

Smackdown – September 19, 2002: They're the Faces?

Smackdown

Date: September 19, 2002

Location: World Arena, Colorado Springs, Colorado

Commentators: Michael Cole, Tazz

It's the go home show for Unforgiven and that means we'll be getting some more of Undertaker vs. Brock Lesnar. At the same time though, you can really see the Smackdown Six being built up before our eyes and that's nothing but good. If we can get a few ten minute matches with some outstanding action here and there in between the Eric Bischoff vs. Stephanie McMahon nonsense, everything should be fine. Let's get to it.

We open with a long recap of the wedding because that's the top story at the moment since it involves the feuding bosses.

Opening sequence.

Rey Mysterio/Torrie Wilson vs. Nidia/Jamie Noble

Torrie looks outstanding here, as in even moreso than usual. Nidia slaps her in the face to start and gets caught in a neckbreaker (normally Torrie's finisher) for two. It's off to Jamie to take Torrie to the mat but she brings Rey in almost immediately. Rey gets planted on his face but gets in the sitout bulldog for two. Nidia keeps validating her employment by distracting Rey so Noble can get in a hard clothesline. Everything breaks down and Torrie gives Nidia a Bronco Buster for the pop of the match. Noble offers to take one of his own so of course it's Rey doing it instead. The 619 into a Code Red puts Noble away.

Rating: C. I know the women weren't exactly the best in the world at this point but the ending accomplished its goal and the Bronco Buster spot was all it needed to be. I'll gladly take this over the champion getting pinned all over again. To be fair though I had

almost forgotten that Noble was champion in the first place. Also, Mysterio goes from a classic opener against Kurt Angle at Summerslam and can't even get on Unforgiven?

D-Von yells at Stephanie about Batista so Stephanie collects his balls. Paul Heyman comes in and says he's brought in some off duty police officers to guard Lesnar. They might not be necessary though as Undertaker had to take his wife Sara to the hospital for false labor. He's on his way here though and Heyman is distraught. Lesnar seems pleased though.

Here's Stephanie in the arena because we haven't seen her recently enough. You don't screw with McMahons because they always get even in the end. That means a clip of the women's protest on Monday and another to set up 3 Minute Warning vs. Billy and Chuck on Sunday. As for the stipulations, she'll address those when she and Bischoff have a face to face video chat later tonight (OF COURSE there's a big segment for that story later) but for now, here are Billy and Chuck.

Billy says it's time to set the record straight....so to speak. Maybe he could keep teaming with Chuck or maybe he could work on a singles career. Chuck: "So you're saying you go both ways?" Cue Kurt Angle of all people to say this sounds like a bad episode of Three's Company.

Angle made some publicity of his own back in 1996 and he didn't do it by making out with Carl Lewis. Kurt insists that he's not gay and he has no problem with anyone who is because gays love him. Angle: "I'm freaking adorable!" A tag match is made for later and Stephanie gives Angle Chris Benoit as a partner. Angle is so freaked out that he keeps making unintentional gay jokes, such as that being a hard one to swallow. More greatness from Angle.

Security won't come out to the ring with Lesnar because they weren't hired to work in the arena.

Brock Lesnar vs. John Cena

Non-title and something that would be a bit different today. Like

Cena would be wearing jean shorts while Lesnar squashed him. Lesnar forearms him in the back of the head to start and hits the first overhead belly to belly. Brock starts pounding him in the back and gets two off a delayed vertical suplex. A waistlock has Cena in even more trouble as the very slow pace continues. Brock stays on the ribs for a bit longer, shrugs off the comeback, and finishes with the F5.

Rating: D. What the heck happened to Cena? He was the hottest rookie around for a long time (possibly even hotter than Brock, or at least showing more fire) and now I can't even remember the last time he won a match. It doesn't help that he never really had a character so there wasn't exactly anywhere for him to go. Lesnar vs. Undertaker still isn't looking interesting but at least they're doing something with the feud to try and get it somewhere.

Video on Rikishi, who was shot back in 1986. Ok then.

Video on Undertaker, who really doesn't need a video package. At least it's set to Adrenaline by Gavin Rossdale, which I've always liked.

Eddie Guerrero wants revenge on Edge for the Stinkface. If that means more Edge vs. Eddie, I guess I can live with it.

Eddie Guerrero/Chavo Guerrero vs. Edge/Rikishi

Chavo slaps Rikishi to start in what is apparently a show of disrespect, because Rikishi is someone to be respected all of a sudden. Edge comes in to take over without much effort but gets sent to the floor where he has to avoid a chair shot from Eddie. The cousins start in on the back and of course we get some classic cheating because that's what Guerreros do.

Edge gets in a powerslam but Eddie cheap shots Rikishi to prevent the hot tag. I love how so many of those spots have been used for the better part of twenty years and simply do not get old. A tornado DDT is broken up and the hot tag brings in Rikishi to clean house. We get the double crush in the corner but only Chavo takes the Stinkface. Eddie bails to the floor so Chavo hits Rikishi with a TV

camera for the pin.

Rating: C-. Rikishi is fine for the hot tag stuff but I still don't see why he's in this spot and the story about him being shot really didn't do much to get him to another level. Eddie vs. Edge is still good and the idea of Eddie not liking him due to Edge being considered a pretty boy is more than fine.

Post match Eddie chairs Edge in the face to cut him open.

It's time for the Stephanie vs. Bischoff sitdown interview with Stephanie getting to be all smug over kicking Eric low on Monday. Bischoff laughs it off and loves the idea of Stephanie having to perform HLA if Billy and Chuck lose on Sunday. Stephanie accepts and says she's not even worried about Billy and Chuck losing (What confidence!) because she might just enjoy HLA. In other words, no matter what happens, Stephanie doesn't lose. Well of course she doesn't.

Matt Hardy vs. The Hurricane

Hurricane is just in tights here with no sleeveless shirt on. Matt has something to say before the match but a WE WANT JEFF chant cuts him off. A quick rollup gives Matt two and the Jeff chants throw him off again. Hurricane grabs a victory roll for his own two and does his pose, earning himself a right hand to the jaw. The announcers try to figure out what Matt Hardy Version I means as Hurricane can't hit the chokeslam.

A Ricochet gets two on Hurricane as the fans switch over to wanting Lita. Hurricane's neckbreaker drops Matt and now the announcers want Undertaker to shot up and pummel Hardy. The Shining Wizard gets two on Matt as this is WAY better than I was expecting. Matt grabs a quick Side Effect and sneaks in a low blow to set up the Twist of Fate for the pin.

Rating: B-. It's amazing what happens when you let these North Carolina guys get together. This was a really fun match with both guys trading good looking moves until Matt cheated to win. It made for some entertaining stuff and while the announcers got annoying

(as expected), that's what you can expect from Smackdown.

Heyman thinks Undertaker is waiting on Lesnar so they're not leaving.

We run down Sunday's card and it's still not very interesting.

Billy and Chuck vs. Kurt Angle/Chris Benoit

Angle and Benoit don't get along. Billy and Benoit start things off but Chris chops Angle for a tag. The team that actually gets along takes over on Kurt and Benoit finds this very amusing. Billy's tilt-a-whirl slam gets two but Billy poses a bit too much, allowing Benoit to get in a cheap shot. It's off to Benoit for the rolling German suplexes as this really isn't the way you want to treat your new top face tag team.

Billy finally avoids a charge from Benoit and gives Kurt the One and Only, setting up the hot tag. Chuck cleans as much house as Chuck Palumbo is going to be able to do before getting caught in the ankle lock. That's not cool with Benoit who throws Angle away so he can put Chuck in the Crossface. Billy makes the save, meaning Chuck should have gotten beaten twice. Chuck gets in a superkick on Benoit for the pin.

Rating: D+. What the heck was that? I mean, Billy and Chuck are going into the semi-main event at Unforgiven (it's gotten WAY more hype than anything other than the two World Title matches and you could easily argue it's beaten both of those) and this is the best you can do for them? They couldn't beat up some thrown together team for their big face debut? Speaking of them being faces, why is that the case? Their big moment was admitting they were lying to the fans and then they stand up for Stephanie or whatever and now they're fan favorites? That's really not impressive.

Benoit and Angle trade submissions post match, making Billy and Chuck look even more worthless.

Undertaker arrives with ten minutes left in the show.

Here's Undertaker to the ring for the last minute hard sell. He calls Lesnar out and gets his wish in a hurry with Heyman not being

able to hold him back. Undertaker starts slugging away as Heyman calls out the troops. That means Matt Hardy, who takes the beating on Lesnar's behalf. Undertaker chases after Lesnar, who has been arrested and put into protective custody. What a lame ending.

Overall Rating: C+. This was a good show on its own but a pretty horrible go home show. To be fair though that's because Unforgiven is a miserable pay per view and really doesn't need to exist at this point. Lesnar vs. Undertaker isn't going to be worth seeing and the build is showing it more every week. There was enough good wrestling tonight to make the show work but the pay per view just isn't interesting and there's no way around it.

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Ivan Koloff Passes Away at 74

What is that, four in ten days or so? Koloff is most famous for taking the WWF World Title away from Bruno Sammartino, ending the legendary seven year reign. He went on to wrestle around the world, including some time down in the Crockett promotion.

George the Animal Steele Passes Away At 79

Of course it's rather sad but he's been in bad health for years so this isn't the biggest shock. That green tongue still freaks me out.

Impact Wrestling – February 16, 2017: I Think I Like This Better Than the Wrestling Show

Impact Wrestling

Date: February 16, 2017

Location: Impact Zone, Orlando, Florida

Commentators: Josh Matthews, D'Angelo Dinero

The big story coming out of last week is the full on split of the Wolves as Davey Richards cost Eddie Edwards his last shot at the TNA World Title. While you can probably guess the reason behind the split, it should be interesting to hear the actual explanation. Other than that we also have the saga of Braxton Sutter and company which seems to be setting up a wedding. Let's get to it.

We open with a recap of the Expedition of Gold, which will take the Hardys to Tijuana, Mexico this week.

Video on Davey turning on Eddie.

Moose/Brandi Rhodes vs. Crazy Steve/Rosemary

I know I say it every time she's out but Brandi is a very beautiful woman. Moose is wrestling in a shirt for some reason here. The guys get things going with Steve bouncing off Moose multiple times. Rosemary offers a distraction so Steve can take over, which must last for a good fifteen seconds. Abyss' interference does a bit better and everything breaks down with Decay taking over.

Moose will have none of that and LAUNCHES Steve onto Abyss at ringside. Rosemary jumps onto Moose's back and it's time for Brandi's still awkward chops (yeah they're still awkward but she's only had a few months of ring time and she's clearly trying as hard as she can). A middle rope missile dropkick puts Rosemary down as Pope still tries to get Mini-Moose over as a nickname. The matching pump punches have Decay in trouble and stereo Game Changers are enough for the double pin at 5:43.

Rating: C-. For someone who hasn't even been in the ring for a year, Brandi already looks more comfortable than a lot of the Diva era wrestlers. Like, she's already miles better than Torrie Wilson or the Kat or anyone like that, which may not sound like much but it suggests that she has a bright future if she wants to stay in the ring. I'm sure we'll get to the "where's Cody" stuff later on and that's where we get the feud out of this.

Eddie Edwards isn't here to talk because he wants to hurt Davey.

Moose tells Brandi he's there for her whenever she needs. There was no hint of anything romantic in the way he said it.

We look back at the end of last week's show.

Eddie calls out Davey but he gets Angelina Love instead, saying there's no Davey until she says so. Basically Eddie abandoned Davey while he was recovering from knee surgery and forgot about his "brother". Love says Eddie can have Davey now and introduces the American Wolf (new nickname) but Eddie cuts her off and says to let go of her husband's balls.

Davey grabs the mic and goes on a rant about how he created the team and the Wolves' Nation. Richards offers him a chance to leave but Eddie goes straight up the aisle to start the brawl. Security breaks it up so Eddie says this isn't over as Davey tries to crawl in the ring. We get a challenge for a street fight later tonight and Davey seems more than game.

Ok....that was great. I was really, REALLY worried about this feud when I first heard about it because their ROH feud was such a disaster but this already fixed the major problem of the ROH version: there's a reason for them to hate each other. The previous one was a bunch of "I respect you but I want Dan Severn to train me because this is suddenly an MMA promotion" and I have no idea why that's supposed to entertain me. This felt like two guys who wanted to kill each other and they got to the point immediately. I can easily go for something like that.

Mike Bennett has a bachelor party for Braxton Sutter, who is miserable. It's basically a frat party with people all around thirty years old and Sutter wants to leave.

It's off to Tijuana where the Hardys are challenging for the Mexican Tag Team Championships of the World. Matt and Jeff demand to speak to the promoter and yell in Spanish at a luchador who speaks English. Konnan, the promotion's owner, wants to make money off their appearance.

Now we have Laurel Van Ness' bachelorette party with Allie having set up a very sweet room with streamers, balloons and confetti everywhere. Maria yells at her for making it look like a children's party. Allie is devastated when she hears about how it's for Laurel and Braxton's wedding.

Kingston vs. Jesse Godderz

Kingston chops away to start and shrugs off a dropkick by raking the eyes. We hit the choking on the middle rope before Jesse makes his comeback with clotheslines and a Blockbuster for two. An STO puts Jesse down for the same but he nails a quick enziguri. Godderz hits a springboard....I guess we'll say forearm for the pin at 4:11.

Rating: D+. Nothing special here and again I don't get the idea of having the DCC losing so often. This was a completely clean pinfall loss to Jesse Godderz of all people and that's a really bad sign. I can't even think of a signature win for them at this point and that's horrible after they debuted so strong.

The DCC comes out post match but Jesse is smart enough to bail.

The bachelor party continues to be horrible with an overweight man crushing the drug dealer.

Allie tries to liven the party up with noisemakers but Maria yells at her again. Sienna just wants to drink.

Tyrus has taken over Fact of Life and brings out someone who was never his friend: Eli Drake, whose arm is in a sling. Drake can't sit at the desk so the sling comes off in a hurry. Eli yells at Tyrus for making decisions that he didn't approve of and not watching his back like Tyrus is supposed to do. No one owns Tyrus and a match is made for next week.

Back in Tijuana (this show has more scene cuts than a Total Divas episode), Konnan says he can't pay the Hardys but his messenger says they don't want money. The Hardys come in to see Konnan and agree to wrestle for the titles for no pay. Matt: "Money is for marks." The Hardys leave and Konnan tells the staff to start making and selling as much bootleg Hardy merchandise as they can.

Maria yells at Allie for the amount of pink at the party. Allie can be a ring bearer next week and gets frosting thrown in her face. The ladies take the gifts (including lingerie) and leave.

We get the match from Tijuana with the Hardys challenging Super Crazy and Psicosis for the Crash Tag Team Titles. While the match is going on, the promotion's women hit on Vanguard I because the women of this promotion aren't all that smart. We only see clips of the match with the Hardys hitting all their signature stuff to win with a Swanton to Crazy. Of note: the referee was blurred out because he works for Lucha Underground, who threatened legal action against TNA if they showed one of their contracted workers.

After the match, the Hardys teleport back to North Carolina before Konnan and company can stop them. Konnan: "WHAT DO YOU MEAN THEY DISAPPEARED???" Back in North Carolina, the Hardys literally throw the belts into a bag and go off to win the Mid-Atlantic Tag Team Titles next week. Hint: you might not want to show us the celebration after winning the belts.

Video on Brooke returning to TNA and being targeted by the Lady Squad.

Sienna vs. Brooke

Maria offers an early distraction to start and Sienna takes over with forearms and a spinebuster. Brooke gets in some forearms of her own as Madison Rayne explains why Maria is the most amazing Knockout ever. Another Maria distraction lets Sienna get in a running clothesline as Josh talks about how you can get a Louisville Slugger baseball bat signed by Jeff Hardy. Maria chokes on the rope and offers a distraction so Sienna can choke as well. As Maria talks about how the Knockouts show their midsections, Brooke fights off the double teaming and rolls Sienna up for the pin at 5:55.

Rating: D+. The wrestling was fine but WOW Madison Rayne is one of the most annoying commentators I've ever heard. She doesn't really have a character and isn't a heel or a face but rather just a woman talking a lot. I'm not sure how that's supposed to add anything to the match but I'm sure it's completely necessary.

One of Bennett's friends wants to put in an adult DVD but Bennett says it's time for something special. That would be a stripper who sounds like she's smoked five packs a day. Bennett slams the door in her face and asks where the DVD went.

Eli Drake commandeers a camera and promises to give Tyrus a beating next week. As usual, this is one of the best things on the show.

Here's Lashley for a chat. Lashley says it doesn't matter if it's wrestling or MMA because no one can hang with him. This brings out UFC fighter (currently facing a potential suspension for steroids) and professional wrestler Josh Barnett to give him a lecture about

respecting the title. Lashley says this is his ring but has to escape an armbar. A challenge is issued but Barnett wants the title on the line. Bobby says he'll fight anywhere anytime and the challenge is accepted for some point in the future. I get the idea they're going for here but Barnett was really, really awkward on the mic.

Everyone has passed out at the bachelor party but Braxton is sitting there twirling his thumbs. He slowly gets up and puts the stripper on Mike's lap for a quick picture. He then calls Maria and leaves the phone on the two of them before leaving.

Eddie Edwards vs. Davey Richards

Street fight with a full hour and a half of build. Angelina does Davey's entrance, allowing him to jump Eddie from behind. There are weapons ready at ringside and Davey keeps beating him down as we take an early break. Back with Davey crushing Eddie's hand with a chair but Edwards fights back anyway. Eddie and Angelina both have chairs but the distraction lets Davey swing a chair into Eddie's for a knockdown.

Cue Eddie's wife Alisha...who gets dropped with a single forearm. Angelina handcuffs her to the ropes but Eddie covers her up and takes the chair shots for her. Davey unloads on him with the chair while Angelina makes Alisha watch. There's no referee as Eddie gets a Conchairto so Angelina counts the pin for a no contest at around 13:30.

Rating: B-. This was a good brawl while it lasted and I'm VERY glad they didn't have a definitive winner. The ending was the important part and will keep this going for a long time as the women add another dynamic to the whole thing. I had a lot more fun with this than I was expecting and that's the best possible outcome.

A promo for next week's Expedition of Gold wraps us up.

Overall Rating: C. That might be the oddest episode of Impact I've ever seen. There wasn't a big focus on wrestling here but rather a lot of vignettes from the two parties, plus all the Mexico stuff.

Outside of the main event, the wrestling we did see ranged from mostly boring to forgettable, but Davey vs. Eddie looks like it has serious potential.

Above all else, I appreciated the idea of TNA trying to do something. The wedding story could be good (assuming Sutter gets to win some matches later on) and Lashley FINALLY has some fresh blood, even if Barnett is hardly a household name and his promo was just a step above a disaster. They're doing something though and that's what matters more than anything after a long stretch of very dull and boring shows. This kept my attention, but I need more stuff actually between the bells rather than all the stuff setting up future matches and stories. Still though, it's a step up.

Results

Brandi/Moose b. Crazy Steve/Rosemary – Double Game Changers

Jesse Godderz b. Kingston – ST0

Brooke b. Sienna – Rollup

Davey Richards vs. Eddie Edwards went to a no contest

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205 Live – February 14, 2017: The Old Box of Chocolates Version

205 Live

Date: February 14, 2017

Location: Honda Center, Anaheim, California

Commentators: Austin Aries, Corey Graves, Mauro Ranallo

With Fastlane starting to get close, we have a Cruiserweight Title match set for the pay per view. It's going to be a battle of England with champion Neville defending against Gentleman Jack Gallagher, who probably won't be much of a threat to the title but at least the match should be fun. Let's get to it.

We recap last week's Fatal Five Way where Gallagher became the new #1 contender.

Opening sequence.

The announcers preview tonight's show.

Noam Dar vs. Rich Swann

Before the match, Swann says it's an important night because he's back on the show and because it's Valentine's Day. Since it's a special night, he's dedicating this one to Alicia Foooooooooox, but she can't handle this. Dar takes him down by the arm to start until Rich uses his flips to speed things up. A dropkick puts Noam on the floor for some treatment from Fox so Rich does some dancing.

The treatment seems to work just fine as Dar kicks away to take over, earning some loud cheering from Fox. One heck of a kick to the jaw drops Dar but he ducks an enziguiri into an ankle lock. Swann has been watching his Kurt Angle Collection on the WWE Network though and flips Dar outside for the escape. Dar gets in a Northern Lariat (with Mauro referring to it as such), only to get caught in a hurricanrana. The Phoenix Splash gives Swann the pin at 7:55.

Rating: C. These two have developed incredibly well in a short time and that's due to very different reasons. Swann's athleticism and in ring work have gotten so much better in a hurry and the dancing has taken a backseat, which is the best thing that could have happened to him. On the other hand, Dar is a great example of someone being enhanced by having a great looking valet. They're a good pairing and that's what Dar needed.

We get a sitdown interview between Neville and TJ Perkins. Neville gives the closest thing to praise that he's going to offer by talking about TJ's win in the Cruiserweight Classic. TJ says he put the cruiserweight division on the mat but Neville wants to know what happened to Perkins when Neville showed up. Perkins wants to know what happened to Neville between NXT and WWE because he seemed to disappear. That's too much for Neville and threats are made for later.

Video on Gran Metalik losing in the finals of the Cruiserweight Classic. He lost to the better man and is back to prove his worth.

Gran Metalik vs. Drew Gulak

Gulak shakes hands but hits a dropkick at the bell and watches Metalik botch some kind of a springboard. A Sami Zayn chop to the chest into a wristdrag off the top sends Gulak outside and thankfully there's no botched dive to follow it up. Instead Drew slows it down with an armbar before Metalik mostly misses a double springboard....something. Drew grabs a Gory Special and spins Metalik into a neckbreaker. Since there's no lucha libre word for selling, Metalik pops back up and enziguris him to the floor for a springboard dive. Back in and the Metalik Driver ends Gulak at 5:26.

Rating: D+. The botches were strong with this one and it really hurt Metalik's debut. Sometimes people try to go a little too fast for their own good and that seems to be what happened here. Of course there's more than enough time for Metalik to fix things up as Kofi Kingston had one of the worst debuts I've ever seen and turned out just fine.

Brian Kendrick comes in to see Akira Tozawa and offers to be his

mentor again. Kendrick talks to him like an idiot because Tozawa can't speak English....until he says he knows what Brian is saying and doesn't like him.

TJ Perkins vs. Neville

Non-title. Feeling out process to start with TJ taking over off a twist of the arm. Neville can't get anywhere with the arm work so he kicks TJ in the face to escape. Perkins gets two off a springboard crossbody but gets sent outside so Neville can do some high quality sneering. A rather loud missile dropkick puts TJ down for two and we hit the chinlock. Back up and Neville gets caught in a jumping neckbreaker, followed by a springboard DDT of all things for two.

The fans chant for Austin Aries as TJ starts in on the arm, only to have his armbar countered into a sitout powerbomb for an emphatic break. Back up and they forearm the heck out of each other until Neville has to escape the Detonation Kick. TJ escapes the superplex and one ups himself by countering the Rings of Saturn into a rollup. Neville will have none of that though and kicks him in the arm to set up the Rings of Saturn for the submission at 12:31.

Rating: B-. This was actually a bit disappointing from what you would expect these two to put together. Perkins is still one of the best performers in the division and Neville is on fire right now. For some reason though the match was just kind of there, which isn't the performance you would expect out of these guys.

Post match Jack Gallagher comes out for the brawl and, after Neville sends William III to the floor, Gallagher headbutts him down and poses with the title to end the show. Kind of a non-gentlemanly action there, no?

Overall Rating: C-. Not the best show this week as I actually couldn't remember most of the card aside from the main event just a little while after watching it. The Metalik match was sloppy and the opener was totally forgettable. Gallagher vs. Neville comes off like a filler feud, albeit an entertaining one. That's not enough for a full show though and it showed badly here.

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Kayfabe – A Wrestling Movie

You don't often get a movie about wrestling and it's even rarer to have one catering to smarks but that's what we have here. It's certainly low budget but the comedy works and it's a really easy sit. You can tell the people who made it put some effort into it and got the idea behind wrestling, which is so important on something like this. Check it out completely free on Youtube.

**Monday Night Raw –
September 16, 2002: Up is**

Down and Left is Right

Monday Night Raw

Date: September 16, 2002

Location: Pepsi Center, Denver, Colorado

Commentators: Jim Ross, Jerry Lawler

It's the go home show for Unforgiven and that means a lot more from HHH and his REALLY COOL SLEEPER. Yes HHH is currently trying to get the sleeper over as a finisher in 2002 and....well he's probably not wondering why people are booing him because he probably doesn't notice. Let's get to it.

We open with a recap of Stephanie McMahon marrying a Justice of the Peace until the Justice ripped his face off to turn into Eric Bischoff, who I guess became the new groom. 3 Minute Warning came in and destroyed the bride. Billy and Chuck are never mentioned.

Bischoff is sitting in the dark to start and says you might know him from shows like Raw and Smackdown. He brings out Rico as the newest member of the Raw roster and gives him a match against Ric Flair as a thank you for last week's work. Also tonight, the Intercontinental Title and World Title will be on the line because this is the best wrestling show in the world.

Opening sequence.

Here's HHH for the real opening speech. The champ laughs off the idea that he's going to lose the title to Rob Van Dam because Van Dam got lucky with one single frog splash. HHH gets sick of the fans booing him but here's Van Dam to interrupt. Rob talks about all the negative energy coming off HHH which is over all of the cool moves Van Dam does.

That earns Rob the big serious lecture about how HHH uses his anger to keep the World Title where it belongs. Rob is quite taken by the way HHH displays his abilities. No one can deny that HHH can spit some water at another level. HHH calls Rob an underachiever who isn't going to amount to anything in this business and will never be

a World Champion.

Van Dam doesn't seem to mind because the fans keep chanting for him. HHH misses a swing and gets kicked to the floor to FINALLY wrap this up. This made Van Dam vs. HHH seem more like a joke than a pay per view title match and that's not good for the first major defense of a new title.

The International Organization of Women is protesting this show.

Ric Flair vs. Rico

Flair trips him to the mat to start and drops the knee for two. A few headlocks have the sideburns all roughed up so he kicks Flair in the chest. Rico runs into the elbow in the corner though and tries to grab a chair, earning himself a suplex. Ric makes the mistake of kicking the chair to the floor and walks into a big spinning kick for the pin (ignore Flair's hand being on the ropes) and the huge upset.

Rating: D+. Nothing to the match but this is EXACTLY the kind of thing they need to be doing: throw new talent against the wall and see what works. I doubt Rico is going to light the world on fire but it's better than trotting out the same tired old acts and wondering why none of them work anymore.

Booker isn't worried about facing Test tonight, even if it's a French test. Yes he speaks French and promises to pass that test tonight.

The protesters get to the gate but get turned away.

Booker T. vs. Test

During the entrances we hear about Bradshaw tearing his bicep and being put out 4-6 months (it was six, plus three months in OVW). Test jumps him to start as we actually hear about the two of them being former Tag Team Champions. A side slam gets two on Booker and we hit the armbar.

Booker makes his comeback with chops and a very slow motion spinebuster but the ax kick misses. A missile dropkick connects for two and Test gets the same off a pumphandle slam, giving us one heck

of a shocked face. Booker uses a hurricanrana of all things to take Test down, setting up the spinning sunset flip out of the corner for the pin.

Rating: C-. Booker winning is the right call as his star continues to rise. Unfortunately it wasn't the most technically sound match in the world as they looked a bit sloppy out there. Granted most of that is probably on Test whose whole thing was a big boot and pumphandle powerslam. Some of those near falls were good though.

Flair is depressed so here's HHH (of course) to yell at him and call him pathetic. Ric yells back about how the title should be more important.

The protesters want to talk to Bischoff.

Tag Team Titles: Un-Americans vs. Dudley Boyz

Bubba and Spike are challenging. Storm headlocks Bubba to start as we're already hearing about tables. A clothesline from the apron puts the champs in control...and Lance goes for a table. Of course it's too early for that so Lance powerslams Spike for two instead. Some rib work keeps Spike in trouble until he grabs a headscissors. The referee doesn't see the tag though (I love that spot) and it's off to a chinlock.

Storm comes back in but eats a dropkick, allowing the hot tag to Bubba. Everything breaks down with Spike playing D-Von on What's Up, only to have Bubba eat a superkick. The referee checks on him for no apparent reason, leaving Spike to take a double powerbomb through the table. Now the referee checks on Spike so there's no count off a Bubba Bomb to Christian. With Bubba having to deal with Storm, Christian grabs a rollup to retain.

Rating: C. It was certainly eventful but that doesn't mean it was the most interesting match in the world. The Un-Americans have hit their ceiling and it's time for a popular team like Goldust and Booker to get the belts already. When I say "a team like" them, I mean only them as there's no such thing as a division at this point. Bischoff gives Chris Jericho the Intercontinental Title match. He'd

also be happy to meet with the protesters because he has a few minutes free.

Spike is put on an ambulance when HHH comes up to smirk at Bubba.

Intercontinental Title: Rob Van Dam vs. Chris Jericho

Van Dam is defending and cuts off a running Jericho with a spinwheel kick. In your moment that tells you this show is scripted of the week, JR says that if Bischoff speaks to the protestors, the Women's Title match is canceled. You know, because we couldn't possibly have that happen in any other time slot and no two things can happen in the same time frame.

Jericho escapes a catapult but gets dropkicked out of the air for his troubles. The champ takes a bit too long going up top though and gets butterfly superplexed back down for no cover. Instead Jericho starts kicking away at the back, followed by a pair of backbreakers to make it even worse.

It's off to a bow and arrow submission as Van Dam is bleeding from the mouth. Van Dam quickly escapes and gets two off Rolling Thunder. The stepover kick to the face looks to set up the Five Star but here's HHH (fourth appearance tonight) so Rob dives onto him instead. The distraction lets Jericho grab the Walls and Rob actually taps to give Jericho the title.

Rating: C+. There wasn't exactly a ton of heat on this one but it helps set up the pay per view and helps us avoid the almost always stupid champion vs. champion matchup. Van Dam tapping clean(ish) was very surprising but I'll take it over another rollup or anything like that. Nothing great but at least it advanced the story.

Van Dam takes a Pedigree post match, just in case you thought the new champion should be the focus here.

The protesters get to wait in a room and one is clearly Stephanie in disguise.

Bischoff is going to meet the women but runs into a celebrating Jericho. Chris wants to avenge himself against Ric Flair so Bischoff makes an Intercontinental Title match for Sunday. Jericho is

pleased.

William Regal is ready for Kane and has the Un-Americans on standby.

Video on Jeff Hardy.

Kane vs. William Regal

An Un-Americans distraction lets Regal get in a few cheap shots, including a series of forearms in the corner. Kane gets the side slam so Regal goes for the knuckles. Not that it matters as Test comes in to break up the chokeslam for the DQ.

Bubba Ray, Booker T. and Goldust make the post match save. A challenge is issued and accepted for an eight man tag on Sunday.

Bischoff is in the ring and calls the protesters down for a chat. They chant IOW (I'm assuming a National Organization for Women parody) and the spokeswoman complains about Bischoff exploiting women in a variety of ways, capped off by HLA. Now guess what the fans are chanting for. Bischoff thinks everyone in the ring with him is a lesbian and suggests some HLA right now.

That goes nowhere so the one who is clearly Stephanie in disguise reveals herself to be Stephanie in disguise (to be fair they did a decent job at not keeping the camera on her for too long but it was the obvious payoff) by kicking Bischoff low and talking trash. Billy and Chuck hit the ring for a modified Doomsday Device (as opposed to just punching and kicking him a lot) and fight off 3 Minute Warning as the announcers and fans have no idea who to cheer for.

I mean, I guess Bischoff is....or is it Steph....I really have no idea. Billy and Chuck should be heels for faking the whole wedding and they were invading here but they were beating up the heel who might be a face because Raw and Smackdown apparently have their own sets of fans. It REALLY shouldn't be this complicated but I'm sure at the end of the day we're supposed to be cheering for Stephanie and company while forgetting the rest of the story all together.

Post match Bischoff is in pain and suggests an "intercontinental" match for Sunday between the two teams. If Billy and Chuck win, Bischoff will, ahem, kiss up to Stephanie in the middle of the ring.

If 3 Minute Warning wins though, Stephanie has to perform HLA. In other words: it's all about Bischoff and Stephanie, but more Stephanie of course.

Raw World Title: HHH vs. ???

HHH is defending against...someone who will be revealed in a minute as Van Dam comes out and jumps HHH, busting him open before the announcement. Security literally drags Rob away and it's Jeff Hardy getting the title shot. At least Hardy is smart enough to go straight at the champ while he's rocked. I wouldn't have expected that from him.

The legdrop between the legs has HHH in trouble but he shoves Jeff outside to break the momentum. Back in and Jeff goes into the post but comes back with a Twist of Fate and Swanton, only to have HHH get his boot on the ropes. HHH grabs the sleeper to retain the title because he actually sees that as a main event finisher.

Rating: D+. This was just there and there was no drama in the whole thing. Hardy was in over his head and it was a waste of time to have the match wrapping up the show. Of course HHH had to have another segment though and that's how the show gets to end. I was sick of seeing him about thirty minutes into the show but he gets to put Hardy to sleep after surviving his finisher. What a great guy.

Van Dam comes back for the Five Star to end the show.

Overall Rating: C-. The show was going along well enough but that Eric vs. Stephanie segment just crippled anything they had going. It's forced, it doesn't make sense and the wrestling is being built around some monsters vs. Billy and Chuck. Other than that there's the rather uninteresting HHH vs. Van Dam feud which is the first title feud that fills in time with no chance for a title change but we get to sit through it anyway. At least Van Dam will get to put HHH over on Sunday though and that's the important part.

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NXT – February 15, 2017: The NXT Special

NXT

Date: February 15, 2017

Location: Full Sail University, Winter Park, Florida

Commentators: Tom Phillips, Nigel McGuinness, Percy Watson

We've got two big matches for tonight with a title on the line. First up it's the Aussie women Billie Kay and Peyton Royce teaming up to face Liv Morgan and a mystery partner. We'll cap it off with Tyler Bate making his first defense of the WWE UK Title against the debuting Trent Seven. Let's get to it.

Quick look at Bate vs. Seven.

Opening sequence.

Authors of Pain vs. Garrison Spears/Lance Anoa'i

Non-title and Lance is Samu's son. It's total domination with stereo Death Valley Drivers putting the jobbers into the corner. The Final Chapter ends Spears at 1:20.

The jobbers get a Super Collider post match.

Video on Tyler Bate.

Billie Kay/Peyton Royce vs. Liv Morgan/Ember Moon

Kind of an obvious pick. Moon spins away from Billie to start and the Aussie is already looking shaken. Billie is smart enough to twist away and get in a kick to the ribs, only to get tossed down with a suplex. The hot tag brings in Morgan to a very limited reaction (that's hard to do in NXT) for the house cleaning. An STO gets two on Peyton as everything breaks down. Moon gets sent outside and Billie knees Morgan in the side of the head for the pin at 3:18.

Rating: C-. I'm still confused by Morgan as they seem to want her to be the new big star of the division but keep having her do jobs in the bigger matches like this one. It's also interesting that they didn't have Moon get the pin here as it's pretty clear that she's going to be the next challenger for Asuka's title and she wasn't exactly the star of the match here.

We look back at Sanity telling Tye Dillinger that he belongs to the team and then beating him down later in the night. No Way Jose and Roderick Strong made the save.

Strong and Jose don't like bullies and respect Dillinger enough to give him a hand.

Here's DIY with something to say. They realized their dream in Toronto but that dream became a nightmare in San Antonio. They've never fought anyone like the Authors of Pain but they saw doubt in their eyes. No matter how much they're beaten down they'll never quit fighting so it's time for a rematch. Cue Paul Ellering to say the match can take place in two weeks. DIY doesn't want to wait but here's the Revival to beat them down, only to have the Authors chase them off.

Video on Trent Seven.

Video on Kassius Ohno, who returns soon.

General Manager William Regal announces a #1 contenders triple threat match for next week between Peyton Royce, Ember Moon and Liv Morgan.

UK Title: Tyler Bate vs. Trent Seven

Bate is defending. They start slowly with both guys having a clean

break and offering a twirl of the others mustache. Bate bounces off the much bigger Seven until Trent runs him over with a much harder version. Nigel starts talking about cricket and gets in a few jabs at Watson (not that difficult) as the slow beating continues while taking us to a break.

Back with Trent getting two off a backslide and Bate giving us that great scared face in the corner. Tyler finally gets going and knocks Trent outside for a good looking dive over the top. Back in and the Seven Stars Lariat is broken up so Tyler grabs the airplane spin. Since it's just an airplane spin though, Trent pops up and gets in a powerbomb for two. A half crab (not a great one though) has Bate in trouble but the hold doesn't last that long.

It's time for rights and left (Bop and Bam if you haven't been formally introduced) but Seven just blasts him with the Seven Star Lariat for two. You know, if it hardly ever finishes anyone, it's not really a finisher. Trent takes his sweet time going up and gets caught in a super exploder suplex for two. Bate gets all fired up and hits the rolling kick to the head, followed by the Tyler Driver '97 for the pin at 15:39.

Rating: B. I'm not really feeling Seven yet but I'm digging the heck out of Bate the more I see him. The fact that the guy is just nineteen years old is mind blowing as the guy looks like he's been doing this for years, despite also looking like he's about fourteen years old. These matches don't really have stories but they're knocking the heck out of the work, which is all they can really do at this point.

They shake hands post match.

Overall Rating: B-. Kind of a middle of the road show this week as we're still getting ready for the bigger stories but it was still entertaining enough. The show breezed by and that makes for a very easy fifty minute show, especially with a strong main event. They also made sure to announce stuff for the future, which is still one of their greatest strengths. It's never "what does someone have in store" but rather "this is what you're going to get". That's a very

key difference and incredibly important.

Results

Authors of Pain b. Garrison Spears/Lance Anoa'i – Final Chapter to Spears

Peyton Royce/Billie Kay b. Ember Moon/Liv Morgan – Knee to Morgan's head

Tyler Bate b. Trent Seven – Tyler Driver '97

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New Column: I Don't Get It

<https://wrestlingrumors.net/kbs-review-dont-get/>

I do some rare fantasy booking on the Women's Title situation.

Smackdown – February 14, 2017: Roses Are Red, Violets Aren't Blue, Smackdown Was Good, This Doesn't Rhyme

Smackdown

Date: February 14, 2017

Location: Honda Center, Anaheim, California

Commentators: Mauro Ranallo, Tom Phillips, David Otunga, John Bradshaw Layfield

There's nothing in between us and Wrestlemania XXXIII at this point with Elimination Chamber out of the way. We still have some big TV to knock off first though and that includes one heck of a main event tonight. Bray Wyatt won the Smackdown World Title in the Elimination Chamber on Sunday but tonight he has to defend against former champion John Cena. Let's get to it.

Long recap of Elimination Chamber kicks things off.

Here's Bray with the title to open the show. After getting a chuckle at the YOU DESERVE IT chants, Bray says Sister Abigail told him this would never be easy. But now, after everything he's gone through, he truly does have the whole world in his hands. Bray welcomes us to the era of Wyatt but here's John Cena to interrupt him.

After waiting for the Roman Reigns levels of booing to cut him off, Cena congratulates Bray on becoming the new champion. John says Bray has already brainwashed the fans because they think he deserves it. Around here, you earn things instead of deserving them so now there's a target on Bray's shoulder. Cue AJ Styles to say that he's already beaten Cena over and over so he wants his one on one rematch for the title right now. Bray seems willing but here's Daniel Bryan to interrupt and make it a triple threat.

Dean Ambrose storms into the building wanting to fight Baron Corbin.

American Alpha vs. Ascension

Non-title. Gable wrestles Viktor to the mat to start and everything breaks down a few seconds later. Alpha is sent outside but come back in off the top with a double clothesline (old Steiner Brothers move) to take us to a break. Back with Gable fighting out of a chinlock, only to get kneed in the face for his efforts. There's something to be said about getting hit square in the face to cut someone off.

Chad gets an armbar over the ropes for a breather but Viktor runs around the ring to cut of the tag. Not that it matters as Gable rolls over for the real hot tag. That means it's time for the suplexes but Chad tags himself back in, leaving Jordan to miss a charge into the corner. Something like an H Bomb gets two on Chad but Grand Amplitude wraps up Viktor for the pin at 9:59.

Rating: C+. I liked this one more than I was expecting to as they've actually made Ascension feel a little more like a threat with just a few good performances. I know we've been told for years that wins and losses don't matter but the last week or so is proof that just one fall can go a long way. Now of course we need some fresh talent on Smackdown and it's WAY too late for this version of Ascension to work but it's better than nothing.

Post match the Usos pop up on screen to say they're coming for the belts. My goodness FIND SOME NEW CHALLENGERS. It feels like they're the only real competition Alpha has had since they debuted.

James Ellsworth is trying to get Carmella to go to dinner when Ambrose comes in. Dean says Carmella is just using him so try online dating. Carmella tells Ellsworth to stand up for her so James kind of does so, only to have Bryan come in and grant Dean a match against Ellsworth for later tonight.

Dean Ambrose vs. James Ellsworth

And never mind as Baron Corbin drags Dean out to the stage. Deep Six into the production area gives us some sparks and Ambrose is out.

We recap Nikki Bella and Natalya fighting backstage at Elimination Chamber, including Bella being knocked into Maryse.

Nikki is in Bryan's office with the boss saying things need to end. Natalya comes in and the arguing begins again. That quickly turns into a fight so Bryan makes it a falls count anywhere match for next week.

Baron says Dean isn't WWE Champion because of him and now Dean is in

the hospital because of him. That's everything you need to know.

Dolph Ziggler is tired of people like Apollo Crews and Kalisto trying to take his spot. If he has to wipe out an entire generation to prove his point, so be it.

Mickie James vs. Becky Lynch

Feeling out process to start with Mickie going for the arm but getting reversed so Becky can take over on the mat. Back up and a shove puts Mickie on the floor, followed by an armbar on Mickie to copy Sunday's tactics. They head outside again and it's a double clothesline to take us to a break.

We come back with Mickie grabbing a chinlock before scoring with a flapjack. The Bexploder gets two on Mickie and a forearm puts her on the floor. James comes up holding her shoulder (which didn't seem to actually hit anything in the crash) but of course she's goldbricking, setting up a spinning kick to Becky's jaw for the pin at 11:58.

Rating: C. The goldbricking might not be the most creative thing in the world but it does play up the idea that Mickie is a veteran who can use her experience to pull off something like that. I'm not wild on them splitting wins on back to back shows but it sets up what should be an entertaining third act.

Here's new Women's Champion Naomi, who says she was hurt at Elimination Chamber. It doesn't matter though because she's coming in to Wrestlemania with this title one way or another. Cue Alexa Bliss to say Naomi is just hiding from the pressure. Naomi could even have her own 30 for 30 special called The Lights Go Out. Bliss is feeling generous though and is giving Naomi a week to get ready for the rematch.

Black History Month video on Nelson Mandela.

TJ Perkins wants us to watch 205 Live.

Smackdown World Title: Bray Wyatt vs. John Cena vs. AJ Styles

Wyatt is defending and this is one fall to a finish. Bray does his entrance and runs into Luke Harper who gives him a pre-match beating. We take a break before the bell and come back with Cena loading up the Shuffle on Styles until Bray pulls him outside. AJ isn't one to be shown up though and hits a big forearm out to the floor.

Back in and a low forearm gets two on Bray but Cena comes back in for the running shoulders to the champ. The AA is countered into a failed Sister Abigail attempt though as Styles comes in with the forearm. Cena plants AJ with the AA for two, followed by Sister Abigail getting the same on Cena with AJ making the save.

Back from a break with AJ slamming Bray onto the announcers' table and dropping a leg to put him through the wood. Cena throws AJ in for another AA but tries a third and gets reversed into the Calf Crusher. That's reversed into the STF but Bray comes back in with the backplash for the last second save. AJ is sent outside and another AA gets two on the champ. The Styles Clash gets the same on Cena and all three are down. Back up again and AJ is sent outside, leaving Bray to grab Sister Abigail for the pin on Cena at 14:05.

Rating: B+. They were spamming the finishers like few matches you'll see these days but at least Wyatt won in a really solid TV match. The fact that Bray pinned Cena clean with his finisher is a great sign and exactly what should have happened here. Cena isn't losing a thing here and Wyatt gets another big fall on his resume. Well done indeed and they even managed to make me buy some of those near falls, which I really didn't expect coming in.

Post match here's Randy Orton for the big staredown. The fans cheer for Orton as Bray says not to listen to it. Orton says he won't fight Bray for the title at Wrestlemania because he pledges loyalty to Wyatt. Bray says that means Orton has the keys to the kingdom and the double pose ends the show.

Overall Rating: B-. Good show here for the most part as they kept me wanting to come back next week (no not for Nikki vs. Natalya 2, which isn't even big enough to earn Roman numerals) and gave us a hot main event. This was a big step up from Sunday and you can see a mixture of upcoming TV plus Wrestlemania plans forming. I liked the show here and that's encouraging coming off a hot Raw.

Results

American Alpha b. Ascension – Grand Amplitude to Viktor

Mickie James b. Becky Lynch – Spinning kick to the head

Bray Wyatt b. AJ Styles and John Cena – Sister Abigail to Cena

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