

Survivor Series 2017: Never Mind The Talent. Here Are The Old Guys.

Survivor Series 2017

Date: November 19, 2017

Location: Toyota Center, Houston, Texas

Commentators: Booker T., Michael Cole, Corey Graves, Byron Saxton, Tom Phillips

I could go for more of this idea of shows turning from kind of uninteresting into stacked. This is a double main event with Team Raw vs. Team Smackdown, plus AJ Styles vs. Brock Lesnar in a non-title match. That might not sound like much but when you have John Cena, HHH, Kurt Angle and Randy Orton in a match, there has to be something right. Let's get to it.

Kickoff Show: Elias vs. Matt Hardy

Bonus match. Feeling out process to start with Matt working on a headlock before grabbing a Russian legsweep. Back from a break with Elias pull Matt's throat into the top rope and then sending the shoulder into the apron. Elias stays on the arm with an armbar and right hands to the shoulder. We hit the armbar as this isn't exactly setting the world on fire yet.

A double underhook shoulder breaker (basically a Pedigree lifted into a shoulder breaker) keeps Matt in trouble until he grabs a Side Effect on the apron. The rams into the buckle and a bulldog set up a regular Side Effect for two. The Twist of Fate doesn't work though and Elias posts the bad arm. Drift Away gives Elias the pin at 9:10.

Rating: D+. The arm work was fine and I'm rather glad Elias won after not having much to do as of late, but what was the point in adding this? It's a nothing match in front of a mostly empty arena that adds nothing to the show. The guys are trying to have a good match and they might as well be

in a flea market for all the people they have watching. Just do the match on Raw where it belongs.

Kickoff Show: Cruiserweight Title: Kalisto vs. Enzo Amore

Amore is defending after they've traded the title. Before the match, Enzo talks about Kalisto sending him into the cake on Tuesday. Then he woke up and looked in the mirror, where he wished upon a star. Tonight, he wants to give Kalisto a beating and fry him up like a chicken so Enzo can be the only Chick-Fil-A open o a Sunday.

Enzo starts fast with some shoulders in the corner but Kalisto grabs a sunset bomb for two as we take an early break. Back with Enzo pulling him out of the corner into a side slam for a near fall of his own. A running forearm in the corner gets two and we're off to the chinlock. Kalisto fights up with a headscissors though, followed by a Death Valley Bomb. The Salida Del Sol is blocked but so is a Jordunzo on the apron. Back in and Enzo sends him face first into an exposed buckle, setting up the Jordunzo to retain the title at 8:54.

Rating: D. For those of you keeping track, that would be back to back matches where the heel sends his opponent into something metal in the corner to set up their finisher. That's bad agenting and I'd expect more out of WWE. I also expected nothing more than Enzo retaining here as Kalisto looked like a pretty lame duck challenger for the most part. Now we can get someone else to scare Enzo a bit before he cheats to retain the title. We're just lucky that way I guess.

Kickoff Show: Sami Zayn/Kevin Owens vs. Breezango

Bonus match. Before the match, Owens and Sami talk about how ridiculous it is for them to be on the Kickoff Show. If Breezango wants to solve crimes, they should be looking at why Owens and Sami aren't leading Smackdown to victory tonight. They're not happy with being caught in the McMahon sibling rivalry...but here's Breezango to cut them off. Breeze thinks Sami and Kevin's facial hair should be at least ten different violations, which sound like fighting words.

Fandango dropkicks Owens outside to start and it's time for some fashion

tickets. It's also time for a break less than forty seconds in. Back with Fandango chopping Sami but Breeze gets caught in the wrong corner. The chinlock doesn't last very long so Owens comes in and grabs one of his own. Naturally it's a long one because no one breaks his chinlock. Breeze fights up with a DDT and the hot tag brings in Fandango. Everything breaks down and Fandango misses the Last Dance, allowing Owens to hit the Pop Up Powerbomb for the pin at 8:28.

Rating: D+. I can't imagine we won't be seeing Owens and Zayn again later, which is exactly what the story calls for in this case. They're major thorns in Shane McMahon's side and it would be the right call. This match gives them a logical reason to be in the building and unfortunately it comes at Breezango's expense. The Fashion Files haven't been on in a few weeks and I'm not sure where Breezango can go without them. They're good in the ring but those segments made them into much bigger stars. Just let them wrestle a win a bit though.

The opening video looks at all of the show vs. show matches, which is really the only way to open up a show like this.

New Day vs. Shield

Now that's an opener. Before the match, New Day accuses Shield of ripping off their invasion idea. Shield might be the big dogs but New Day is about to go Bob Barker on them. The dogs are going to bite themselves as we get closer to Wrestlemania season. New Day would never do that because New Day rocks. Before we get going, here's another video on the Sieges for reasons of WWE needing to make sure to play it as many times as possible.

Dean and Kofi get things going with Ambrose getting the better of it and handing it off to Rollins. Big E. comes in as well but since Rollins isn't over losing the NXT Title to him a few years back, he brings Reigns in instead. A shoulder puts Reigns down but he's right back up with a leapfrog into a Samoan drop.

Ambrose tags himself in though and everything breaks down with Shield getting the better of it. New Day gets clotheslined out to the floor until Woods is dragged back in for a Unicorn Stampede. The hot tag brings

in Kofi for some chops and the Boom Drop on Ambrose. The real Unicorn Stampede has Ambrose in trouble and Woods' dropkick in the corner makes things even worse.

Everything breaks down again with Cole saying a brawl would go to New Day. Big E. spears Ambrose through the ropes as Rollins and Reigns just kind of stand around. Back in and Ambrose breaks up a belly to belly superplex, allowing the hot tag to Rollins. A quick Blockbuster takes Kingston down and a Sling Blade gets two. Reigns comes in for a running clothesline, followed by a Superman Punch to Woods.

Dean makes a blind tag and it's the wind-up knee into Dirty Deeds for two on Kofi with Big E. making a save. Everything breaks down again and Big E. breaks up the TripleBomb. Reigns gets sent into the steps and Trouble in Paradise drops Rollins. Back in and Big E. gets on Woods' shoulders so Kofi can jump over them for a splash. Big E. is dropped into a second splash but they have to cut Rollins off instead of covering.

In a scary power display, Big E. scoops up Ambrose and Rollins for a double Midnight Hour, only to have Reigns spear Big E. into his partners for the save. Both teams go to a corner and come out swinging, leaving Ambrose to hit Dirty Deeds on Big E. on the floor. The spear cuts Kofi in half....and Roman goes up? A SUPER TRIPLEBOMB ends Kofi at 21:33.

Rating: B. Oh yeah it worked. Shield winning is far from shocking but New Day got in some serious offense. It makes sense to have Shield get the win here as they don't actually have the big win since reforming. They were beating the heck out of each other here and that's how this show needed to start. Good stuff.

Stephanie (of course) gives the Raw Women's Team a pep talk. Basically she wants every member to be awesome.

Raw Women's Team vs. Smackdown Women's Team

Raw: Alicia Fox, Nia Jax, Bayley, Sasha Banks, Asuka

Smackdown: Becky Lynch, Carmella, Tamina, Natalya, Naomi

Asuka gets an especially big entrance, which is exactly what she

deserves. Becky and Alicia start things up with Fox being sent into the corner and dropped face first onto the buckle. Bayley makes a blind tag though and comes in to grab a rollup on Lynch for the pin at 2:34. Tamina comes in and drives Bayley into the corner, only to have Asuka come in and fire off some kicks.

Alicia tags herself back in and the beatdown commences. A hard shot finally knocks Bayley into the corner but she knocks her way free without too much trouble. Carmella gets in a superkick to drop Bayley though and Tamina's top rope splash is good for the pin at 5:22. Nia comes in to face Tamina in the hoss (What's female for hoss?) battle, including the big headbutt exchange.

Tamina gets powered into the corner for some shoulders to the ribs, only to have Nia rip her Raw shirt off. A big charge runs Tamina over for two but a Lana distraction lets Tamina hit back to back superkicks. Naomi dives onto Nia and a third superkick keeps her on the floor. Tamina adds a crossbody from the steps and beats the count to get rid of Nia at 8:55. It's off to Naomi to slug away on Fox but she misses the split legged moonsault. Instead it's a sunset flip for two, which the referee counts as three anyway, for the pin at 10:30. Banks comes in for the Bank Statement to get rid of Naomi at 10:55.

So it's Banks/Asuka vs. Natalya/Carmella/Tamina, which better wind up as an Asuka showcase. Asuka comes in with a series of strikes and the hip attack for two on Carmella. A quick Bronco Buster stuns Asuka but Carmella makes the mistake of slapping her in the face. One heck of a kick to the head gets rid of Carmella at 12:51. Banks comes back in and grabs a Bank Statement on Natalya with Tamina making a save. The Sharpshooter gets rid of Banks at 15:07 and it's Asuka vs. Natalya/Tamina.

The double teaming begins in a hurry but Tamina misses the top rope splash. Asuka slaps on a cross armbreaker to make Tamina tap at 17:28 and the Sharpshooter is quickly reversed into a kneebar. That's broken up with some kicks to the ribs but Asuka kicks her in the head. The Asuka Lock is good for the final submission at 18:18.

Rating: D. And that's being generous. This was a complete mess with the first six or so eliminations (out of nine remember) being there for the sake of being there. Asuka should have eliminated four or even all five members but instead let's have Tamina look awesome (for some reason) and people like Becky and Bayley treated as afterthoughts (again). Terribly booked match here and unfortunately, I'm not all that surprised given how this division tends to go.

Stephanie and Daniel Bryan bicker, drawing up memories of Wrestlemania XXX with Stephanie talking in that way that ONLY SHE EVER TALKS. This goes on way too long (after a way too long WWE Network ad) as it's almost like they're filling time on a four hour show.

Baron Corbin vs. The Miz

Non-title but this is US Champion vs. Intercontinental Champion. Miz's wife Maryse is in the front row and Corbin looks down at her, sending Miz into a frenzy. They fight outside with Miz sending him into the barricade, only to have Corbin do the same. Of course the announcers completely ignore this to talk about the wrestlers trying to fire up their brands backstage.

Corbin gets in a right hand but Bo Dallas clips his knee and Miz takes over again. The Figure Four is broken up in a hurry and a one legged Deep Six gives Corbin a near fall. Corbin pulls Curtis Axel inside but has to kick out of a rollup. The short DDT gets two more and it's time for the YES Kicks. Miz hits the running corner dropkick but charges into End of Days for the pin at 9:21.

Rating: C+. Better match than I was expecting here and I'm rather glad given the effort they actually put into the build. There wasn't much of a story here but they did what they could to put one together. Corbin needed the win more than Miz did, even though I'm never a fan of a champion losing clean like this. Good match too.

Corbin says he just shut Miz up.

Paul Heyman isn't worried about AJ Styles being phenomenal. AJ may be the most phenomenal wrestler of this generation but he's up against a

conqueror.

The Bar vs. Usos

Same deal as Miz vs. Corbin but with tag teams. Before the match, the Usos say if Sheamus and Cesaro are the Bar, they're pole vaulters. Sheamus, now with white tips on his mohawk, drives Jimmy into the corner to start but the twins take him down without much effort. As Graves and Booker argue over Booker winning Tag Team Titles (as usual, I have no idea why this is going on), Cesaro comes in with an uppercut.

Jimmy knocks both of them off the apron but gets caught in a Regal Roll on the floor. Cesaro slaps on a chinlock as Cole compares Sheamus' hair to the Red Rooster. Oh come on man that's low. Sheamus gets two off the Irish Curse and Cesaro kicks Jey off the apron to prevent a hot tag attempt. The hot tag works a few seconds later though and Jey comes in to clean house.

A running Umaga Attack gets two on Cesaro but Sheamus cuts Jimmy off. That means a jumping uppercut to Jey and we hit the Cesaro Swing into the Sharpshooter. Sheamus Brogue Kicks Jimmy down so Jey has to crawl over to the ropes for the break. That just means a super White Noise for two as Jimmy dives in for the save. Cesaro loads up a powerbomb and Sheamus goes up, only to have Jey grab him for a Samoan drop as Cesaro plants him.

That's good for two on Sheamus as I'm still trying to figure out why Cesaro would do that. An enziguri finally allows the hot tag to Jimmy, who cleans house in a hurry. He dives over the top onto Cesaro but tags out on the way, leaving Jey to hit the Superfly Splash for the pin on Sheamus at 15:55.

Rating: B. This was good (albeit maybe a bit less than you would have expected) but SWEET GOODNESS stop acting like Raw vs. Smackdown is life and death. No one cares about this save for one month out of the year and it's just obnoxious to hear for the whole show, especially with the announcers acting like their lives are on the line with every near fall.

Jason Jordan isn't happy with not being on Team Raw but hopes they win. After HHH is eliminated that is.

We look back at Charlotte winning the Smackdown Women's Title on Tuesday.

Charlotte vs. Alexa Bliss

Champion vs. champion again. Bliss bails to the floor to start and then hides in the ropes to avoid a right hand. Charlotte gets her arm snapped down off the apron and Bliss takes over for the first time. Back in and we hit the armbar with a stomach claw but Charlotte reverses into a rollup. The kickout sends her hard into the corner, only to have Charlotte hit something like a fall away slam into the corner.

Bliss sends her into the corner again though, setting up a top rope double knee drop to the back for a scary landing. Code Red gives Bliss two but she can't grab the DDT. Instead it's a guillotine choke with Bliss nearly crying as she tries to make Charlotte tap. Charlotte powers up into a Batista Bomb for two more, followed by Natural Selection for the same.

The moonsault misses though and Bliss' DDT gets another near fall with Charlotte getting her foot on the ropes. A bad looking spear drops Bliss for no cover so Alexa comes back with a dropkick to the ribs. Twisted Bliss hits knees though and the Figure Eight makes Bliss tap at 15:40.

Rating: B+. I know Bliss is considered one of the weaker workers but sweet goodness she's gotten a lot better in the ring as of late. Bliss looked like she belonged in there with a proven star like Charlotte and that's a lot more than anyone would have believed was possible a year or so ago. Really good match here and a big surprise.

We recap Brock Lesnar vs. AJ Styles in the final champion vs. champion match. Styles won the title less than two weeks ago while Lesnar has held his since Wrestlemania. There isn't much of a story here but the question is can AJ overcome the monster.

AJ Styles vs. Brock Lesnar

Non-title in an idea you should get by now. Heyman handles Brock's Big Match Intro as only he can do. The fans are split here as AJ is smart enough to not rush in. That's fine with Brock who scores with the

shoulders in the corner. Styles gets knocked down in the corner again so Lesnar drags him across the ring by the hair. One heck of a suplex has Styles rocked again and the German suplex makes things even worse.

AJ gets dumped over the top in a heap and Lesnar throws him into the announcers' table. Back in and Brock hits another release German suplex as this is completely one sided. A running knee in the corner keeps AJ rocked and a shot to the face drops him again. Brock: "FIGHT ME!" AJ slugs away to no avail as a knee cuts him down. The F5 is escaped though and Brock misses a knee in the corner. AJ scores with a DDT and gets a much needed breather.

They botch a tornado DDT with AJ being shoved off and both guys are down again. The Pele puts Lesnar down again but Brock is right back up with another German suplex. AJ sends him outside though and the slingshot forearm has Lesnar in more trouble. They're doing really well with the hope spots here. Brock gets sent knee first into the steps and there's another running forearm.

Back in and AJ hits a Lionsault of all things, followed by the springboard 450 for a close two. Another F5 is countered into the Calf Crusher but Lesnar rams Styles' head into the match for the break. Well that works. The F5 is escaped for the third time and the Phenomenal Forearm is good for two. AJ goes outside one too many times though and it's the F5 for the pin at 15:16.

Rating: B+. In a way I was hoping Jinder would interfere and cost AJ the match as I'm still not a fan of the champs getting pinned clean. At least it was to Lesnar and in a great match though. Lesnar was trying out there and that's probably more than you would have expected had Jinder been the opponent. This was the match I was hoping for though so we'll call this a solid win.

Long recap of the main event. Smackdown invaded Raw, then they invaded again, then Raw invaded Smackdown. Let's have an all-star elimination match.

Raw Men's Team vs. Smackdown Men's Team

Raw: Kurt Angle, Finn Balor, Samoa Joe, HHH, Braun Strowman

Smackdown: Shane McMahon, Bobby Roode, John Cena, Randy Orton, Shinsuke Nakamura

Shane charges at Strowman (so much for Angle promising to start the match) and gets LAUNCHED across the ring, freaking Shane out. It's off to Orton vs. Joe with a shoulder dropping Orton like he's nothing. Neither finisher can hit and it's time for a standoff. Balor comes in to face Nakamura in what could be classified as a dream match. The fans chant NXT and then what sounds like USA until Nakamura takes him against the ropes for the head on the chest.

Nakamura misses a kick and has to avoid a double stomp, giving us a standoff. HHH comes in to face Nakamura, who tells him to COME ON. A kick to the face drops HHH as Cole keeps referring to Nakamura as Shin. The facebuster is somewhat botched as HHH winds up on his back, meaning it's off to Roode. The slugout goes to Roode until he walks into a spinebuster. Roode grabs one of his own but can't hit the Glorious DDT.

Instead it's Angle (complete with stars and stripes gloves) coming in to roll some German suplexes. Nakamura comes in, gets in a cheap shot on Strowman, and strikes away at Kurt without much effort. Joe and Balor get dropped as well before HHH's Pedigree attempt is countered into another kick to the head. Strowman gets in but Nakamura scores with a middle rope knee. Not that it matters as the running powerslam eliminates Nakamura at 11:22.

Roode comes in next with the Blockbuster for no count as Braun kicks him away before one. A second attempt misses though and the second running powerslam makes it 5-3 at 12:22. Joe tags himself in and it's time for an argument. Smackdown is smart enough to let HHH and Angle nearly come to blows until Orton breaks it up. Shane gets to slug it out with Joe but Orton powerslams Joe down. Everyone clears out until it's Orton/Cena vs. Strowman for a heck of a showdown. Strowman gets knocked outside but Cena gets dropped with a single right hand.

It's time to load up the announcers' table but Shane comes over to help (along with Nakamura, who is still here for some reason) with a triple

suplex to drive Strowman through. Joe (who, along with Strowman's partners, didn't fall into a hole somewhere) breaks up Shane's elbow, only to have Cena come in for a running clothesline. A big boot puts Cena in the corner and the Rock Bottom out of the corner looks to finish him....until Balor and Joe get in an argument. The AA plants both guys and a second gets rid of Joe at 18:04.

Angle comes in to face Cena with Kurt taking him down rather easily. The slugout draws the BOO/YAY chants and Cena scores with a ProtoBomb. Angle picks the ankle though and it's an Angle Slam for two. The Coup de Grace sets up another Angle Slam and Cena is gone at 21:55. So it's Orton/Shane vs. Strowman/Balor/HHH/Angle. Balor kicks away at Orton but makes sure to dropkick Shane into the barricade. Another shotgun dropkick looks to set up the Coup de Grace but Orton rolls away, setting up the RKO to get rid of Balor at 23:35.

HHH comes in and gets shoved into the ropes to crotch Angle on top. Cue Owens and Sami to go after Shane (as you knew was coming) but the boss fights them off with a chair. Strowman comes in to go after Orton and the running powerslam makes it 3-1 at 26:35. Shane is all alone now and stays on the floor with no counting from the referee. Strowman is waiting on Shane until HHH tags himself in instead. Cole thinks brother vs. brother-in-law is the MOST AMAZING THING HE'S SEEN IN THE LAST FIVE MINUTES but Angle tags himself in instead.

A Russian legsweep gets two on Angle and the jumping back elbow gets the same. There's the Angle Slam into the ankle lock with Shane looking at the ropes and then crawling back into the middle of the ring. And then HHH breaks it up and Pedigrees Angle to give Shane the pin at 32:02. Strowman stares HHH down as Shane is holding his ankle. That's about it though as HHH Pedigrees Shane for the pin at 34:18.

Rating: D. Well that was awful. Much like in the women's match, most of the people were just there to fill in spots while the stars (read as the old people) were all that mattered. They had me believing that Shane might be the sole survivor out there and somehow, that wasn't the most impossible thing in the world. This was terrible for the most part, outside of the opening ten minutes or so where they were just doing crazy

combinations. After that though, this was ALL about Raw and the McMahons looking awesome, which was the last thing this show needed to do. Really bad booking to what should have been awesome.

Post match HHH celebrates as Strowman looks confused. Strowman grabs him by the throat and chokes him in the corner, telling HHH to never try to play him again. A Pedigree attempt is swatted away and back to back running powerslams end the show.

Overall Rating: B-. So to recap, the elimination matches were awful and everything else ranged from very good to awesome. It's like they know the one big idea they want to go with (Asuka looking awesome, which worked, and whatever the ending to that main event was, which didn't work) but have no idea how to get there. The booking was all over the place tonight and that made for a very trying evening at times.

However, the good stuff, which thankfully was a lot more common than the bad, was quite good with the champion vs. champion matches all delivering, plus a very solid Shield vs. New Day match. It made for a good theme to the show, despite the rather annoying build that it took to get there. That word annoying brings us to the real problem with this show.

The commentary tonight might have been the most annoying I've ever heard it be, including the days of heel Michael Cole. All night long it was this stupid "my show is better than your show" nonsense which adds nothing to the show and feels like they're just running their mouths for the sake of an idea. It came off like forcing a concept into the show and that got old in about five minutes. Saxton was annoying, Booker sounded stupid, and Cole put on his old cheerleading uniform. It was a major problem, though thankfully not enough to knock a good show off course.

Results

Shield b. New Day – Super TripleBomb to Kingston

Raw Women's Team b. Smackdown Women's Team – Asuka Lock to Natalya

Baron Corbin b. The Miz – End of Days

Usos b. The Bar – Superfly Splash to Sheamus

Charlotte b. Alexa Bliss – Figure Eight

Brock Lesnar b. AJ Styles – F5

Raw Men's Team b. Smackdown Men's Team – Pedigree to McMahon

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