

Thought of the Day: That Brock Lesnar Announcement

The one where his opponent will be announced this week. Hopefully it's a sign of things to come. Smackdown is going live two weeks from today and for years it's been a dead, nothing show with matches airing again the next week on Raw with no mention of them already happening on Thursday. By airing big news like this on Smackdown, WWE is starting to get some buzz going on Smackdown where it might be worth seeing again. Do that multiple times and people might actually start watching.

Monday Night Raw – July 4, 2016: Half A Cheer For The Red Monday Night Show

Monday Night Raw

Date: July 4, 2016

Location: Nationwide Arena, Columbus, Ohio

Commentators: John Bradshaw Layfield, Michael Cole, Byron Saxton

Now this should be interesting as it's another show where almost no one is going to be watching, meaning WWE isn't likely to put much, if any, effort into the show. There's a US Title match between Rusev and Titus O'Neil plus a big US vs. The World elimination tag match which will likely get a lot of time. Let's get to it.

We open at the roster's Fourth of July party with Golden Truth rapping in the background. The Vaudevillains take their place with English singing

the Declaration of Independence, only to have food thrown at him. Miz and Maryse (who should wear red more often) go into a rant about how this is why we can't celebrate holidays anymore, which turns into an ad for Smackdown going live in two weeks.

A massive food fight breaks out with Kane and Big Show getting into a chokeslam battle until Heath Slater throws something at them, earning himself a chokeslam through a table. Everyone else leaves with only Kevin Owens sitting at a table. Owens: "This would never happen on Canada Day." Someone hits him with a pie and Owens freaks out. Total filler but it's tradition at this point.

Opening sequence.

Lillian Garcia sings the National Anthem as we have red white and blue ropes again.

US Title: Rusev vs. Titus O'Neil

Rusev is defending and yes this is actually happening again. Titus is dressed like Apollo Creed for a nice touch. This is joined in progress after a break with Titus throwing Rusev around with ease before being tossed/suplexed out to the floor. Back in and we hit the chinlock for a bit before Titus fights up for the slugout. Some shoulders and a big boot put Rusev down, followed by a powerslam for no cover. The Clash of the Titus gets two and the announcers basically admit that it's over. Rusev gets in some kicks to the head and the Accolade ends this at 5:53.

Rating: D+. Next. Like please, find ANYTHING to go with from here because this feud has been over from the second the match was announced in the first place. Titus was fine (ok that's a stretch) enough for a one off match but this is something like four times that we've seen Rusev beat up Titus, save for a lame countout. This needs to end the whole thing though because it's not interesting and never really was.

Miz vs. Ambrose tonight in your weekly Smackdown rematch.

Here are the Social Outcasts dressed as minutemen but are quickly cut off by Enzo and Big Cass. Enzo thinks we should have some star spangled

banter because they're stars and take meteor showers. Amore lists off the Presidents in order and it's time for a match.

Enzo Amore/Big Cass vs. Social Outcasts

Bo and Curtis since Heath is still banged up from earlier. Enzo gets beaten down for all of a minute before Cass comes in to clean house with the usual. A big boot sets up the Bada Boom Shakalacka for the pin on Dallas at 2:03. In other words, the people dressed as the old school Americans get squashed.

Here are Charlotte and Dana Brooke with something to say. Charlotte talks about people being jealous of her and the proof is around her waist. It must be eating Sasha alive that Charlotte is the champ and all she has is a WE WANT SASHA chant. There is no one that has done more than Charlotte this year because Sasha is all hype.

Cue Sasha to say Charlotte can be champion but she'll never be Sasha. Charlotte doesn't want to be here but Sasha says she would be champion if not for Charlotte's daddy. We get the very good question of what it means to be the boss. Charlotte has been champion for most of the time since they debuted in WWE a year ago so she's the legit boss. Sasha talks about how a boss fights all the time and is about to fight now but Dana's distraction lets Charlotte kick Sasha in the face. That earns her a Bank Statement with Dana making the save before Charlotte can tap.

Dean Ambrose vs. The Miz

Non-title and another Smackdown rematch that won't be billed as a rematch because Smackdown means nothing. Dean starts fast and clotheslines Miz out to the floor for a whip into the barricade. Miz reverses a whip and we take an early break. Back with Ambrose fighting back but getting dropkicked in the knee for his efforts.

We hit the Figure Four for a bit as JBL goes on his same rant about how you can't put Ambrose's face on billboards or have him on Jimmy Fallon, even though NO ONE BUT CENA (and occasionally Reigns) EVER DOES ANY OF THAT STUFF. Miz's top rope ax handle is countered and Dean sends him outside for the suicide dive. Ambrose is nice enough to hold his leg

after the dive connects. Back in and Miz kicks him in the face, only to walk into Dirty Deeds for the pin at 9:42.

Rating: C-. The match was fine, albeit a shorter version of the exact same match that we saw back on Smackdown because that show is a dress rehearsal for whatever they're doing on Monday. JBL continues to get on my nerves with his whole HE CAN'T BE CHAMPION thing because as usual, it makes no sense.

Post match here's Seth Rollins for his match and a quick staredown with Ambrose that goes nowhere. Dean changes his mind and comes back to do commentary as it's time to rip off Dean Ambrose from a few months ago.

Seth Rollins vs. Dolph Ziggler

Non-title and Dean switches from Spanish commentary to English as they get started. They hit the mat to start with Ziggler sending Rollins outside. Seth comes back in for some stomps and an enziguri to knock Dolph to the floor as we take a break. Back with Dolph getting a faceplant off the top for two, followed by Rollins' low superkick getting the same. Ziggler evens the superkick score for another near fall, only to have the Zig Zag countered into the Pedigree for the pin at 11:18.

Rating: C+. This was fine and a better use of Ziggler than you normally see. Ziggler is going to be fine no matter how many times he loses and it's a good idea to have Rollins win matches clean like this one. Rollins is a much bigger star so this really doesn't hurt anyone in the short or long run.

Post match Rollins gets on the announcers' table to rant about his legacy. He still thinks Reigns should be taken out of the triple threat because Reigns hasn't worked for anything a day in his life. Ambrose gets on the other announcers' table so Rollins can yell at him a bit before the fight is on. Rollins gets the worst of it though and it's Dirty Deeds onto the table, which doesn't break.

We get an old school Wyatt Family video with them talking about how New Day's reality doesn't really exist. They invite New Day into their world because the power of positivity is a myth believed only by fools and

children. Join them.

Video on Baron Corbin. You don't see this kind of thing often enough.

Here's Vickie Guerrero to say she should be in charge of Smackdown. This goes on for a good while until security takes her away. Cole calls this very strange, despite it happening every week for the last month.

Big Show gives Team America (Zack Ryder, Kane, Dudley Boyz, Apollo Crews, Mark Henry and Jack Swagger) a pep talk about how it doesn't matter where you're from. Naturally the Battle Hymn of the Republic is playing in the background.

Vickie is being taken away when she runs into ex-boyfriend Dolph Ziggler....who says he's never seen her before so she should be taken away.

Golden Truth vs. Vaudevillains

Breezango is at ringside. Truth and Gotch start things off with Simon taking a kick to the face. A double tag brings in Goldust to work on English, including a bulldog for no cover. Everything breaks down and Truth tags himself in, setting up a powerbomb/side slam combo (Solid Gold) for the pin on English at 1:31. I'm so glad they brought the Vaudevillains up for something like this. Breezango did nothing.

Bob Backlund wants Darren Young to live a problem free life. His advice is to make his problems bend to his will. Then he asks about Young's finisher, which is still the Gut Check. Backlund isn't cool with the fact that Darren doesn't have a submission hold so he suggests the Crossface Chickenwing, which he officially gives to Young. See, Backlund believes in Darren and wants him to be great again.

Here's John Cena to suggest that the crowd isn't as fired up as they normally are. They seem a little disappointed tonight but maybe they need to find that energy they had the first time he stood face to face with AJ Styles. We were waiting fifteen years for the big showdown but then AJ failed to stand on his own two feet. It wasn't a big surprise though as Cena always knew he'd have to fight all of the members of the Club if he

wanted to fight one, which is why he got laid out last week.

Cue the Club with AJ talking about the Club making their return to Tokyo this past week but the posters were all about John Cena. The Club runs Tokyo and soon they'll run WWE, but first they have to get rid of Cena himself. AJ knows that Cena is loading up that shovel to get rid of him but last week there was no one out to save Cena when he was in trouble. It's because no one relates to him because he's this top star. Instead people relate to the Club, because they have the guts to get it done.

The Club is going to beat him up week after week, including on Labor Day and Halloween, even if it means dressing up like Bushwhacker Luke and Brutus Beefcake. Then on Christmas Day, Anderson is going to wrap presents with his hot Asian wife (his words) and then beat up John Cena. The Club comes down to the ring to beat him up now and the attack is on until Enzo and Big Cass of all people make the save. That's certainly better than the Usos.

The Shining Stars are actually still a thing.

Summer Rae vs. Becky Lynch

Natalya is watching from the back as Summer chokes in the corner to start. We hit the chinlock less than a minute in before Summer botches a suplex, basically dropping Becky on her head. Some clotheslines set up the Bexploder for two before the Disarm-Her makes Summer tap at 2:58.

Chris Jericho wishes the Multi-National Alliance (Yes really. That would be Jericho, Alberto Del Rio, Cesaro, Sami Zayn, Sheamus, Kevin Owens and the Lucha Dragons) a happy Canada Day but a multilingual argument breaks out.

Enzo and Cass shill Sonic.

Here's New Day to talk about the Wyatt Family. We get Deliverance jokes before New Day promises to bring them a bowl of Booty0's. The Wyatts pop up from their compound and say New Day's screams are music to their ears. Bray issues the challenge to come to the compound. Kofi accepts but Woods keeps looking worried. As Big E. promises to spread positivity from the

window to the wall, Woods cuts them off and says Bray just knows about fear. This is a bad idea and it's no longer fun and games. If they can't see that, New Day can't survive.

John Cena/Enzo Amore/Big Cass vs. The Club is set for Battleground.

Team USA vs. Multi-National Alliance

USA – Apollo Crews, Big Show, Kane, Dudley Boyz, Mark Henry, Jack Swagger, Zack Ryder

Multi-National Alliance – Chris Jericho, Kevin Owens, Sami Zayn, Cesaro, Sheamus, Alberto Del Rio, Lucha Dragons

Elimination rules and the foreigners (including Kalisto, who hails from the far off land of Chicago) come to the ring to their national anthems. Owens beats up Ryder to start before it's quickly off to D-Von vs. Cara. This is going to be really hard to keep track of early on. A quick 3D gets rid of Cara at 1:05 and the Brogue Kick does the same to Bubba at 1:12.

Back from a break with Cesaro swinging D-Von into the Sharpshooter for the submission at 5:45. Swagger comes in for the Patriot Lock but has to fight out of the Sharpshooter attempt. Jericho comes in and the Vader Bomb hits raised boots, setting up the Codebreaker for the elimination at 7:53. Kane comes in but everything breaks down for a huge brawl as we take another break.

Back with Del Rio getting two on Crews off a Backstabber before getting dropkicked out of the air. The hot tag brings in Henry for some slow motion house cleaning, only to have Kalisto dive into the World's Strongest Slam for the elimination at 13:20. Owens comes in and GIVES HENRY A POP UP POWERBOMB for the elimination at 13:35.

That was insane and I was thinking there was no way he could do it but he just did anyway. Ryder is in next but Owens sends him into Sami, triggering the obvious brawl. Kane tags himself in but Owens hits Sami with a chair for the DQ at 14:55. As in Owens is disqualified, though it should really be Kane. Speaking of Kane, he hits Owens with the chair for

another DQ at 15:24, despite Owens already being eliminated. Kane chokeslams Sami so Crews adds the standing moonsault for the elimination at 15:49. Sheamus Brogue Kicks Crews for the elimination at 15:53 and we're rapidly running out of people.

So it's down to Ryder/Big Show vs. Jericho/Sheamus/Del Rio/Cesaro with Jericho beating on Ryder. Cesaro tags himself in and it's time for the uppercut train on Cesaro's own teammates. He loads up the Neutralizer on Ryder but gets rolled up to eliminate Cesaro at 18:41. The announcers treat that way too lightly and it's Sheamus beating on Ryder, only to get caught with a neckbreaker. The hot tag brings in Big Show to start cleaning house with the KO Punch eliminating Jericho at 20:14. Del Rio's low superkick is blocked and a chokeslam gets rid of Alberto at 21:31.

We're down to Sheamus vs. Ryder/Big Show with Show pulling Sheamus back in over the top by the hair. The chokeslam doesn't work though and Sheamus is smart enough to go for the leg. Ryder comes in for his forearms in the corner, only to get caught in the powerslam for two. Show grabs Sheamus by the throat and shoves him into the Rough Ryder for the final pin at 22:18.

Rating: C-. Oh what else were you expecting here? You knew that a bazooka blast to the chest wasn't going to defeat the Americans here and that's exactly how this should have gone. Ryder getting the win is a fun little moment and no one is going to remember this by the time it's the fifth of July so everything is fine. The match was nothing to see but it's not like any rational person was expecting anything else.

Old Glory is lowered and fireworks take us out.

Overall Rating: D+. Again I ask: what else were you expecting? It was mostly a skippable show with some decent wrestling and a grand total of nothing of note, save for a six man being announced twenty days before a pay per view. This is a good example of a throw away show that no one was going to watch in the first place but at least there was enough stuff on here to keep me entertained for three hours. We'll be back to serious next week and that's fine on a holiday like this.

Results

Rusev b. Titus O'Neil – Accolade

Enzo Amore/Big Cass b. Social Outcasts – Bada Boom Shakalacka to Dallas

Dean Ambrose b. The Miz – Dirty Deeds

Seth Rollins b. Dolph Ziggler – Pedigree

Golden Truth b. Vaudevillains – Solid Gold to English

Becky Lynch b. Summer Rae – Disarm-Her

Team USA b. Multi-National Alliance – Rough Ryder to Sheamus

Remember to follow me on Twitter @kbreviews and pick up my new book on NXT: The Full Sail Years Volume II at Amazon for just \$3.99 at:

<https://www.amazon.com/dp/B01FWZZ2UA>

And check out my Amazon author page with cheap wrestling books at:

<http://www.amazon.com/Thomas-Hall/e/B00E6282W6>

Pick A Summerslam Redo

As is always the case I'll be doing last year's show but you can pick the show I redo this year. 1998 was done last year so that's out of the running as well. This will be a fresh redo and not just a reposting of one I did years ago. Vote in the comments.

Lucha Underground – June 29, 2016: I Want To See It

Lucha Underground

Date: June 29, 2016

Location: Lucha Underground Temple, Boyle Heights, California

Commentators: Vampiro, Matt Striker

It's the last regular show before the first week of Ultima Lucha, which will run for the next three shows. You can probably figure out most of the card from here but only a few matches have actually been announced. It should be interesting to see what Lucha Underground comes up with to get us there as they have some rather unique ways of setting up matches. Let's get to it.

The recap looks at Mil Muertes' latest death and feud with King Cuerno, plus Prince Puma challenging Rey Mysterio for Ultima Lucha Dos.

The Trios Titles will be on the line at Ultima Lucha with Fenix/Drago/Aerostar challenging PJ Black/Johnny Mundo/Jack Evans. The show now has its own graphics to really make it look important.

King Cuerno vs. Mil Muertes

That's quite the opener. Cuerno gets Muertes to chase him around to start but Muertes just spears him down back inside, which Striker says is like the reaper's trident. He's kind of a weird guy. Muertes fires off some chops, which Striker say are designed to disorientate your opponent. I thought they were designed to hurt your opponent's chest but that's just me. A chokeslam gets two for Mil but Cuerno comes back with a running knee and dropkick to set up the big dive through the ropes.

The referee gets taken out as well so Cuerno grabs a chair. Of note here, Striker talks about some soldiers being in the crowd and then calls the

bumped referee a casualty of war. Bad choice of words there. Muertes no sells a chair to the head and blasts Cuerno with a clothesline. The chair to Cuerno's back makes it even worse but Mil misses a charge and goes head first into the chair in the corner, allowing Cuerno to grab a rollup (and the ropes) for the pin at 4:30.

Rating: C+. Striker driving me up the wall aside, this was a good enough brawl to set up the pretty obvious gimmick rematch at Ultima Lucha. Cuerno has always been one of my favorites around here so it's cool to see him getting a push and the biggest win he's ever had in the promotion, though I'm sure he'll get destroyed in the rematch.

Taya and Ivelisse come in to see Dario and get catty with each other from the start. Dario makes a match between them for Ultima Lucha to see who the baddest woman is. As they're leaving, Catrina comes in and calls Ivelisse a little girl. Apparently Muertes wants a rematch with Cuerno at Ultima Lucha but Dario lists off everything Catrina and Muertes have done to him. Catrina doesn't care and asks for it to be a death match. Dario actually agrees and Catrina disappears. Dario: "Women."

Prince Puma vs. Dragon Azteca Jr.

This should be good. Rey Mysterio is out with Azteca. They start fast (of course) by running the ropes with Puma missing a kick to the head and a standing moonsault before they trade armdrags. Striker begs Vampiro to help him with this play by play but he gets a break as the guys shake hands off a standoff. Dragon slaps him in the face and they run the ropes again with both guys sliding to the floor. Azteca runs back in for a suicide dive but gets caught on Puma's shoulders (surprising power display) and sent back first into the post.

Back in and Dragon's middle rope hurricanrana sends Puma flying and a springboard hurricanrana takes him off the middle rope. A running forearm to the jaw staggers Puma again, allowing Dragon to hit his pop up DDT (the DDTJ) for two. Back up and Puma pulls Dragon off the middle rope into a Blue Thunder Bomb followed by some rolling suplexes for two. The 630 is broken up as Puma gets crotched and a super victory roll gets two for Dragon. Puma kicks him in the back of the head and a Michinoku Driver

gets two more. A dropkick sets up the 630 to finally put Dragon away at 8:44.

Rating: B+. Really awesome stuff here and that's all it was going to be. Azteca has hit the ground running in Lucha Underground and this does a good job of setting up Puma vs. Mysterio. Unfortunately it doesn't do much to set up Azteca vs. Lotus, which isn't the strongest feud in the first place. Still though, great match.

Post match Puma says that's Mysterio at Ultima Lucha.

Here are Son of Havoc, the Mack, Cage and Texano in the ring for a chat with Dario. The boss has plans for the four of them for Ultima Lucha: the Unique Opportunity Tournament. The winner will receive the most unique opportunity that he's ever offered so give it everything you have. The tournament starts next week but he thinks they should get a start right now so the brawl is on.

We run down the Ultima Lucha card. Those graphics really do add something.

Johnny Mundo vs. Fenix

Mundo flips off the crowd to make it clear that he is in fact the villain. Thanks for pointing that one out for us chum. Fenix starts with an early rollup attempt before a standing moonsault gets two. Mundo takes him into the corner for some choking, only to get chopped over and over and over. A quick C4 gets two for Mundo and we hit a double arm crank with a chinlock. Mundo spinebuster him for two and Taya gets involved with some choking.

Fenix superkicks him off the ropes though and dives out onto Johnny and Taya at the same time. We get a Super Calo reference before Striker says this is the fight of Fenix's life. I'd think the Muertes match where he won the title was a bit bigger but who am I to argue with Striker. Fenix gets two more off a sunset bomb but Taya grabs his foot so Johnny can kick him in the head. The End of the World misses as Taya puts the Trios Title belt on the apron. Fenix is right back up and chopping Johnny on

the top, setting up a super C4 for no count as Taya has the referee. A belt shot puts Fenix away at 7:53.

Rating: B-. I'm not wild on the WWE style finish but at least it fits Johnny's character to perfection and helps set up the Trios Titles match at Ultima Lucha. Johnny and Taya are perfect together and you could see them being a thing in real life which always helps. Fenix has very quietly become one of the best performers in this company and it's always fun to see him in the ring.

Post match the other four members of the trios come out for the big brawl with Ivelisse following them to go after Taya. A huge brawl ends the show with the good guys (and Ivelisse) cleaning house.

Overall Rating: B+. Good wrestling and a VERY strong build towards Ultima Lucha makes this an awesome show. I love the fact that it's a three week show, basically guaranteeing that the matches don't have to be as rushed as they were last year. I'm looking forward to the show more than ever now and that's exactly how I should feel with a week to go. Really well done here as I've come to expect from this promotion.

Remember to follow me on Twitter @kbreviews and pick up my new book on NXT: The Full Sail Years Volume II at Amazon for just \$3.99 at:

<https://www.amazon.com/dp/B01FWZZ2UA>

And check out my Amazon author page with cheap wrestling books at:

<http://www.amazon.com/Thomas-Hall/e/B00E6282W6>

Ring of Honor TV – June 29, 2016: The NXT Effect

Ring of Honor

Date: June 29, 2016

Location: Nashville Municipal Auditorium, Nashville, Tennessee

Commentators: Andrew Gervani, Nigel McGuinness

This is another of those odd weeks where we should be past a pay per view but instead it's a stand alone show which might feature a midcard feud not big enough to get on the actual pay per view. Or it might be an hour long look at the Bullet Club, which could be almost any given episode of the show. Let's get to it.

Thankfully the opening narration tells us that we'll be back in two weeks with the Best in the World fallout. Therefore tonight is all about the Women of Honor division, which is almost never mentioned on the regular TV show.

Opening sequence.

Veda Scott/Amber Gallows/Allysin Kay vs. Sumie Sakai/Thunderkitty/Crazy Mary Dobson

Kay is better known as Sienna in TNA. Gallows (the Bullet Babe, as in Bullet Club BECAUSE OF COURSE IT IS) starts with Kitty, who claims to be 95 years old. Amber beats her down to start and shrugs off a faceplant before it's off to Dobson vs. Kay with Allysin catching a cross body in a fisherman's buster. Scott comes in and misses some kicks, allowing Dobson to dropkick her in the chest.

Sumie comes in for two off a nice northern lights suplex, followed by a double dropkick with Kay helping things out a bit. Everything breaks down and Gallows offers a distraction so Kay can kick Sumie in the face. Scott grabs something like Stratusfaction and we take a break. Back with Gallows grabbing an X Factor before stopping to say Too Sweet. Sakai gets in a fisherman's buster and the hot tag brings in Mary as house is

cleaned.

Everything breaks down again and we get a Tower of Doom, followed by the parade of finishers. Dobson stomps on Allysin's foot and kicks her in the head, setting up the Kaiju Killer (split legged moonsault) but Gallows makes a save. Kay gets in a discus lariat for the pin on Dobson at 9:45.

Rating: C-. This is going to be a long night. These matches fall under the category of "wrestling is cool because it's wrestling" and that's not a theory I really subscribe to. I need a story and some personalities and just calling someone CRAZY isn't going to be enough. The match was fine enough but it was really just six women doing moves to each other for about ten minutes.

The other weird part is Scott is an evil attorney on the regular ROH shows and here she's just a wrestler with no real character. There's a disconnect there and ROH doesn't do anything to explain it, other than saying we don't usually like her. I need more than that and I don't think we're getting it here.

Faye Jackson vs. ODB

This is Faye's debut and I've never liked ODB. Jackson isn't sure what to do to start so ODB slaps her (own) chest and no sells a bad clothesline. A running splash in the corner crushes Jackson again and a better clothesline puts ODB down for two. We're two minutes in and the announcers already declare it gutcheck time. Jackson hits three straight running Umaga Attacks in the corner (the Triple Spun Milkshake) for two but she can't get ODB in a fireman's carry. Instead ODB hits the middle rope Thesz press for the pin at 4:14.

Rating: D-. The match sucked and ODB continued to do everything that gets on my nerves about her. Jackson looked like a rookie out there and a lot of that probably has to do with how little ring time these women get. This show is rapidly falling downhill and a lot of that is due to having no reason to care about these women. Jackson is a rookie and that's about all I know about her. Again, I need more than that.

Inside ROH is a pair of dueling promos from Hania and Mandy Leon before

their match tonight.

Hania vs. Mandy Leon

Hania is billed as a huntress which feels like something out of GLOW though she looks like she's carved out of stone. Leon on the other hand...how do I put this....well simply put she looks great. Feeling out process to start until a test of strength doesn't go anywhere. We get the eternally stupid suplex to break it up with both women laying on the mat and popping their shoulders up at two.

Hania flips her away and the overly choreographed stuff continues because that's how a lot of people think wrestling works. They trade rollups for two each until Leon headscissors her out to the floor, only to have Hania trip her up and send Leon into the barricade. Back from a break with Hania getting two off a springboard missile dropkick. A victory roll gives Mandy the same but Hania gets two more off a spinwheel kick.

Mandy grabs a neckbreaker and hangs onto it for a fairly unique (and not that painful) submission, followed by a Stratusphere but she misses a moonsault. A double clothesline puts both of them down until Hania tries some YES Kicks. Mandy shrugs them off and grabs a bulldog, only to eat more kicks to the face. They trade reverse DDT attempts, only to have Mandy counter into a Koji Clutch. It's right next to the ropes though so Hania gets in a Codebreaker for the pin at 13:46.

Rating: B. I was blown away by this as it really looked like two good looking women in their very revealing outfits (an aspect that worked very well here and there isn't much other way to put it) but they were actually working hard. There's A LOT of work to do for both of them but I got into the match and had fun watching it, even though I still don't know much about either woman. Good stuff here and very interesting that Leon is better than just a talker.

BJ Whitmer talks about how awesome Kelly Klein is and says her name over and over again in an old school manager trick. The promo is about how strong of an athletic background she has and how serious she is about her training. That tells me more than I know about most of the women on this show in about thirty seconds.

Taeler Hendrix is tired of hearing about Klein because this is her company and we get in the ring with her.

Kelly Klein vs. Taeler Hendrix

BJ Whitmer and Truth Martini are in the respective corners. Klein grabs a quick abdominal stretch but Taeler reverses into one of her own. Hendrix grabs a rear naked choke but gets broken up as we take a break. Back with Klein sitting on the top rope with a chinlock before Hendrix cartwheels into a superkick. Kelly charges into a kick as well and a palm strike staggers her again. A spinning kick to the face gets two for Hendrix before she kisses Klein to set up a Tombstone for two. Klein doesn't seem to care for the sexual assault and grabs a guillotine choke for the tap out at 6:32.

Rating: C. Not bad here and they have a character in Klein. Unfortunately there's nowhere for them to go because the women are never featured on the TV show. The wrestling wasn't bad and Hendrix comes off more like a character than a wrestler, which is exactly what this division really needs. You need someone to care about and someone reminiscent of a redheaded Paige is a good idea.

Overall Rating: C. Well it was different, though it seems to be a one week concept, which makes this a bit more difficult to care about. There was one strong match in here but I really don't know enough about most of the women to get into the shows. For a one week concept I liked it though there isn't enough to make this work every single time. A match here or there would be fine though and a nice change of pace over all the normal stuff they do on this show.

Remember to follow me on Twitter @kbreviews and pick up my new book on NXT: The Full Sail Years Volume II at Amazon for just \$3.99 at:

<https://www.amazon.com/dp/B01FWZZ2UA>

And check out my Amazon author page with cheap wrestling books at:

Thunder – February 7, 2001: Yul Brynner Would Be Disappointed

Thunder

Date: February 7, 2001

Location: Bankcorpsouth Center, Tupelo, Mississippi

Commentators: Tony Schiavone, Mike Tenay

Amazingly enough, we're coming in off a surprise heel turn this past Monday as Rick Steiner joined up with Flair's group to reunited with his brother yet again. They really aren't even hiding the fact that this is another NWO clone and I really don't think anyone minds at this point. Let's get to it.

We open with a recap of Scott Steiner's rough night, which means he wrestled about ten minutes over three matches.

Shane Helms vs. Kaz Hayashi

This is a qualifying match for a six man elimination #1 contenders match at SuperBrawl. Kaz flips out of a wristlock to start and runs over Shane with a shoulder. Shane flips up and it's an early standoff. Kaz gets smart and kicks at the leg but his springboard DDT is countered into a northern lights suplex over the top. Helms hits a big cross body to the floor but bangs up his knee in the process.

Back in and Kaz moonsaults over and before headscissoring Shane right back to the floor. Kaz gets in a dive of his own but can't hit a top rope hurricanrana. A good looking superkick puts Kaz down and a running neckbreaker does it again. Shane wants the Vertebreaker but here's Chavo

Guerrero for a distraction, allowing Kaz to grab a German suplex for the upset.

Rating: C+. This was a nice surprise and I can dig the idea of Chavo being worried about facing Helms again in the future and taking him out here. Kaz winning is a bit odd but there's not much of a chance of him adse corner before breaking up an enziguri with another right hand. Smiley jumps over him in the corner and does a bit of dancing but stops to look for Glacier. A clothesline sets up the Seanton Bomb for the easy pin.

Post match Mark Jindrak comes in as a distraction so Shawn Stasiak can come in for the beatdown. Something is edited out as O'Haire came back in from the apron and kicks both guys down. The beatdown is on again until Palumbo makes the save.

Flair gives Sanders Konnan tonight.

Team Canada comes out with Storm picking Elix Skipper to face Cat.

The Cat vs. Elix Skipper

Cat superkicks him to start but Skipper pops up and starts hitting on Miss Jones. At least he has good taste. Skipper takes him to the floor for a whip into the barricade. Back in and Cat starts firing off the kicks, followed by a running ax handle and the Feliner for the quick pin.

Rating: D. Nothing to see here as usual as being the Commissioner (which may have been on the line here but it wasn't clear) doesn't mean a ton aside from just opposing Flair. Skipper should be in the Cruiserweight Title hunt and Cat should be doing almost anything other than being a regular wrestler but at least he has a personality.

Post match Storm offers a distraction so Mike Awesome can take Cat out.

Totally Buff is ready for Kronik. They should be after facing them so many times.

Chavo Guerrero asks Wall to take out Rey Mysterio tonight. Hugh Morrus is heard laughing.

Kwee Wee asks a few jobbers (one of whom is Chris Harris) to fight him later tonight. One of them doesn't take kindly to this and seems game later.

Flair tells Scott Steiner to worry about Nash and ignore everything else.

Lex Luger vs. Brian Adams

Adams sends him head first into the announcers' table to start and drops him onto the barricade for good measure. They get inside for the first time with Adams raking his boots across the eyes, followed by some choking in the corner. Luger pulls him outside and sends Adams head first into the steps before a whip sends him into "the rail of pain." Back in and we hit the posing, followed by a backbreaker for two.

Lex stays on the bad back with a suplex and even more posing. Now we go old school with a bearhug until Adams powers out and hits a backbreaker of his own. Cue Buff Bagwell but Adams drops him with a single right hand. The full nelson slam puts Luger away clean in a bit of a surprise.

Rating: D-. It's rarely a good sign when the best thing you can say about a match is that it had a clean ending. Adams winning with a simple full nelson slam was a surprise but at least the interference didn't mean anything. Also it's nice to see Luger putting people over instead of fighting Goldberg on three straight pay per views as it seems he's FINALLY learning his place.

Bryan Clark runs in for the post match save.

Rey Mysterio Jr. vs. The Wall

Wall has Chavo with him. As usual the announcers act like Rey is going to die because they've never watched Mysterio vs. a bigger guy. Rey goes after the knee to start but springboards into a one armed gorilla press. A sleeper has a bit more success on the big man until he drives Rey back first into the corner. Wall throws him outside so Chavo can get in some cheap shots.

Rey's knee goes into the steps and Wall chokes him while standing on the announcers' table. A hard whip sends Rey chest first into the buckle as

the announcers think the match should be stopped. Wall misses a top rope legdrop and Rey hits the springboard seated senton with Chavo making the save. That earns him a big flip dive but here's Hugh Morrus to electric chair Wall off the top and hit No Laughing Matter to give Rey the pin.

Rating: D. So to clarify, the greatest cruiserweight of all time has to get beaten down for five minutes and then saved by Hugh Morrus to set up a match between Morrus and Wall at SuperBrawl. Naturally they had no choice but to put these feuds together and have Mysterio look like a goon whose career was saved. At least he won though and that helps a lot. It was a rough way to get there but the right guy won and that helps a lot.

Mysterio and Morrus clean house post match.

Here's Kwee Wee for his usual "I'm all man" speech. Tony: "Is it just me or is his hair crooked?" And that's your latest reason why Kwee Wee is going nowhere. Kwee Wee calls out a fan and it's time for a fight.

Kwee Wee vs. ???

A few right hands give Kwee Wee a pin.

Here's the guy Kwee Wee called out earlier tonight with a missile dropkick and we have another match.

Kwee Wee vs. Johnny Dodson

Kwee Wee beats him down with ease and ends Dodson with a piledriver in just over a minute. It would be nice for this to go somewhere but I doubt Kwee Wee is considered important enough to get such attention.

Konnan vs. Mike Sanders

For some reason I can't picture the Mississippi crowd being that into Konnan's odd way of speaking. Tony: "Word." Konnan gets two off a rollup to start but Sanders rolls into a crucifix for two of his own. The mat work goes to Konnan as he grabs something like a standing figure four but sitting on the leg instead of pulling back on it.

The announcers talk about the new owners doing something about Flair as

Sanders drops a knee on Konnan's chest. A clothesline puts Konnan down for no cover because Sanders is busy yelling at the crowd. Sanders puts on a cobra clutch for a bit before Konnan comes back with the rolling lariat. The X Factor sets up the Tequila Sunrise for the clean submission.

Rating: D+. Sanders is someone who looks like he has potential but doesn't seem like he's going anywhere. Konnan is actually not the worst worker in the world as his normal stuff is entertaining enough though it's hard to get into whatever nonsense he says before the match. It's also amazing how much better he is when he's just being himself and not pulling "pranks" with the Filthy Animals.

Don Harris says he now has a manager's license. Normally I would ask how bad the commission that issues licenses must be but it seems that they're avoiding Harris Brothers matches so they're smarter than I am.

Jeff Jarrett/Rick Steiner vs. Insiders

The Insiders clean house to start and thankfully they're not wasting the "big" match of the Insiders vs. the Steiners on a nothing show like this. Page and Jarrett get things going with Jeff taking a hard clothesline (with authority according to Tenay) before getting crotched against the post. Rick comes in and blasts Page in the face because he's Rick Steiner and therefore gets to beat up anyone he wants.

It's time for the heels to take turns beating on Page before Steiner slaps on a chinlock about two minutes in. That's never a good sign which is why it's standard Rick Steiner procedure. Jeff puts on a sleeper because he's a master of the hold according to Tony. Don't you have to win a match with it to be a master?

Page escapes with the belly to back (a master wouldn't allow that) but Rick comes in with a belly to belly to prevent the hot tag. Page finally punches Jarrett down and it's Nash coming in for a bunch of right hands and boots. The Jackknife puts Steiner away and for once that's a bad ending as you don't want a new champion losing when Jarrett is right there.

Rating: D+. This was fine, albeit the same boring main event you would expect on Thunder. Page is always going to be solid and Jeff can be his normally dull self but the other two are clearly just there because they're paid to be and aren't going to put in any effort above the minimum. The clean ending was nice for a change, though it should have been Jarrett.

Scott Steiner, Totally Buff and Kronik come out for the standoff to end the show.

Overall Rating: D-. Just a bunch of bad wrestling and more of the same boring stable vs. stable feud that has been dominating the company for weeks now. It's not the worst story or anything but it's so repetitive at this point because WCW has done it so many times in the last few years. So many of the stories are stuck in limbo and it's getting rough to sit through every single week. At least Rick Steiner lost though and that's always a good thing.

Remember to follow me on Twitter @kbreviews and pick up my new book on NXT: The Full Sail Years Volume II at Amazon for just \$3.99 at:

<https://www.amazon.com/dp/B01FWZZ2UA>

And check out my Amazon author page with cheap wrestling books at:

<http://www.amazon.com/Thomas-Hall/e/B00E6282W6>

Jerry Lawler Reinstated,

Charges Dismissed

<http://411mania.com/wrestling/domestic-assault-charges-against-jerry-lawler-dismissed/>

You kind of had to expect him to be back immediately after this was cleared up. It's not like Otunga was going to be a long term replacement (just not enough experience though he was fine in the little time he was in the role) so it should be nice to have Lawler back in his heel role.

Hideo Itami Returns At House Show

<http://411mania.com/wrestling/hideo-itami-returns-from-injury-at-nxt-house-show/>

Good for him, though it's going to take some time before he gets his rhythm back and he wasn't exactly lighting up the world before he left.