an attempt at a story which goes nowhere either. Get rid of the thing or try something interesting because this is the worst stuff they're doing with actual wrestlers.

Buff Bagwell arrives. For some reason this is a big deal.

Kevin Nash and Diamond Dallas Page actually explain what SOL means.

Gene is with the Cat and Miss Jones, the latter of whom he calls delicious. Cat says he'll leave the country for thirty days if he loses tonight. Gene: "Ms. Jones, I could rock your world sweetheart!"

Rey Mysterio/Kidman vs. Alex Wright/Kronik

Tony confirms that yes, this was going to be three Filthy Animals vs. the Boogie Knights. Remember that Kronik is only out here for seven minutes and thirty seconds. Tygress sits in on commentary to drive me crazier than Mancow ever could. Disco is at ringside to violate Flair's rules.

Kidman headlocks Adams to start and is immediately launched across the ring. An armdrag puts Adams down as Disco is at the announcers' table plugging WOW Magazine where he's listed as WCW's Wrestler of the Month. Kidman grabs a sleeper as Tony says there's a WCW Magazine to plug instead. The full nelson slam plants Kidman and Alex tags himself in for two. It's off to Rey vs. Clark with Mysterio being tossed into the corner for a beating from the orange giant.

A bulldog drops Clark and sets up a springboard legdrop for two. The announcers debate what Tygress calls Rey (Papi) as he's caught in a sitout powerbomb. Again Alex tags himself in for two before kicking Rey in the face. It's time for a tag but Kronik leaves, 6:11 into the match. The fact that they have a stopwatch makes this even dumber. Kidman and Rey beat Alex down as the announcers debate Tygress' "stuff". The Nutcracker Sweet puts Wright away.

Rating: D. Who was this supposed to benefit? The Knights look like they can't win a match on their own and the Animals can only claim a victory in a handicap match. Kronik comes off looking the best here as Clark beat Rey and Kidman on Thunder by himself and now the two of them leaving changes the course of the match. They're the ones who come out looking smart, save for that whole not being able to tell time thing.

Mike Sanders has a plan for the Tag Team Title match.

Scott Steiner says he's out of his mind and that means he's at his best.

The Cat vs. Shane Douglas

Shane gets kicked to the floor to start and goes after Ms. Jones, who kicks him in the head to save herself. Cat goes after Madden to continue their ridiculous feud, allowing Shane to slam Cat back inside to take over. We hit the choking and the neck crank for a bit before Cat comes back with his weak variety of strikes.

There's the Feliner but Cat is dizzy for no apparent reason, meaning Ms. Jones has to shove him into the cover for two. The women go at it on the floor before heading inside for more brawling. In the melee, Shane finds a chain to blast Cat for two. Shane stops paying attention so Jones pulls out a briefcase containing the loaded red shoe, which knocks Shane silly for the pin.

Rating: F+. This is on a LONG list of matches you could cut to improve the show. Who in the world wanted to see this James Brown nonsense again with the Cat cheating more than Shane cheated to win? Cat is a funny guy at times but this is another feud that wasn't interesting in the first place and then had a bad match on top of that.

All of Jeff Jarrett's guitars have been destroyed and Bagwell may have been behind it.

General Rection (or Hugh as his teammates call him) says this is the final match with Lance Storm and whoever wins tonight wins the war. It's not over until the Misfits say it's over.

I kid you not: we get a GLACIER promo. Tony: "Oh no not again." Madden: "What are we thinking doing that crap again? Then again we keep Disco around."

Bam Bam Bigelow comes out and says he beats Mike Awesome by forfeit. Not quite though as here's Ric Flair (Stevie doesn't recognize the music but thinks Ric is going to fight) to say there's a replacement. Ric: "We've got 10,000 people here to see you wrestle." Shut up Ric. You're drunk. At least we have a face boss for a bit though and it's a nice idea.

Bam Bam Bigelow vs. Sgt. AWALL

Madden rants about how Bigelow should have won by forfeit but Stevie says this table can only take so much. It's a brawl to start as the announcers debate why AWALL has a table out here when it's not a hardcore match. Tony's eventual answer is that "it's his thing." AWALL gets two off a middle rope clothesline but Bigelow spins out of a belly to back and lands on top to take over. The Greetings From Asbury Park is countered into a forearm to the chest and it's table time. The chokeslam is countered as well and the Greetings put AWALL away, even though his head didn't come close to the mat.

Rating: D-. Another match that could have been cut and added nothing. I like the idea of delivering on what was promised here but good night they could have done anything else but this and no one would have noticed. At least they kept this short, but again how many people are there that could have played AWALL's part and gotten a win out of it? Bad match too, as you would expect here.

Post match Bigelow collapses and it's treated as a big serious moment.

After that, Bagwell laughs off Jarrett not having a guitar to use tonight.

Bigelow is stretchered out as this is still treated as a big deal.

We recap Lance Storm vs. General Rection which is mainly about Major Gunns changing sides and becoming Canadian by her own free will. Unfortunately people stopped caring months ago but the feud is FINALLY wrapping up here.

US Title: Lance Storm vs. General Rection

Rection is challenging and Storm has badly taped up ribs. Oh and remember when Storm and Bigelow were talking earlier in the night? It was a swerve so Bigelow can pop off the stretcher and jump Rection, which TOTALLY required the stretcher and Owen Hart voices and couldn't have just been done in a backstage segment.

Storm starts fast as you would expect him to and goes after the knee

which is wrapped around the post. Rection kicks him away but has to get to the ropes to avoid a Mapleleaf. Storm gets crotched against the post and Rection powerslams him but Gunns breaks up the moonsault. And never mind as Rection elbows Storm off the top and “hits” the moonsault to get the title back.

Rating: D. Yeah after all that build and storyline, this wasn’t even six and a half minutes. Cat vs. Douglas gets eight minutes and the US Title match, which actually had a long story to get us here, can’t even get six and a half. Another nothing match and another time that the midcard champion’s name is a sex pun.

Sanders tells Doug Dillinger to send security home for the night. Dillinger doesn’t seem impressed.

The announcers promise that the main events are still to come.

Ad for Starrcade in three weeks. Can you imagine Wrestlemania getting anything less than five weeks?

Jeff Jarrett vs. Buff Bagwell

Oddly enough Jeff Jarrett drops to the midcard as soon as Russo is gone. Jarrett doesn’t have a guitar here and it really is a strange sight. Buff shoves him away to start and it’s already time to pose. A swinging neckbreaker and some right hands set up a hiptoss to send Jeff outside but he gets in a low blow to get a breather.

Madden thinks it was just a twisted nipple. Jarrett gets in a few chair shots and again, disqualifications aren’t a thing in WCW 2000. Back in and Jeff stomps away as this is rapidly dying before our eyes. We hit the sleeper because that’s a Jeff Jarrett spot, as is him missing a running crotch attack and hitting the ropes. The Blockbuster misses though so Buff has to hit a tornado DDT for two instead.

The ref gets backdropped to the floor (of course) and here’s David Flair to DDT Jarrett onto the chair in retaliation from Monday. Since David sucks as a professional wrestler though, Jeff kicks out at two. Buff’s reverse layout DDT (think Christian) gets the same but Jeff has another

guitar hidden under the ring. A big shot to the shoulder is enough to put Bagwell down for the pin.

Rating: D+. That's almost out of pity, which really isn't the best sign for a match. This was Jarrett being uninteresting as only he can and Bagwell being the same guy he's been for years now. I'm still not sure why these two are fighting in the first place and I doubt WCW has much of an idea either.

Again we immediately cut away to recap Nash/Page vs. the Thrillers. This isn't a very complicated one: the Thrillers turned their back on Coach Nash and beat him down several times, which meant Nash needed help. For reasons that aren't clear, this meant Page.

Tag Team Titles: Diamond Dallas Page/Kevin Nash vs. Perfect Event

Perfect Event is defending and Sanders comes out for commentary. As you might expect, the Thrillers come out as the security guards for the match to get around Flair's ruling. Or they could just be Disco Inferno. The fans want Hall but of course that's not an option right now. Nash and Palumbo get things going though I never heard an opening bell.

After a quick break on the floor, Palumbo comes back in for some hard (open hand) punches, earning himself entry into the People Kevin Nash Has Done The Same Stuff To In The Corner Club. Snake Eyes drops Palumbo and Nash gives Stasiak a left hand (that's a new one) to put him on the floor. The Thrillers try to come in and are dispatched just as quickly but here are Flair and the real security to get rid of them.

Apparently Sanders has a manager's license (which says "Official Manager") which allows him to stick around. Madden: "You're like Jim Cornette but people still remember who you are." We settle down to Page clotheslining Stasiak and Shawn being knocked back and forth between the challengers' fists. A quick DDT gets two for Stasiak, followed by a double slingshot suplex for two from Palumbo.

Page avoids a charge in the corner and clotheslines Palumbo down but still can't make the hot tag. A sunset flip causes Stasiak's trunks to come down but Page is still kept in the wrong part of town. Palumbo's top

rope shoulder gets two on Page as this is already the second best match on the show, at least partially because of the time it's getting. You can't tell any kind of a story in five minutes while this one has already broken ten. Palumbo trips Page in the corner and a double wishbone keeps him in trouble.

Page powers out of a front facelock and makes the tag but of course the referee doesn't see it. That's one of those ideas that is always going to work. We hit the sleeper on Page for the belly to back counter and the tag to Nash which really wasn't as hot as it should have been. House is quickly cleaned and Nash Jackknifes Stasiak for two with Sanders pulling the referee out. That earns Mike a Diamond Cutter as Nash covers Stasiak again for the titles.

Rating: C-. It's not so much that the match was good (it was ok at best) but this was pretty easily the second best match on the card so far. Nash and Page may be old and no longer draws but they're capable of having a watchable match. Unfortunately this is probably about it for the Thrillers as they gave the veterans their best shot and got beat in the middle of the ring. What's left for them to really do? Again: they're the original Nexus.

Lex Luger is ready for Goldberg because it's the only thing he hasn't done in wrestling.

Quick recap of Luger vs. Goldberg, which is all about adding a big win to Goldberg's second Streak, even though Flair basically said the Streak means nothing anymore.

Lex Luger vs. Goldberg

At least it's Luger again and not the Total Package while everyone called him Luger anyway. Madden tries to explain that only Russo can change the Streak thing, which makes sense in theory, but it stops making sense when you have Flair saying it can be overridden at basically a moment's notice. Goldberg works on the arm to start and pops up after a belly to back suplex.

Lex slowly stomps Goldberg down in the corner but he's right on his feet

again for some knees to Luger's chest. Luger's running forearm puts Goldberg down and a big clothesline sends him over the top. Back in and Goldberg hits a quick powerslam before pounding away on the mat. The spear hits Luger and the referee but Goldberg Jackhammers Lex anyway, meaning a second referee comes in to count the pin.

Rating: D-. It says a lot when Goldberg is clearly the better worker in the match but Luger was horrible here. He wasn't doing anything beyond forearms and knees to the back and that's just not enough in 2000. Bad match here and in this case it's because of that stupid Streak thing as Goldberg should be getting ready for the World Title instead of squashing an over the hill goon like Luger.

The cage is lowered while Goldberg's music is still playing.

Quick recap of Booker T. vs. Scott Steiner, which is a rematch from Halloween Havoc where Steiner got disqualified for being too brutal.

WCW World Title: Scott Steiner vs. Booker T.

Booker is defending and this is a straitjacket Caged Heat (Cell) match because a regular cage match just wouldn't be enough. In other words there's a straitjacket in the corner of the cage and you can use it to tie your opponent up. Steiner attacks him at the door but Michael Buffer is professional enough to complete the introductions while the beating is on.

Booker fights him off and takes off the belt, only to get pounded down in the corner. A clothesline puts Booker on the floor and it's time for the elbow into the pushups. The spinning belly to belly gets two but Booker gets in a few kicks for a breather. That comeback is quickly stopped by a clothesline, followed by a superplex for two. A bearhug gets Steiner as far as a bearhug is going to get him as Booker fights back and gets in the missile dropkick. It's time to get the straitjacket but Booker doesn't exactly tie Steiner up that well.

Instead he goes outside and gets a chair to blast Steiner in the head twice in a row. Steiner, whose arms were never tied, rips the jacket apart, rendering that aspect of the match completely worthless. There's

the Recliner but Booker counters with an electric chair into a stun gun. Booker gets in a quick Book End for two but Steiner is right back to his feet. The ax kick connects but Steiner gets in a chair shot, followed by a Bubba Bomb of all things. Steiner puts on the Recliner for the knockout and the title as Stevie is devastated.

Rating: D+. Well that happened. They made no secret of the fact that Steiner was winning the title here and it was probably long overdue. The match was watchable enough but the straitjacket thing really didn't need to be there. It also didn't help that Steiner actually set a new benchmark for worst Recliner ever as Booker was just on his knees with Steiner's hands in front of his throat. That looked horrible and there's no other way to describe it.

Steiner destroys Booker's knee to end the show.

Overall Rating: F. This isn't as hard to sit through as the Russo shows but they're far less interesting. The problem here is so much of this isn't worth airing on a pay per view. You could probably cut off half the matches and air this as roughly an hour and a half show to greater results. Let's see:

Hart vs. Mancow

Hardcore Title

Wright/Kronik vs. Filthy Animals

Cat vs. Douglas

Bigelow vs. AWALL

Jarrett vs. Bagwell

That's half the card and how much of it would have been missed if it wasn't around? WCW is going in circles at this point and it's really getting tiresome. We're three weeks away from Starrcade and I can't even begin to imagine what we're going to have to sit through there. Unfortunately it's probably going to be Mayhem II, despite the show really not being good in the first place.

You can't overlook that either: this show really isn't all that good. You had a fun three way tag match that meant nothing and a decent Tag Team Title change which isn't likely to mean anything either as those titles change hands so fast. Other than that the matches ranged anywhere from horrible to worthless, though at least this time there was nothing stupid enough to make me need to go on a long winded rant to calm my nerves.

Remember to follow me on Twitter @kbreviews and pick up my new book of the History of the Intercontinental Title at Amazon for just \$3.99 at:

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Thunder – November 22, 2000: The Clouds Are Back Again

Thunder

Date: November 22, 2000

Location: Augusta-Richmond County Civic Center, Augusta, Georgia

Attendance: 3,800

Commentators: Mike Tenay, Stevie Ray, Tony Schiavone

It's the go home show for Mayhem and unfortunately that means we're not likely to see much tonight. We might get some build towards the Tag Team Title match which was only added on Monday but other than that, this could be a very long night. Not as long as it would have been for the people who had to sit through this and Nitro of course. Let's get to it.

Opening Nitro recap.

Here are Mike Sanders, Mark Jindrak and Sean O'Haire to get things going with Mike having a big bandage around his head after the Goldberg match. Sanders brings up all the stuff with Kwee Wee on Monday before mentioning Meng, which draws out the monster.

Meng vs. Mark Jindrak/Sean O'Haire

The Thrillers pound him down as well as they can with O'Haire getting in a good looking clothesline for no cover. Instead Meng shrugs it all off and Samoan drops Jindrak. Something like Poetry in Motion doesn't work and Meng slowly beats them both down like the glorified jobbers they are. A double Tongan Death Grip brings in the rest of the Thrillers and it's a big DQ after Jindrak and O'Haire look worthless.

Nash and Page make the save and Sanders is ticked. Mike wants Page to fight a Thriller tonight and Stasiak volunteers, with Sanders making it a lumberjack match for no logical reason.

Scott Steiner is here.

Ric Flair says there's a restraining order between Scott Steiner and Booker T. If they fight before Sunday, Booker is suspended and Steiner loses his title shot. I'm so glad they did this four days before the pay per view.

Here's 3 Count to say they are in fact still 3 Count. The dancing ensues and almost no one cares.

Yang vs. Shannon Moore vs. Evan Karagias

Evan and Shannon slug it out to start with Shannon getting the better of it, only to be sent out to the floor for his efforts. Yang misses a kick at Evan and gets rolled up for a fast two as Shannon gets back in. It's Yang taking over on the singer/former singer before Evan pancakes him down. That means it's time to drive the Cadillac (that stupid thing where Evan has his hand on a steering wheel and his other hand as a phone), only to have Shannon get come back in with a Fameasser.

Yang gets sent outside so Jamie can stomp him, leaving Shannon to eat a powerslam for two. There's always something strange about someone Evan's size doing a powerslam. Helms pulls Evan to the floor but gets whipped hard into the barricade. Back in and Yang hits a quick reverse White Noise for the pin on Shannon. It's as sudden as it sounds.

Rating: C. As usual this needed more time and some more polish but at least it was entertaining while it lasted. I still have almost no idea why these teams are still fighting but they can do some fun big matches. Unfortunately this was nowhere near long enough and the match was a bit sloppy, which dragged it down too much.

Alex Wright tries to buy Kronik for later tonight but apparently can only afford half. Adams seems to have an idea.

Stevie Ray interviewed Scott Steiner earlier today and oh this could be a train wreck. Steiner is sitting behind a plastic screen, apparently to prevent another version of what happened to Tenay. Scott is ready to right the wrongs of Halloween Havoc, which of course leads into a discussion of the University of Michigan. This sets off a big censored tirade, during which the camera pans over a bit too much to reveal that the plastic isn't attached to anything. Stevie is all defensive but here's Booker to hit Steiner with a chair. Some hero.

Here are the Filthy Animals for their match with the Boogie Knights, but first it's time to hit all the catchphrases, meaning you have time to make a nice sandwich before we get things going. Alex Wright comes out and says he has a surprise.

Rey Mysterio/Kidman vs. Bryan Clark

Kidman gets thrown into the corner to start and it's time for some stomping. A big boot has him in even more trouble but of course a single dropkick staggers Clark. Where would cruiserweights be without their dropkicks? Mysterio comes in to help but Kidman gets crotched for his efforts. A chokeslam sends Rey flying and it's back to Kidman for another dropkick. The faceplant to break up a powerbomb gets two on Clark and it's High Times, with Rey looking right at it and doing nothing. Instead he heads outside to beat on Wright, leaving Kidman to take a Meltdown for

the pin.

Rating: D. Why does WCW hate cruiserweights so much? They just had former Tag Team Champions lose to Bryan Clarke in a glorified squash match for the sake of pushing a feud with the Boogie Knights. I know they might not have been the biggest things in the world but it would have been nice to see them not treated as cannon fodder.

Steiner invades Sanders' office and demands a match. Mike immediately agrees and that's the segment.

Bam Bam Bigelow and Reno say they'll win their tag match later.

Page and Nash are ready for the Thrillers.

Vito rambles a bit until Sanders comes in to give him a match tonight. Vito calls him Parmesan face.

Recaps of Steiner vs. Booker and DDP/Nash vs. the Thrillers.

The Thrillers rant a lot and Gene Okerlund swears at them. O'Haire says have Paulshock interview them next time.

Video on Sanders vs. Goldberg. Feel free to have a match anytime here.

Here's Booker to talk about various player haters. You'll have to kill him to take the title from him and he's sorry about giving Major Gunns the Book End. Booker has six words for Goldberg: Don't hate the player, hate the game. Instead of killing Booker to take the title, maybe you could just teach him how to count. This brings out Goldberg, who says he saved Booker on Monday. After Mayhem, that title is coming back where it belongs. So I guess the Streak angle is officially dead? They shake hands, though Booker is a bit tentative.

The Cat and Buff Bagwell are ready for their match tonight. Is that match happening ANYTIME SOON???

Shane Douglas and Torrie come out to insult Buff with Shane saying he has a surprise partner to face Bagwell/Cat tonight. That would be Jeff Jarrett, which shouldn't surprise anyone. For some reason Jarrett makes

Christmas jokes about Bagwell and this really doesn't go anywhere.

Buff Bagwell/The Cat vs. Jeff Jarrett/Shane Douglas

Cat pounds on Douglas in the corner and kicks him a few times, only to get poked in the eye to stop that cold. As usual, heel wrestlers easily defeat karate guys. Jarrett comes in to keep Douglas safe and it's time for a double beatdown. Cat dropkicks both guys down and makes the hot tag to Bagwell (yeah a hot tag a minute in) for some house cleaning. Everything breaks down and the women argue on the floor, earning Ms. Jones an ejection. The Stroke plants Cat for no count as the referee is out with the women. Buff mostly botches the Blockbuster but gets hit with a foreign object to give Jeff the weak pin.

Rating: D. I'm honestly not sure why these people are fighting in the first place and I really have no idea why I'm supposed to want to see them having matches on pay per view. It really does seem like they're just throwing whatever they can to fill in a card. That's never a good sign for a promotion and it's not a good sign here.

Crowbar and Mike Awesome say they'll win.

Scott Steiner vs. Big Vito

Before the match, Steiner accuses Goldberg and Booker of having a love fest earlier. After Sunday, he'll celebrate being the World Champion by getting horizontal. Steiner goes over to the announcers' table to yell at Stevie but Vito comes out to start the brawling. The fans chant for Stevie as Vito gets thrown around, including the spinning belly to belly. A backbreaker allows Steiner to throw Vito outside and it's time for another trip to the announcers' table.

Back in and Steiner keeps beating on Vito in the corner with a genuine imitation mudhole stomping. Vito gets tied in the Tree of Woe for some choking he grabs a quick belly to belly for a breather. The top rope elbow gets two and there's a flying headbutt for the same. Vito goes up for the third time but gets crotched down, setting up the super t-bone. The Recliner puts Vito away.

Rating: C-. I remember this being way better and that comeback is still pretty good. Vito has gotten some insane mileage out of that Hardcore Title reign despite barely ever winning anything else since then. This was a better match than it had any right to be and it's clear that they're setting up something with Stevie vs. Scott, or at least they should be.

Mike Awesome/Crowbar vs. Bam Bam Bigelow/Reno

Hardcore rules. Awesome and Crowbar bring in the weapons because they're the good guys here. It's a big brawl to start with Crowbar and Reno heading outside, where Reno uses a trashcan lid to block Awesome's suicide dive. Crowbar loads up an Asai moonsault and has to hit the mats stomach first as the heels are too busy brawling to catch him. Thanks for that guys.

They head up to the stage for all of ten seconds before it's back to ringside while Tony plugs Backstage Assault (that wrestling game where you never actually get in a wrestling ring). Reno goes after Awesome's knee in the ring as Bigelow throws a cookie sheet at Crowbar's head. Unfortunately it misses and hits a fan, but at least it was a nice try.

Bigelow and Reno are laid onto tables and Crowbar is nice enough to let Awesome powerbomb him over the top and through Reno for the big crash. Bigelow gets up and kind of sends Awesome through another able (kind of as in Awesome jumped WAY harder than Bigelow threw him) as Reno covers Crowbar for the pin o the floor.

Rating: D-. Some of the spots worked here but the match was a huge mess that had no business existing. There's a Hardcore Title match on Sunday and I really don't need to see a hardcore match here to help set that up. The title and the division are just so dead and stupid at this point but for some reason it's still a thing. Really bad match here and no one cared, which is sad when you have someone like Crowbar going all over the place and working so hard to get the stupid idea over.

Shawn Stasiak vs. Diamond Dallas Page

Lumberjack match with most of the midcard sans the Thrillers at ringside.

During the lumberjacks' entrances, Tony mentions Starrcade for perhaps the first time all year. Mike Sanders sits in on commentary to brag about Stasiak's "youthness." Page knocks him outside early on and hits a big dive to take out Stasiak and some lumberjacks. There goes the brawl between the lumberjacks and we're down to a regular match inside of a minute.

Stasiak gets in a jumping back elbow and here are Chuck Palumbo and Kevin Nash to stand at ringside. A fireman's carry gutbuster gets two on Page as more Thrillers start showing up. We hit the chinlock and some choking before Page starts a comeback, only to get hit in the head with a foreign object for two as Nash pulls the referee out. There's a Diamond Cutter but there's no referee, allowing Palumbo to hit Page with a chair to give Stasiak the pin.

Rating: D-. There's a little credit here for the sake of giving Stasiak a win but this was way messier than it needed to be. They really could have done the exact same match without the lumberjacks and that's never a good sign. Also well done on having Page lose his first match back before he gets a title shot on Sunday.

Nash powerbombs the referee to end the show, which the announcers find funny for whatever reason.

Overall Rating: F. The horrible days of Thunder are back and it's as we're going into a pay per view that I had little to no desire to see in the first place. There's almost nothing interesting going on here and the main event really couldn't be more obvious. The second biggest match on the card is going to be Goldberg vs. Lex Luger, which is as horrible of a thought as you could possibly have. This was a really bad show though and there are no signs that it's getting better.

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Smackdown – April 14, 2016: Split The Roster More Often

Smackdown

Date: April 13, 2016

Location: Valley View Casino, San Diego, California

Commentators: Mauro Ranallo, Jerry Lawler, Byron Saxton

It's going to be an interesting week as most of the roster is off on the international tour. However we have some fresh names tonight in the Vaudevillains who debuted last week and the even fresher team of Enzo and Big Cass, both of whom will be in the tag team tournament tonight. Let's get to it.

Opening sequence.

Del Rio vs. Styles and Jericho vs. Zayn tonight, both for the first time ever.

Maryse introduces the Miz for MizTV. Miz calls her the love of his life and the only woman worthy of being his wife. It seems that Maryse is the guest this week as Miz asks what it's like to be married to him. That would be perfection with Maryse calling Miz an a-lister and a role model for children around the world. Miz actually gets on his knee in front of her to promise holidays with Leo in St. Bart's, which Maryse calls the real life People Magazine.

This leads to them making out, only to be interrupted by Zack Ryder

because he doesn't seem to get that it's over. Ryder asks Maryse what it's like to be married to someone who wears more makeup than her. Yeah the title might be gone but Ryder is looking forward to seeing Cesaro take the title from Miz at Payback. This sets up a challenge for a title match right now but apparently Ryder already has a match tonight. For some reason Miz knows this and Ryder doesn't.

Zack Ryder vs. Baron Corbin

Corbin throws Ryder around like the jobber that he is to start before sending him out to the apron. Whatever springboard move Ryder was trying is knocked out of the air with a single punch as the announcers put Corbin's battle royal win over very hard. We hit the chinlock on Ryder, followed by a northern lariat (correctly called by Ranallo). Zack gets in a middle rope dropkick for his hope spot but the Broski Boot doesn't work. Instead the End of Days puts Ryder away at 3:12.

Rating: D+. Well it was nice while it lasted Zack but we're back to reality now. This was the same squash that it would have been even if Ryder never won the title in the first place, which makes that whole thing feel even less important. Corbin has a good presence to him and the finish still looks good but he'll need to go somewhere else before this gets tiresome.

Post match Corbin goes after Ryder again but Dolph Ziggler runs out for the save. I'm assuming that's Corbin's first major win.

Kevin Owens mocks Renee Young and threatens to get involved in Zayn vs. Jericho. His advice is to have Renee go ask Sami if there's any insight as to what's going to happen in the main event.

Emma vs. Paige

Paige gets a jobber entrance. The announcers make various unfunny jokes and puns as Paige takes Emma into the corner to start, only to get caught in a rollup to send her head first into the bottom buckle. Emma stomps away in the corner and we hit a seated full nelson as Ranallo actually brings up the Fabulous Kangaroos. Paige kicks away and gets two off a running knee to the chest. Some right hands in the corner are broken up

with Emma dropping Paige face first onto the top turnbuckle....for the pin at 3:16.

Rating: C. Well it was no NXT classic but they did enough to make Emma look more like a player on the main roster. It's a shame how badly they screwed her up a few years back but it's nice to see that things could turn around for her. There's potential there and if they're going to set up something with this division, they'll need all the help they can get.

We recap the first two tournament matches and the debut of Karl Anderson and Luke Gallows.

We look back at Bray Wyatt teaming with Roman Reigns on Monday. I guess we can call that the first shovel of dirt out of Bray's grave after Rock buried him eight days prior. You know, because he totally did and when you're buried, it's because your career is over. Like, totally over and there's no recovery ever.

Tag Team Tournament First Round: Enzo Amore/Colin Cassady vs. Ascension

Enzo and Cass are WAY over here, as you would expect. Before the match, Enzo talks about how tough a neighborhood they grew up in. It was so tough that they almost got sent to live with their auntie and uncle in Bel-Air. He could think of a million bad things to say about the Ascension but the worst of all is that they're the Ascension. Cass promises to win the titles and declares all of their opponents to be SAWFT.

Enzo and Konnor get things going with a hard shoulder dropping Amore. It's off to Viktor who is quickly sent into the wrong corner, allowing the tag to Big Cass. Enzo gets slammed onto Viktor for two but Konnor knocks Amore off the apron and into the barricade to take over. Back in and Viktor slaps on a chinlock for a bit before avoiding a charge to send Konnor into the post. The hot tag brings in Cass for the house cleaning, including the Empire Elbow to Viktor. Everything breaks down and Konnor gets kicked in the face, followed by the East River Crossing and Rocket Launcher for the pin on Viktor at 4:33.

Rating: C. Nothing for the wrestling but the important thing here is how

Enzo and Cass know how to work the formula. Cass is great at coming in and cleaning house after the smaller Enzo takes a big beating. There's a great history of big guy/small guy teams and these two have more than enough charisma to go around, meaning they could have a nice future ahead of them.

AJ Styles talks about fighting everywhere to get to the top and now he has to fight Roman Reigns to get to the top of WWE. Alberto Del Rio comes in and says that Del Rio has been fighting for table scraps but tonight we'll get to see if all that hype is real. Del Rio says AJ doesn't belong here and AJ agrees. AJ: "I belong in the ring."

AJ Styles vs. Alberto Del Rio

In a far too common theme tonight, Del Rio drives him into the corner to start as Ranallo compares AJ vs. Reigns to Muhammad Ali vs. Ken Norton. Well at least it's not Scott Norton. The feeling out process sets up the dropdown into the dropkick, which you really should see coming if you've ever watched any AJ Styles match.

AJ fires off chops but gets kicked in the chest for two. A top rope ax handle gets two more before AJ sidesteps a charge to send Alberto's shoulder into the post. The running enziguri knocks AJ off the apron and a big dropkicks ends AJ out to the floor again. Back from a break with AJ fighting out of a chinlock, as so often happens when we come back from a break.

The striking sequence drops Del Rio and AJ nips up, followed by the running clothesline in the corner. AJ loads up a pumphandle but gets countered into a Backstabber to leave his mouth hanging open. The low superkick misses though and AJ Pele's him for two. Del Rio gets in a reverse superplex and thankfully doesn't severely hurt AJ by dropping him on his head. Alberto misses the top rope double stomp but avoids the forearm. Instead it's the armbreaker, which is quickly countered into a rollup for the pin on Alberto at 13:55.

Rating: B. They're doing a good job of building AJ up as the guy who never gives up and fights until the end, especially against big names that are higher up on the food chain. It's almost like they're doing a

good job of building up a challenger before a champion knocks him off in the title match. Good match here and the well booked story continues.

Goldust tells R-Truth that Golden Truth won't be a thing tonight. Fandango comes in and announces himself as Goldust's new partner, which means tandem gyrating. Truth doesn't want to join them and looks flabbergasted.

Tag Team Tournament First Round: Vaudevillains vs. Goldust/Fandango

English stomps on Goldust to start and a double right hand puts him down. The snap powerslam gets Goldust out of trouble and it's off to Fandango for a comeback that goes nowhere. Well other than into a Whirling Dervish to send the Vaudevillains to the semi-finals that is.

We look back at Dean Ambrose taking over the Highlight Reel and laying Jericho out.

Jericho says he's been beating up amateurs since he got back because people like Styles and Ambrose have no respect for the veterans. He's the greatest of all time and proved it right here in this dump ("Yeah it's a dump!") when he beat the Rock and Stone Cold in one night. Tonight he'll make Zayn feel the pain because he's the best in the world at what he does.

Greetings From Puerto Rico video.

Sami Zayn vs. Chris Jericho

Jericho poses to start so Sami rips the skin off his chest with a chop. That sends Jericho outside for a chair through....and here's Kevin Owens. He doesn't get very far down the ramp before Dean Ambrose comes out with fliers for the Ambrose Asylum before sitting in on commentary. Sami finally remembers that a match is going on and rolls Jericho up for two. Dean annoys Jericho with a flier and we take a break.

Back with Owens on commentary as well and actually complimenting Dean on the new show. Jericho knocks Zayn outside and poses a bit before a top rope back elbow gets two. We hit the ASK HIM chinlock as Dean and Owens get in a mini argument, resulting in Owens throwing away his flier. Sami

gets a quick two off a high cross body and the climb up the corner tornado DDT gets the same. The Helluva Kick misses though and the Walls go on to put Sami in real trouble.

Ropes are of course reached but Sami's springboard is broken up by a running forearm. Owens and Ambrose are now full on cheerleaders until Jericho runs Dean over and sends him into the barricade. Jericho dives at Sami but hits Owens by mistake before heading back inside. Chris yells at Sami a lot, earning himself an exploder suplex into the corner. The Helluva Kick is loaded up but Owens comes in for the DQ at 15:11.

Rating: B-. I liked AJ vs. Del Rio a little bit more but this also set up a few things down the road while also building up the two pay per view matches. Sami winning without getting the pin is a good idea as you can't keep having him get pinned all the time. It's not a great match or anything but at least it set some stuff up for the future.

Sami and Dean clean house to end the show and likely set up a tag match.

Overall Rating: B. Now that's more like it. This was how you run a Smackdown as there was good wrestling to go along with some (basic) storyline advancement. It's always nice to see them doing something interesting and important instead of just having matches for the sake of matches. The extra wrestling helped as well with the mostly empty roster helping more than it hurt, which was quite the surprise.

Results

Baron Corbin b. Zack Ryder – End of Days

Emma b. Paige – Emma pinned Paige after dropping her onto the top turnbuckle

Enzo Amore/Colin Cassady b. Ascension – Rocket Launcher to Viktor

AJ Styles b. Alberto Del Rio – Rollup

Vaudevillains b. Goldust/Fandango – Whirling Dervish to Fandango

Sami Zayn b. Chris Jericho via DQ when Kevin Owens interfered

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Lucha Underground – April 13, 2016: They Can Do Tags Too

Lucha Underground

Date: April 13, 2016

Location: Lucha Underground Temple, Boyle Heights, California

Commentators: Vampiro, Matt Striker

Things are quickly picking up around here with the big showdown of Mil Muertes vs. Matanza coming up a lot faster than expected. The match should be one heck of a brawl between the two hardest hitters in the promotion, though I could have seen it being built up a lot longer. Let's get to it.

We open with a recap of Dario Cueto introducing the Aztec Medallions which joined together to form the Gift of the Gods Title.

Another recap shows us the trios tournament being set up.

Cage, Johnny Mundo and Taya are in Dario's office and Johnny quickly figures out that they're going to be a team. Cage wants to fight Johnny instead but gets shot down. Dario seems to try to hit on Taya but is shot

down even faster. We almost get Cage saying he wants the Lucha Underground Title but Dario has heard the catchphrase too many times already and cuts him off in a funny bit.

Argenis vs. Killshot

This is the new Killshot, now in camouflage and wearing dog tags. Argenis misses an early charge and gets dropkicked in the corner. Some LOUD chops have Argenis in even more trouble as Vampiro brings up Jumbo Tsuruta. What might have been a low blow stops Killshot's run but he easily throws Argenis to the floor for a running flip dive. Now that's how you get the Temple behind you.

Back in and Argenis gets in a chop of his own to set up a top rope armdrag for two. Striker keeps using military lingo as Killshot easily counters a top rope hurricanrana into a brainbuster. That's enough for Striker to assume Killshot is suffering from PTSD, which probably isn't something that should be brought up in a storyline. With Striker talking about IED's, Killshot loads up an electric chair before flipping Argenis down into a piledriver for the pin at 6:02.

Rating: C. Borderline inappropriate comments from Striker aside, this was a great introduction to the new Killshot which can pretty easily be called a success. Until now he was really just a guy without much of a gimmick but not he's playing the character to near perfection. Well as much perfection as you can see in a long squash.

Dragon Azteca Jr. asks Black Lotus how she can work for Dario. She says it's because Matanza killed Azteca Sr. (it was really her) and seems upset that she had to lie.

Daga is in Dario's office and gets to compete for one of the Aztec Medallions (now broken up since the Gift of the Gods was cashed in). Tonight he gets Texano, who Dario describes as one of the toughest men he's ever met, not named Cueto of course. Daga: "That's because you haven't met me."

Aztec Medallion: Daga vs. Texano

They start very fast with some quick near falls until Texano grabs a headlock to slow things down. A loud chop has Daga's dander up before a hard kick puts him right back down for two. More chops and a clothesline seem to have Daga favoring his arm and Texano sends him outside for a good looking dive. Daga is fine enough to fire off a kick and take over, including a cringe inducing running dropkick in the corner.

They forearm it out until Texano kicks his head off to put both guys down. A middle rope Rough Ryder gets two on Daga but a hurricanrana gets the same on Texano. I'd have had that be the finish. Daga grabs an ankle lock (not something you often see around here) but Texano gets the ropes and plants him with a sitout powerbomb for the pin at 7:21.

Rating: B. This was a pretty awesome back and forth match with both guys beating the heck out of each other until a questionable finish. What was the point of bringing Daga in and even give him Dario time before having him lose in his debut match? Either way it was entertaining stuff and Texano continues to be one of my favorites.

Catrina tells Mil Muertes that the Disciples are in the trios tournament but he's really not pleased. She insures him that they won't screw up before talking about how devastating Matanza can be. He might even be more powerful than the earthquake that created Muertes.

Trios Tournament First Round: Johnny Mundo/Cage/Taya vs. Dragon Azteca Jr./Prince Puma/Rey Mysterio Jr.

This should rock and Rey is looking like the Flash. Cage starts with Dragon and easily drags him around with a headlock. Azteca gets in a kick to the back of the head but is easily thrown across the ring to stop any comeback. It's off to Puma as Striker brings up their feud from last year. Now that's something Striker could be good for instead of taking his head off half the time.

Cage throws Puma down as well and it's off to Johnny for a corkscrew moonsault and two. It's off to Taya and the announcers immediately start the oogling. Some forearms to Puma's mask get two before he rolls her up for the same. Striker brings up Jem and the Holograms before it's back to Cage to lift Puma up for a sitout powerbomb. A standing moonsault gets

two for Cage (yes for Cage) but he won't accept a chair from Mundo.

Cage slaps Johnny in the face for the tag and it's time for some double teaming, only to have Johnny pull Rey off the apron to break up a hot tag attempt. Not that it matters as Puma tags Dragon in (so much for Johnny figuring that one out) for a quick two off a hurricanrana. The really hot tag brings in Rey for a top rope seated senton on Johnny before sending both Mundo and Taya into the ropes.

They roll away from the 619 attempt but Puma and Dragon hit consecutive dives to take them out again. Cage remembers that he's in the match though and drops Puma and Azteca, leaving Rey to moonsault Johnny for two. Taya gets back in for a Magic Killer of all things on Dragon, only to have Rey send her outside again. The three masked men are ready to dive but Cage comes back in to clean house.

Some kicks send him to the floor and Puma gets two on Johnny with a 450. A standing C4 drops Puma but Azteca kicks Johnny in the face. Cage splashes Taya by mistake but quickly lifts Puma up in a fireman's carry. Dragon tries to make a save with a high cross body....and Cage catches him while still carrying Puma on his shoulders. Yeah they're smaller guys but GOOD NIGHT THAT'S TERRIFYING.

Both of the masked men get dropped but Puma escapes Weapon X. Mundo's Flying Chuck hits Cage by mistake so Rey gives Johnny a 619 before taking Taya down with a seated senton off the apron. Puma's 630 (which is much more of a legdrop here) FINALLY puts Mundo away at 12:54.

Rating: A-. Oh yeah this was awesome. There comes a point in lucha where you just have to throw everything out the window and let things go nuts. Cage is such an athletic freak it's scary but this was much more about the dives and flips from the masked men. This was a blast with everyone nailing it all match long and a really fun match throughout. Great stuff indeed and one of the better matches the company has ever had.

Post credits, Dario warns Matanza of his match with Muertes next week through the cage bars. Matanza has to stay in the cage so no one can steal him from Dario because he's the most important thing in Dario's world. "So next week, make me proud and bring death to the dead." Matanza

shakes the cage to end the show.

Overall Rating: B+. This was another show where Lucha Underground shows how awesome it really can be. The stories are all over the top but the key is Lucha Underground setting up a world in which they make sense. Maybe not perfect sense but at least sense. I had a great time tonight with main event being one of the most entertaining tag matches the promotion has ever put on. This was an awesome show and a ton of fun, as it was supposed to be.

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New Column: Wait Wait, Don't Tell Me

Another thing WWE does to get on my nerves.

<http://wrestlingrumors.net/kbs-review-wait-wait-dont-tell-me/>

NXT – April 13, 2016: They've Still Got It

NXT

Date: April 13, 2016

Location: Kay Bailey Hutchison Convention Center, Dallas, Texas

Commentators: Corey Graves, Tom Phillips

We're back to normal now after Takeover: Dallas but we'll be seeing some the action from Wrestlemania Axxess where about four weeks of shows were taped. This is going to include some TV debuts and potentially the fallout from the big show, though there's a good chance a lot of that will be included in backstage segments. Let's get to it.

Commissioner William Regal runs down some of tonight's big events, including Shinsuke Nakamura's TV debut.

Opening sequence.

The camera is a little different here as the hard camera is opposite the entrance. Other than that it looks like a regular setup, despite Axxess taking place just a few feet away.

Austin Aries vs. Angelo Dawkins

The fans are behind Aries here of course. Dawkins quickly takes off his headband but gets taken to the mat and ridden a bit. A hard shoulder puts the much smaller Aries down but he snaps off some armdrags to take over. Dawkins throws him down and stomps away before slapping on a front facelock. This sets up a lot of yelling about Dawkins' Island, the meaning of which I'm sure will be covered later. Back up and Dawkins misses a charge in the corner, allowing Aries to start in with those hard forearms. The neckbreaker over the middle rope sets up a roaring elbow for the pin on Dawkins at 4:15.

Rating: C-. Standard debut here and there's nothing wrong with that. Aries looked fine here and beat up a jobber that we've seen before,

though none of that really matters as we're still waiting to see his next big match. Given that Corbin is gone, maybe he could challenge Balor as there's no point in seeing Balor vs. Joe III.

Samoa Joe says nothing has changed and now he wants Apollo Crews next week.

No Way Jose is coming next week.

Alexa Bliss vs. Tessa Blanchard

Tessa is of course the daughter of Tully. Bliss takes her down to the mat to start but gets kned in the face for two. Back up and Alexa drops her again, allowing Bliss to stand on her back for Graves calls a Tony Hawk. We hit the cravate for a bit before Bliss loads up a slap. Tessa blocks it though and shouts I DON'T THINK SO in a Stephanie style screech. Alexa is done with this though and grabs Blanchard by the throat while giving us the best crazy eyes I've seen since Edge retired. A shove Tessa down and a standing moonsault into knees to the chest gives Alexa the pin at 3:52.

Rating: C+. Bliss' best match ever and a lot of it is due to those eyes. I know she gets a lot of compliments for her looks but that was one of the best visuals I've seen in a very long time. At the same time though, Tessa clearly has that it factor and knows what she's doing in the ring. Give her some experience and a bit of a character and she's ready to be one of the top women in NXT. Really nice surprise here and I'm very pleased.

Finn Balor is ready for any challenger as the new #1 contender. He'll be sticking around for Nakamura's in ring debut. That's really the only option right now but it still seems a little soon.

Tommaso Ciampa/Johnny Gargano vs. Vaudevillains

Gargano armdrags Gotch into an armbar to start before it's quickly off to Ciampa who takes English's head off for two. Everything breaks down for a bit and Gargano gets double teamed on the floor to give the Vaudevillains their first real advantage. Gotch works on the arm and tags in English,

who comes in between the bottom and middle rope. I've never seen a male wrestler come in that way unless he was injured.

Gargano knees Gotch off the apron and quickly crawls over to Tommaso for the hot tag. A hanging downward spiral (think Randy Orton) gets two on English but Gotch makes a blind tag to come in. The rollup doesn't work though and the flip over armbar makes Simon tap at 5:03 in a big upset.

Rating: C+. This picked up near the end but above that it was a big surprise. You really don't expect a main roster team (and they were acknowledged as such) to lose to a team that hasn't had a ton of success even in NXT. Still though, well done on a clean win and maybe Ciampa and Gargano are going to be the next challengers.

Tye Dillinger says Nakamura is great but tonight Nakamura is competing against him, not the other way around. Tonight Nakamura is being sent back to Japan. Dillinger leaves but comes back to give interviewer Rich Brennan a 3.

Baron Corbin vs. Tucker Knight

Corbin takes him into the corner for some right hands to start but Knight gets in a nice dropkick and a Thesz press. Back up and End of Days puts Knight away at 1:57. Nothing to see here.

American Alpha stood in the empty convention center wearing their new titles earlier today when Enzo and Cass showed up to praise the new champions. They'd also like a match, which doesn't even need to be for the titles. Jordan and Gable seem to agree with the idea.

Bayley vs. Liv Morgan

Wristlocks are exchanged to start as the fans sing the HEY WE WANT SOME BAYLEY song. Morgan does a Matrix move to avoid a clothesline, only to get elbowed in the back. The fans think Bayley is going to hug her but Morgan grabs an ankle scissors to take over. A bulldog sets up a monkey flip, only to have Bayley counter a whip into the Bayley to Belly for the pin at 3:24.

Rating: C-. Just a quick match to get Bayley back on her feet but Morgan

looked good out there at the same time. It's clear that they're planting the seeds for the next batch of women and with Sara Del Ray coaching them, there's little doubt that they'll all work out. Remember how nothing Bayley and Sasha were back in the day and then look at where they were just a year or so later.

Post match Bayley says she was beaten by a better woman but the fans make her want to keep standing and be champion again.

Tye Dillinger vs. Shinsuke Nakamura

The chants are almost split to start but Nakamura's fans cut off Tye's with a HE'S ELEVEN chant. Tye armdrags him down and holds up the ten fingers, which fascinate Nakamura for some reason. He even asks the referee about it but Tye tells him to bring it, which you just don't do to this guy. Back up and Nakamura takes him to the ropes before casually putting his head on Tye's chest. That gets a ten from Shinsuke and an offer to bring it.

The fans already say it's awesome and while I get the sentiment, could you save that for more than two minutes into a glorified squash? Tye gets two off a good looking superkick and we hit the chinlock. Graves has to mock the fans for failing to chant ELEVEN in rhythm as Shinsuke starts his comeback. We get the kicks to the chest and head, including the shaking stomp in the corner. The Kinshasa puts Dillinger away at 5:14.

Rating: C. Dillinger is a great example of someone who has skills and talent but is rarely ever going to win a big match. However, as soon as you get the TEN thing going, everyone forgets about that because he's got enough charisma to carry him wherever he needs to go, even if that's normally to a loss. I don't think Nakamura needs much more explanation.

Overall Rating: C+. This was back to basics for NXT and that's what they do best. It was a night of quick/nothing matches but we got some storyline advancement and potential matches set up for down the road. It also helps that they announced two matches for next week (American Alpha vs. Enzo/Cass and Joe vs. Crews) to give us something to look forward to. As usual, NXT knows how to book week to week and sets the standard for doing so.

Results

Austin Aries b. Angelo Dawkins – Roaring elbow

Alexa Bliss b. Tessa Blanchard – Moonsault knees to the chest

Johnny Gargano/Tommaso Ciampa b. Vaudevillains – Flip over armbar to Gotch

Baron Corbin b. Tucker Knight – End of Days

Bayley b. Liv Morgan – Bayley to Belly

Shinsuke Nakamura b. Tye Dillinger – Kinshasa

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Monday Nitro – November 20, 2000: Set It Up, Blow It Off

Monday Nitro #267

Date: November 20, 2000

Location: Augusta-Richmond County Civic Center, Augusta, Georgia

Attendance: 3,000

Commentators: Tony Schiavone, Mark Madden, Scott Hudson

It's the last Nitro before Mayhem and most of the show would seem to be set up already. Scott Steiner continues to be one of the strongest heels the company has pushed in years but at the same time he's not exactly lighting the world on fire with the chinlock finisher and all the insanity in his promos. Maybe the TV being back in America will be better so let's get to it.

We open with a video on some of the big stories at the moment, including Luger vs. Goldberg, Nash vs. the Thrillers, Major Gunns leaving the Misfits for Canada, because that's still a thing, and of course Steiner being all crazy.

Also in Europe, at a show called Millennium Final, the Boogie Knights won the Tag Team Titles in a major upset. Wright won the match on his own after Disco was injured early on.

Earlier today, Luger tried to get a World Title match tonight. Sanders wasn't sure but seemed to agree, only to have the Thrillers bail when they found Sean O'Haire laid out in the hallway.

Sanders says there will still be a Tag Team Title match tonight no matter what. Luger's title shot is confirmed.

Opening sequence.

Jamie Noble vs. Yang

Yang hits the ring and starts fast as Madden realizes that Jamie is "a white guy." Jamie sends him to the floor for a flip dive (Madden: "He's pretty fly for a white guy.") but Yang powerbombs the heck out of him back inside. Jamie bails back to the floor where Leia Meow snaps off a hurricanrana to pop Madden harder than it should. Back in again and they chop it out, followed by Jamie getting two off a middle rope legdrop. Yang catches him coming out of the corner for an over the back piledriver but here's Evan Karagias and 3 Count for a distraction. Jamie dives on Moore and Helms before rolling Yang up for the pin.

Rating: C. Standard yet fun fast paced cruiserweight match here and

that's always a good way to open the show. The three team idea is fine and could set up some interesting stuff down the line, though I have no hope of any of these guys getting anywhere as a result. They're far too low on the WCW totem pole and there's almost no way to rise up that thing before turning 40.

Evan and Noble clear the ring post match.

Luger talks to Flair about doing the right thing and Ric promises to make sure it happens.

We look at Scott Steiner beating Sting down on Thunder to put him on the shelf AGAIN.

Alex Wright is on the phone with the injured Disco and doesn't know who his partner is tonight. He finds Kronik but they won't take a check. The Filthy Animals chase Wright away.

We see Rick Steiner vs. T-Money (Terry Crews) on Battledome in a boxing match which turned into a big brawl because of course it did.

Here's Ric Flair with something to say. Ric talks about how awesome WCW is for going from Europe to Georgia and tells Tony that he was great in England all night long. Madden: "DID YOU SLEEP WITH RIC FLAIR???" My goodness there's an image I never need to think about again. He can't change Luger vs. Booker T. for tonight because it came from the Commissioner (Can we please pick a set of rules for these two?) but he'll spice things up tonight.

If Luger wins the title tonight, Goldberg has a title shot on Sunday. Flair doesn't care about the Streak that Russo invented because Goldberg can get a shot on Sunday. Cue Jeff Jarrett to threaten Ric with a guitar shot. Jeff actually has a reason to be out here: he has information about the father of Stacy Keibler's baby. Ric looks a bit shaken up Jeff says that he (as in Jeff) knocked Stacy up, or gave her the guitar shot of love that is.

David comes out and wants to know when and where this happened. Apparently it was on the night of the Great American Bash at the

Baltimore Marriott after Jarrett won another World Title. Stacy came to the door wearing very little and carrying a shopping bag. The Keibler elf wanted to know if Jeff wanted some of her cookies and didn't care what happened with David.

Things happened and the next morning all that was left was the shopping bag. That bag was full of garbage, just like the rest of this story. Jeff guitars David as the announcers try to figure out why Jarrett came up with this story, which is a fair question. Cue Buff Bagwell to go after Jeff, only to be whipped into the set like the goon that he is. Buff gets back up and knocks Jeff off the stage for his big hero moment.

Kevin Nash tells Fit Finlay (now an agent) that he's not here alone.

Team Canada is in the back and apparently Elix Skipper is going to be Wright's partner.

Tag Team Titles: Perfect Event vs. Elix Skipper/Alex Wright

Wright and Skipper are defending. Stasiak and Wright get things going with Alex stomping away before Palumbo comes in with a big right hand. A double slingshot suplex puts Wright down and Stasiak gets two off a neckbreaker with Skipper making a save. Everything breaks down and here are the Filthy Animals to lay out Wright, giving Stasiak the pin and the titles.

Rating: D. Another nothing match in a move pretty clearly taking place to transition the titles from O'Haire and Jindrak to Perfect Event because that was the big solution they needed or something. They would have been better off having Kidman or one of the Animals in there as the partner but instead they went with Skipper for reasons of randomness, even though he wound up being a normal partner for Wright.

Video of Mancow attacking Jimmy Hart to set up their match at Mayhem.

Kwee Wee thinks Lance Storm is scared to fight him so he's dropping out of the tag match so General Rection can fight instead. How does that make sense? Kwee Wee's partner Meng promises (yes he's talking) to rip those crossed eyes out of his head. So much for any kind of logic.

Mike Sanders has an idea for Kwee Wee tonight.

Vito hits Reno in the head with a bat with compliments of Maria (Vito's sister). Ignore the bat clearly bending as it made contact.

The Battledome guys are here yelling about something.

Wright thinks WCW is scared of the Boogie Knights being champions so now they want the Animals in a handicap match at Mayhem.

The Battledome guys are still here so Rick Steiner comes out with the Battledome belt. Naturally this means it's time to talk about Luger vs. Booker T. tonight. Steiner challenges them to a fight and T-Money gets in, only to have the other three get in and help with the beatdown. Security comes out for the save and this takes WAY too long to break up.

The Thrillers are ordering pizza when Reno comes in and says he wants to fight Vito tonight.

Rection gives the Misfits a pep talk.

Here's Kevin Nash to introduce his help against the Thrillers. Nash has come to the realization that he has thirteen months and ten days left on his contract and he's not sure how he wants to spend the rest of that time. He drove here from Atlanta today with a good friend of his and now he has to watch the Thrillers be handed the Tag Team Titles.

Cue Sanders to make the match because he's convinced that Nash doesn't have any friends around here. Nash says he's here to make money instead of making friends, which somehow turns into a discussion about cheese whiz 101. For some reason Nash insults Sanders' ability to hold himself in a bar and that's enough to bring Mike to the ring. Cue Diamond Dallas Page to the ring for the save, which would have worked a lot better had he not come out a few weeks ago for a Battledome segment. Jindrak eats a Diamond Cutter and Page says he'll see them on Sunday.

Luger isn't worried about fighting Booker T. tonight because it's a main event style match.

We recap Meng/Kwee Wee vs. Team Canada in a bizarre yet interesting feud.

Jim Duggan/Lance Storm vs. Kwee Wee/Meng

Before the match, Storm rips on America for not being able to figure out its Presidential race two weeks in. Meng kicks Storm in the ribs to start but a Duggan 2x4 shot to the back puts him down. Duggan comes in for some shoulders to the ribs as the fans chant USA. So I guess they're for Duggan as he's the closest thing to an American that they have in the ring right now. A Tongan Death Grip is quickly broken up but the hot tag brings in Rection. Skipper blasts him with the flagpole, which draws out the Misfits to give him a beating. In the melee, Rection rolls Duggan up for the pin. Tony makes WAY too big of a deal out of this.

Rating: D. Well that happened. I'm really not sure why Rection pinning Duggan is supposed to be a big deal but Tony certainly seemed to be excited over what we just saw. The match was too short to mean anything, much like everything else that's happened tonight, but at least we had that Jeff Jarrett/Stacy story.

Jeff Jarrett and Shane Douglas are talking about something.

Kwee Wee vs. ???

Sanders is on commentary and very pleased when the opponent is revealed as Goldberg. The match lasts 29 seconds in case you were expecting something else.

Post match here's Ric Flair to say Sanders deserves equal treatment. Goldberg isn't all that tired though so here's a bonus.

Goldberg vs. Mike Sanders

36 seconds and it's 21-0, even though Flair said the Streak didn't matter anymore.

Booker isn't worried about Goldberg interfering tonight because he can beat Luger on his own.

We flash back to Halloween Havoc at Shane Douglas attacking The Cat and then beating up Ms. Jones the next night on Nitro.

Shane Douglas vs. Buff Bagwell

Before the match, Torrie insults the Georgia women because she's from Los Angeles. Oh and Shane wants Cat at Mayhem. Buff gets sent into the corner to start before coming back with a neckbreaker and that stupid strut of his. Shane knocks him towards the ropes though and Torrie adds in some choking from the floor. The announcers try to push Bagwell as a matinee idol because so many of their fans know what that means.

We hit the chinlock on Buff for a bit before he gets out with an electric chair. The Pittsburgh Plunge gets two but Buff gets in a Vader bomb for the same. A quick double arm DDT (Hudson: "The Kobashi DDT!") puts Shane down so here's Jarrett to interfere and Cat to cut him off. The Blockbuster gives Buff the pin.

Rating: C. Totally watchable match here and it's nice to see something actually get a little time (less than six minutes is a marathon tonight) for a change. Douglas isn't much to see in the ring and Bagwell was his usual self but at least we had something decent enough to watch. You can only watch so many three minute matches around here before it gets tiring.

Post match Cat wants to fight right now but it winds up being dance time instead.

Scott Steiner comes out for the main event but first of all he has something to say. He pulls out a box of Kleenex to cry over Sting but doesn't need them because he isn't really sorry for the injuries. Sting had a fair warning to walk away but he came to the ring anyway. Whenever he comes back, Steiner is more than willing to hurt him again. As for Flair, all he wants to do is screw Steiner out of his World Title. It doesn't matter though because Steiner beat Goldberg at Fall Brawl and he can do it again anytime. Steiner can put Luger and Booker out of wrestling too if he has to because he's a genetic freak.

WCW World Title: Booker T. vs. Lex Luger

Steiner is on commentary, Luger is challenging and we've got less than five minutes left in the show. Luger gets kicked in the face to start,

followed by an elbow to the jaw. Some forearms to the back have Booker in trouble and a backbreaker gets two. The champ gets in a spinning kick to the head and the ax kick sets up the Spinaroooni. Cue Goldberg so Steiner gets up, triggering their big brawl. Luger loads up a chair but Goldberg gets in and spears Lex to give Booker the retaining pin.

Rating: F. This was about four stories mixed together in a match that didn't even last four minutes. I don't know who thought bringing Luger back was a good idea and I don't know who thought putting him in the main event was an even better idea. The match barely existed of course because we needed to see the Cat dance earlier but did you want to see more of Luger?

Booker yells at Goldberg but has to fight off Steiner to end the show.

Overall Rating: D. Pretty worthless show here other than to set up the Tag Team Title match on Sunday. The main event was one of those stories that was invented and blown off in the span of a night and went nowhere while not really changing anything. The wrestling was nothing to see, the angles were nothing interesting and the show did almost nothing to make me want to see Mayhem. Such is life in WCW as we approach one of its final pay per views.

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Balls Mahoney Passes Away At 44

I'm sure you've heard about this by now. I never was a fan of the guy but 44 is too young for anyone.