

Three Former World Champions Allegedly Finishing Up With TNA

And that's not all for them. Spoilers for the recent tapings included.

<http://411mania.com/wrestling/magnus-rumored-to-be-leaving-tna-following-slamiversary/>

http://www.lordsofpain.net/news/tna/Spoiler_Another_Top_Wrestler_Leaving_TNA.html

Oh and if that's not enough:

[UPDATED: Kurt Angle Announces He Has a Tumor in His Neck](#)

So in case you don't want to click on things, here's what's going on, assuming these are all true:

1. Magnus is leaving
2. James Storm is leaving
3. Austin Aries is leaving
4. Kurt Angle needs ANOTHER neck surgery

I know it's a bad time to be in TNA, but man this is one heck of a series of hits. I don't know where they're going to find the money for talent to replace these guys, but they need to come up with some answers fast. Well, assuming they still have a show to air after September.

Thunder – February 2, 2000: Screw You Hulk Hogan

Thunder

Date: February 2, 2000

Location: Broome County Arena, Binghamton, New York

Attendance: 2,323

Commentators: Mike Tenay, Scott Hudson, Bobby Heenan

The big story tonight is going to be the return of Hulk Hogan, who was casually announced to be coming back on Monday during a Shane Helms vs. Norman Smiley match. I'm not sure how much good Hogan can do to save this mess of a show, but at least he'll do boring stuff with some extra charisma. Let's get to it.

We open with the standard recap of Nitro.

Here's the NWO, complete with Scott Hall, to open things up. Hall can't quite get HEY YO out so let's look at the girls talking about what a sexy beast Scott Steiner really is. That brings us to still acting Commissioner Jeff Jarrett, who says that it's still his job to make Sid miserable. Therefore, tonight we're getting Sid in Triple Threat Theater. You cannot be serious. Like, tell me you didn't just say that.

Somehow this is true, and here's the lineup: a submission match vs. Mike Rotunda, a hardcore match vs. Rick Steiner and Caged Heat (could they at least try to hide their cries of PLEASE WATCH OUR SHOW) against the Harris Twins. Jeff repeats that he takes bribes, making me think this is the result of a bet to see how horrible of a show they can possibly put together.

The announcers run down the card, which will have nine matches total. Three of these will feature Sid Vicious. How much longer before this company goes out of business?

A limo arrives.

The NWO buys off referee Slick Johnson.

Norman Smiley vs. The Demon

In a line I think I'll be repeating a lot tonight, let's get this over with. Norman is in the Demon attire here but Demon comes out of his coffin to start fast. Demon rips his gear off Norman, revealing smiley face trunks. This earns Norman a suplex and a punch to the face, followed by a lot of growling from Demon. A clothesline in the corner staggers Norman, but he quickly goes behind Demon and hooks the Conquest for the win.

Demon, ever the salesman, shrugs off the submission and chases Norman to the back.

Lenny Lane and Lodi are now to be called Lane and Idol and are collectively known as To Excess. Yeah sure why not. As long as they drop the incest.

Sid Vicious vs. Mike Rotunda

Submission match because WCW thought making Kevin Sullivan booker was so important that we don't have the Radicalz anymore. There is however one cool moment in this entire thing: an elderly woman is holding up a sign that says "90 year old woman needs a hug" and Sid hugs her. I know he's annoying and being shoved down my throat but that genuinely gave me a bit of a smile.

Mike tries a go behind to start and gets elbowed in the face. Just like at Syracuse back in '81. Sid pounds away in the corner but misses a running knee, allowing Mike to take him down and slap on a Figure Four. That goes nowhere so Mike tries an STF but Sid quickly makes the ropes. Back up and Sid hits a chokeslam but Mike but Mike hits him low. Well in theory at least as the camera cut away, because all of Ferrara and Russo's schtick was fine but a low blow? That's too far. Sid escapes a fireman's carry and slaps on what is supposed to be a Crossface for the win.

Vampiro doesn't have much to say but would like to face Kidman again.

We finally get brackets for the Cruiserweight Title tournament. These are updated after the first three matches.

Psychosis

The Artist Formerly Known As Prince Iaukea

Lash Leroux

Shannon Moore/Shane Helms

Cruiserweight Title Tournament First Round: Shane Helms vs. Shannon Moore

Feeling out process to start with Shane getting in the first big move with a suplex. Shane bails to the floor for no apparent reason other than to let Shannon dive onto him. That's what a good bandmate should do. Sometimes you need a guy you can trust to dive on you. I hear that's how Hall and Oates got together. Back in and Shane scores with another suplex for two but walks into a crossbody for the same.

We're told that Madusa is in the building, freaking out Evan Karagias who is in on commentary. That's one thing I certainly don't miss about Russo's time: not every match needs guest commentary. He LOVED that idea. Shane counters a sunset flip and slams Shannon down again, only to miss a corkscrew moonsault. Shannon's big offense here? A snapmare for two. Oh come on man. You need a role model. Like Matt Hardy. Back up and Shane kicks him in the ribs but his neckbreaker is countered into a backslide of all things to send Shannon to the semifinals.

Rating: D+. A snapmare and a backslide? REALLY? We went from Mysterio, Guerrera, Malenko, Jericho and others tearing the house down to a snapmare and a backslide? The match was watchable enough but man, could we get more than one or two high spots in a match? Not a horrible match given their lack of experience on this stage and having about three and a half minutes.

They hug it out post match.

Madusa tells the NWO she wants a match tonight.

Hogan was in the limo. Again, you would expect this to be treated as a bigger deal.

Here's Hogan for the big return speech for a big ovation. It's definitely Hulk instead of Hollywood here, which is definitely the right move at this point. Hogan talks about having a chat with Goldberg and Sting about all the pre-taped scenes and the writers (oh geez) and now he's here to get something off his chest. He's tired of a bunch of young nobodies trying to act like they mean something. Ric Flair has been talking about taking the business back and for once Hogan agrees with him.

This brings him to Luger, presumably one of the young guys, who immediately comes out with Liz. Luger thinks Hogan is a coward, just like Sting who never comes out when Luger calls for him. We see a clearly fake Sting (complete with a wig) coming to the ring but Hogan jumps Luger before that can go anywhere. Liz gets an atomic drop (with Hogan barely dropping her) and Hogan ducks a bat shot to send Luger running. So that's the co-main event at SuperBrawl I'm guessing.

Quick recap here: all the rookies suck, and all the veterans are awesome, except for that horrible Luger. This is the savior's big return speech, where he rips the youth apart and basically says everything since he's been gone has been a waste of time. Also, not a word about what happened at Halloween Havoc, meaning we're never going to get an explanation.

Kidman and Torrie have the KidCam.

Jeff Jarrett talks to Oklahoma about a women's division. We're really doing this again?

Kidman vs. Vampiro vs. The Wall

The small guys go after Wall to start with a spinwheel kick and double clothesline putting him on the floor so we can have a talented (though worthless according to Hogan) pairing. Vampiro suplexes him down but Wall comes back in and blasts Vampiro in the back, followed by a gorilla press drop to Kidman. The double teaming continues but Wall shrugs off a cross

body.

Instead, Torrie distracts the crooked referee (at least he has good taste), allowing Kidman to blast Wall with a chair. Those are completely no sold (concrete over steel I guess) so Kidman throws the chair at Vampiro and is immediately knocked to the floor. A chokeslam from Wall ends Vampiro to finish a fairly packed yet quick match. So after Vampiro and Kidman have two good matches, Wall gets the push. Raise your hand if you're surprised.

Sid is ready for Steiner.

Lane and Idol want a Tag Team Title shot but the Mamalukes aren't interested.

Sid Vicious vs. Rick Steiner

Hardcore match, and I can't believe it but they actually bring up Sid powerbombing Steiner through the stage a few months back. Who would have guessed they could work a tape machine, let alone remember that? Steiner tries to get smart and is almost immediately clotheslined out to the floor. They fight into the crowd with Rick chucking a chair towards ringside, nearly wiping out a fan or two in the process. Maybe he can get fired! I'm willing to have a few fans suffer to get rid of Rick Steiner.

Rick can't entirely suplex Sid onto a table but drops him on it anyway. Close enough I guess. We hit the front facelock on the outside after a devastating two minutes of not wrestling. A whip into the barricade and chair to the back....seemingly fire Sid up as he comes back with a chair of his own and they head towards the entrance. Sid ducks for a backdrop but someone blasts Steiner with a bat, allowing Sid to get an easy pin.

Rating: D-. So let's get this straight: Sid won the title twice last week in three matches in two days and now he's having three matches in one night after winning the title? Who writes these contracts? Hogan only had to wrestle at three Starrcades out of the six he was around for but Sid can wrestle seven times in four shows?

This Week In WCW Motorsports.

Hogan leaves.

Diamond Dallas Page vs. The Machine

Now here's an interesting case. Throughout the night there have been vignettes for the Machine, who is apparently coming. Machine was a masked man named Emory Hale (also spelled Hail at times) who floated around WCW for years because he had a great look and could conceivably be turned into a good monster. The problem was that even after years of training, he was one of the absolute worst workers in history. I distinctly remember watching this match for one very infamous spot and I'm curious to see if it's as bad as I remember it.

Machine gets a big, overblown entrance with a silhouette entrance with Hudson wanting to know why the Machine is here. It's not really that surprising. Everything else in WCW is stuck in 1986 so why not bring back the Machines? Machine shoves him into the corner a few times but Page grabs some armdrags to put him down. There's the discus lariat followed by a Cactus Clothesline as Page is in full control. This has been acceptable so far and Machine keeps the level up with a low blow and snake eyes before jumping up and down to stomp Page on the mat.

A Russian legsweep with little snap gets two and a World's Strongest Slam plants Page again. Now here's the big moment. Machine goes up top, in the corner on the far left from the camera. That's important as Page shakes the rope to crotch him, but for some reason he shakes the rope facing the entrance, meaning a rope that Machine wasn't touching. This must have thrown Machine off as he jumps halfway across the ring to crotch himself on the ropes instead of just, you know, dropping down. Page hits two more clotheslines (his fourth of the match) followed by the floatover Diamond Cutter for the pin.

Rating: D. You know, bizarre spot aside, this wasn't the worst match I've ever seen. The problem here is they built Machine up as someone important but Page beat him clean in four minutes. Page was getting back to the style that worked so well for him so maybe putting him nearer the top of the card could work. He's old but at least he hasn't been near the top of the card for fifteen years or so and is relatively fresh.

Arn Anderson says the Funk vs. Flair feud got him into wrestling. Wait what? I'm not the best NWA historian in the world, but is there another major Flair vs. Funk feud other than the one in 1989? I'm sure they had matches before (I can find two World Title matches between them in the early 80s and a tag match in 1985), but unless I've never heard of it, they never did anything major other than their famous matches. Anyway, Anderson respects both guys but he's wanting WCW to stand up to the NWO and wants the two of them to lead the charge.

Villano IV vs. Tank Abbott

Meng is watching from the back as the Villanos try twin magic and are both knocked out in about a minute.

The Harris Boys talk about being NWO and show why you never hear them speak.

Funk asks Anderson whose side he's on but Arn won't answer.

Mamalukes vs. David Flair/Crowbar

Non-title and Crowbar starts with the Bull. Disco is on commentary again and asks a good question: why are these teams always paired together? As the match we've seen a few times already continues, we see Daffney go up to Ms. Hancock for watching the match, but let's cut away from that and see Crowbar hitting a slingshot splash for two. That's not the worst idea in the world.

Johnny comes back with a gorilla press drop and brings in Vito before it's off to David, who is brought in by Crowbar throwing him over the ropes. Makes sense. David dances over to Vito and gets kicked in the face for his efforts. Vito comes off as a Saturday Night Fever enthusiast, which is possibly why I've always kind of liked him. Vito drops a middle rope elbow for two and it's back to Johnny. The hiptoss into the powerbomb is enough to set up the tag back to Vito as the beating continues.

Vito goes back to the middle rope for a knee drop but David rolls away. Granted he rolled towards the corner and hit Vito's knee because the idea

of left and right is too complicated for him but at least he tried. Crowbar comes in off the hot tag and everything breaks down with Vito hitting the Impaler on David but Daffney offers a distraction. In the melee, David hits Vito with the crowbar to give Crowbar the fluke pin. Longest match of the night here at about 5:45.

Rating: D+. Disco brought up a good point: why are these teams always fighting? Is there no one else that you can put in there against the champions instead of Flair and Crowbar? You have a roster this big and they don't have a combination to put together against the Italians? The match was watchable as long as Crowbar was in there and Vito was his usual self.

Sid Vicious vs. Harris Twins

This is inside Caged Heat because that's how WCW thinks it gets ratings. They start fighting in the aisle and the Twins knock the World Champ onto a table. That goes nowhere so they try this cage thing with the Twins stomping away in the corner. A bunch of elbow drops have Sid in even more trouble and they clubber him down to keep the advantage. There is zero reason for this to be in a cage so far.

We hit the chinlock less than three minutes in and my goodness just close this company now. It's early 2000 and I'm watching one of the Harris Twins chinlock World Champion Sid Vicious inside Hell in a Cell on a Wednesday in front of 2,300 people in Sid's third match of the night. Sid fights back, throws we'll say Ron over the ropes and powerbombs Don for the pin, wrapping this up in less than four minutes, giving him a total in ring time of about ten and a half minutes for three gimmick matches.

Rating: F. If you need an explanation, you fail as a wrestling fan.

Post match the NWO raises the cage and comes in to destroy Sid as the cage....doesn't lower back, again defeating the purpose of the cage being there in the first place. Steiner puts him in the Recliner and Sid gets spray painted as Jarrett promises to make Sid miserable to end the show.

Overall Rating: D-. There was some good stuff going on with this show but my goodness HIRE SOME NEW PEOPLE. WCW still had money at this point and

there had to be someone out there they could snatch up. I know the main event is Valhalla and no one new is cracking into it, but get someone new to fill out the midcard. It's a bad show but the main event stories are doing most of the damage. Oh and Hogan saying the young guys are worthless. That was bad too.

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Slammiversary 2015 Preview

It's another TNA pay per view and now, instead of being better than WWE's offerings, the question is can they be better than One Night Only. It's almost impossible to not beat Bound For Glory from last year, and at least there's something borderline important on this show. Let's get to it.

So this could be interesting as I'm not entirely sure what's on the card in the first place.

We'll start with the six man ladder match for the X-Division Title with new champion Tigre Uno defending against Rockstar Spud, Kenny King, Crazy Steve, Manik and Mandrews. This is another example of the title meaning nothing as there are no feuds to be seen and it's just throwing everyone out there for

the sake of a big multi-man spot fest. It's also telling that less than a week after the title changed hands, it's already time for a fresh batch of opponents, despite Uno having no real connection to any of them. Tigre retains as he just got the belt earlier in the week.

I'll take Davey over Aries to pick the stipulation for the final title match, because for some reason TNA thinks faces should pick stipulations in matches instead of heels, as common sense would suggest.

Matt Morgan will likely beat Bram via DQ or just cleanly because Bram is one of the biggest wastes in all of the company. This whole challenging anyone on the roster is really just a thing that he's doing with no real upside. What good does it do him or anyone for that matter to have a bunch of one off matches? At least Morgan was successful in TNA. Kind of. In tag teams. Some of the time.

Ethan Carter III/Tyrus should beat Lashley and Anderson because there is zero logical reason for Anderson and Lashley to win given Carter's upcoming title shot. Actually there's no real reason for them to be teaming together other than they're a pair of losers at the moment, but then again this is just another meaningless match.

Brooke and Kong over the Dollhouse in what should be another obvious ending. These are starting to worry me though as TNA is going to have to screw up something obvious sooner or later.

Jesse Godderz will beat Robbie E. because, again, there's no logical reason for Robbie to go over. Godderz is getting a nice push as the new self obsessed heel, and having him lose to Robbie would be about the dumbest thing they could do here. Godderz won't go very far with this character (his finisher is a Boston crab) but what they're doing so far is working well.

Jeff Jarrett wins the King of the Mountain title. Yeah it's

now a title and the other participants are Matt Hardy, Eric Young, Drew Galloway and Bobby Roode. I love that they're setting up a midcard title again, but their track record with these things kind of sucks. Well there's no kind of to it actually. Maybe this will be different, assuming Jarrett actually sticks around.

Finally, James Storm over Magnus as this is probably continuing.

Overall, Slammiversary doesn't look that bad. The card is WAY better than Bound For Glory looked last year as A, stuff actually matters here and B, I've heard of everyone on the card. I don't think the show is going to mean anything other than being a long episode of Impact, but at least it could be entertaining. The build for this has barely existed because TNA can't do something as simple as schedule things properly, but that's the least of their problems right now. This show could be good, but it's the most cautious optimism possible.

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Lucha Underground – June 24, 2015: Death Is The End

Lucha Underground

Date: June 24, 2015

Location: Lucha Underground Arena, Los Angeles, California

Commentators: Vampiro, Matt Striker

This is a different kind of show as there is almost nothing set up due to last week's episode being nothing but one match. We do however have Mil Muertes vs. Drago for the #1 contendership, meaning it's time to see Drago die again. Well assuming you think he died when he initially left a few months back. Let's get to it.

We open with a recap of the Aztec medallions with Fenix and Jack Evans winning the first two. The second recap shows Dragon winning the title shot but having to face Muertes for the shot again.

The announcers give us a recap of Mundo vs. El Patron, who will face off at Ultima Lucha.

Super Fly vs. Sexy Star

Star saves Fly from an attack but she also beat him in a mask vs. mask match, causing Fly to attack her a few weeks back. Before the match we get a quick sitdown interview with Super Fly, who isn't pleased with Vampiro saving Sexy Star from Pentagon Jr. Fly slaps him in the face to start but gets rolled up for a quick two.

Back up and a very weak looking elbow to the jaw puts Star down again and a slightly less weak dropkick does the same. A boot choke in the corner has Star in even more trouble but as usual, it's clear that Fly (or any opponent for that matter) isn't going full strength on her. Fly slaps her in the face to get the people really booing so Star grabs a quick majistral cradle for two.

Something like an AA with no snap and a backplash put Star down for two

more so she backdrops him 360 degrees over the top with Star landing on his feet before crashing. Star mostly misses a dive to the floor, only to shrug off Star's offense back inside and hit a double powerbomb for the pin.

Rating: D. This was a good example of the problem of man vs. woman matches. Star can definitely work just fine, but there are men clearly not comfortable with going full speed against them and it really makes the matches awkward. They need to figure out a way around this, because this match was really lame due to Fly not wrestling a match like he usually would. Or maybe Fly just isn't very good.

Post match Fly beats on her even more and goes for the mask before Sexy rolls away.

Video of Drago training.

Aerostar vs. Pentagon Jr. vs. Cage vs. The Mack vs. Marty Martinez

The winner gets an Aztec Medallion. Before the match, Pentagon says he wants more than a medallion because he wants revenge on the man who destroyed his greatest sacrifice: Vampiro. They shove each other a bit and Vampiro unbuttons his shirt but Pentagon walks off. Back from a break and we're having a four way instead.

Aerostar vs. Cage vs. The Mack vs. Marty Martinez

Vampiro is very stoic when we get back and doesn't say anything before the bell. Star and Martinez pair off, leaving Cage to kick Mack in the face. That goes nowhere as Mack shows FIGHTING SPIRIT (Striker's words) to run Cage over. The power guys fight to the floor as Vampiro thinks Martinez might be a stalker. The stalker comes back with a dive to take Star out but Star pops back up and dives on a few people, leaving Cage the only one in the ring.

Back in and Star dives right into a fall away slam back to the floor to give Cage even more of an advantage. He's smart enough to pull Martinez back in for two but Mack breaks it up and throws Cage down, only to have Star springboard in with a missile dropkick. A springboard backsplash

gets two on Mack, but he Samoan drops Star for two more. Star and Cage go outside, leaving Martinez to give a creepy wave to Mack before springing into an armdrag for another near fall on Mack.

That's fine with Mack who hits something like Swiss Death on Marty, only to eat a discus lariat from Cage. Martinez and Star dropkick Cage into the ropes....which earns them a wicked double clothesline. Cage is in full control, only to walk into an exploder suplex onto the apron, followed by a top rope backsplash from Mack. Martinez takes way too long on top, allowing Star to do his stupid rope walk into a hurricanrana, followed by a springboard splash for the pin and the medallion.

Rating: C+. Fun match here as you would expect from a big mess like this. Lucha Underground is great at throwing a bunch of people out there to do spots for a few minutes before getting to the finish once they get tired. It's nothing revolutionary or mind blowing, but it's all you need for something like this.

The Trios Champions are practicing and get in yet another argument. Cue Catrina who says the Disciples of Death are coming for the titles. The Disciples appear and lay out the champions before disappearing and being replaced by Muertes. Well that was odd.

Mil Muertes vs. Drago

Anything goes and the winner gets the title shot at Ultima Lucha. Before the match, Hernandez appears and beats Drago with a belt before throwing in some choking for good measure. Well Hernandez knows about choking so it fits well. Also, since Hernandez was live on Impact, does this make him the modern Rick Rude? Muertes does his big entrance but the fans chant MAMACITA at Catrina to kill the mood.

Mil grabs him by the waist to start but Drago climbs the ropes for a Sliced Bread #2, only to have Muertes do the Undertaker sit up. So he's Undertaker, the stone is the urn and Catrina is Bearer? Muertes fires off some hard clotheslines in the corner and a Goldberg style spear puts Drago down again. Fans: "GET THE COFFIN!" For some reason Mil opts for chops instead of more power stuff and Drago is able to send him to the floor for a big dive.

That's fine with Mil though as he posts Drago and throws him through some chairs. The fans want tables because SCREW OFF ECW. My goodness that must be the most annoying chant in wrestling history. Muertes doesn't help things by powerbombing Drago onto the announcers' table, earning himself a face chant. So much for faces and heels in wrestling. Drago busts out a tornado DDT back inside but the rollup is easily broken up, followed by the Flatliner to give Muertes the title shot.

Rating: C. Total squash here with Drago getting in nothing more than token offense. That's exactly what this needed to be though as Muertes vs. Puma is going to be a great title match, though they're crazy if they don't put the belt on Muertes. He's the best heel this company has ever had and having him lose the big showdown would be a waste, especially with very few left for Puma to fight.

Muertes kisses Catrina and here are Konnan and Puma for the staredown to end the show.

Overall Rating: C+. It's cool to finally see the build up to a major show instead of just a big TV show for a change. The wrestling here was good enough but that wasn't the point. Tonight was about setting up the title match for Ultima Lucha, which is only six weeks away. Good enough show here, especially with all the other stuff they have to cover before the big night.

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Ring of Honor – June 24, 2015: Quality Meets Entertainment

Ring of Honor

Date: June 24, 2015

Location: Ted Reeve Arena, Toronto, Ontario, Canada

Attendance: 1,500

Commentators: Kevin Kelly, King Corino, Nigel McGuinness

It's the final week of the Global Wars cycle, meaning next week it's back to the full on Ring of Honor crew for the first time in this series.

Tonight we're getting appearances from some major New Japan stars, which should lead to some interesting pairings with the Ring of Honor guys.

Let's get to it.

Opening sequence.

Roderick Strong vs. Shinsuke Nakamura

Strong is on a roll at the moment and is known as Mr. ROH. Nakamura is a huge star in New Japan and has amazing charisma. I've always been a Strong fan and Nakamura is one of the few New Japan guys who lives up to the hype he receives. Nakamura takes him down by the arm to start but Strong reverses into a key lock of his own. Back up and Strong nails some dropkicks but can't put on a bow and arrow hold.

An Angle Slam gets two on Nakamura but he kicks Strong in the head and starts with his signature knee strikes. Another knee puts Strong over the barricade and we take a break. Back with Strong winning a slugout but falling to the mat. Strong is back up with a torture rack into a backbreaker though (he's been called the Messiah of the Backbreaker), sending Nakamura to the ropes before the Strong Hold (Boston crab) can be

locked in.

Instead it's Nakamura slamming him down but missing the running knee (Bryan took it from him) and taking a jumping knee to the face. A backbreaker onto the top turnbuckle gets two as I'm digging the psychology in this one. His move is a back hold so work on the back. Why is that so complicated? A big forearm drops Strong and a jumping knee from the middle rope knocks him silly.

Strong is up first and grabs the Strong Hold, sending Nakamura into the ropes for a break. They slug it out again with Strong taking Nakamura's head off with a running boot (Sick Kick) but a suplex backbreaker (I told you he knew a lot of them) only gets two. The running knee gets one on Strong and Nakamura can't believe it. Granted he usually gyrates around like that so it's hard to tell how mad he is. Strong hits another knee but Nakamura just blasts him with a knee/kick to the face for the pin at 17:05.

Rating: B+. This was a hard hitting wrestling match here and that's the kind of stuff that Ring of Honor is shooting for. Strong is a big star in ROH but Nakamura comes off like a natural performer, which makes him stand out anywhere he performs. This was a fun match that again lived up to its hype, which is what Nakamura does best.

Michael Elgin vs. Gedo

Gedo is a smaller guy who also books New Japan. Elgin is a big power guy who can do other things to back it up. Gedo goes to the eyes to start but walks into a fall away slam for two. Things are going slowly due to Elgin's eye but he's still easily able to suplex him back in, complete with a count of thirty from the fans. They weren't second of course but wrestling fans aren't the most patient people in the world.

Elgin's spinning Swanton misses and Gedo kicks him in the face for two. There's always something to be said about keeping it simple. Elgin gets tired of this defense stuff though and buckle bombs Gedo, followed by a helicopter bomb (Elgin Bomb, one of my favorites) for the pin at 4:48.

Rating: D+. Yeah this wasn't clicking. Elgin needs someone with more

speed to get a decent match out of him and Gedo is more of a cheater than anything else. It doesn't help that Gedo is pushing 50 and is really there more for his name than anything else. Not horrible, but it's good that they kept this short.

Roppongi Vice/Kazuchika Okada vs. AJ Styles/Young Bucks

This is Chaos vs. Bullet Club with Vice being a tag team of (Trent) Baretta (with its 19,000 spellings) and Rocky Romero. The Bucks (Nick and Matt Jackson) are the IWGP Junior Heavyweight Tag Team Champions and Styles is IWGP Heavyweight Champion, making this champions vs. challengers. Styles and Okada get things going with AJ snapping off some armdrags before they trade victory rolls for two each. An early attempt at both finishers fails as well and it's a standoff after a very fast start.

Off to Baretta vs. Nick for some missed superkicks before Matt and Rocky come in. The Bullet Club gets tired of waiting and cleans house with a single superkick. Yeah the Bucks REALLY like throwing superkicks. Baretta gets triple teamed but Romero comes in to break up a cover. The Bucks start their pretty slick double teaming before it's off to Styles for a suplex into the corner. I like it when wrestlers do normal moves into different places. It's simple yet still seems fresh, which is hard to do these days.

Back from a break with AJ taking Romero and Okada off the apron to prevent a tag, so Trent whips out a tornado DDT for the tag to Romero. Rocky cleans house by dropkicking AJ off the apron and hurricanranaing both Bucks at the same time. Matt nails a superkick to slow him down but Rocky pops off the ropes and hits a clothesline to put both guys down. Okada and Styles come in off another double tag with Okada taking over in a hurry. AJ comes back with his moonsault into a reverse DDT but Okada reverses into something like White Noise into a backbreaker.

Nick gets double teamed by Vice as everything breaks down. A Doomsday Device but with a running knee and on the floor, plants Nick but AJ plants Okada with Sunday Bloody Sunday (Prince Devitt's old move, basically a one arm DDT brainbuster). Like so many Japanese stars, Okada

isn't interested in selling though and pops up with a tombstone. The Rainmaker (maybe the most overrated finisher I've ever seen. It's a standing clothesline with theatrics) misses and Nick takes Okada to the floor with a tornado DDT which clearly didn't connect.

Romero gets hung over the ropes for a swanton and More Bang For Your Buck (a quick series of dives) is broken up and Okada drops a top rope elbow on Nick. AJ's springboard forearm (I love that move) takes Okada out again but Matt starts firing off even more superkicks, only to have Okada dropkick Styles down to break up the Clash on Romero.

All six slug it out and a triple superkick staggers Chaos. Okada again pops up and a double superkick/Pele combo and a spike piledriver into a flipping spike tombstone (the Meltzer Driver. Yes that Meltzer) puts him right back down, followed by a double superkick into a Styles Clash on Baretta for the pin at 17:25.

Rating: B. Here's the thing: this match was not a very well done match. It was sloppy at times, the "fighting spirit" thing still comes off as a way to not have to sell, the flips are borderline meta, the move is actually called the Meltzer Driver, Kelly has to shout SUPERKICK every single time one connects, the tagging part was forgotten halfway through (and no that's not an ROH thing. It annoys me when every company does it) and the fans cheering for the heels is always annoying because they're cool heels instead of trying to do, like, heel stuff.

However, that doesn't mean it wasn't an incredibly entertaining match. This was fun throughout with everyone moving all over the place and having a great time out there. Yeah it's a spot fest, but that normally means it's entertaining. Styles continues to be on another planet since going to Japan and this was no exception. Really fun main event here, albeit with issues I'll likely be insulted for pointing out.

Overall Rating: A-. This show was a really good example of balancing good wrestling and entertainment, but again, they have the problem of New Japan leaving next week. However, this was a good way to get the fans in the tent, which is going to keep them coming back later. In theory at least. This was definitely the best show they've put on so far, which is

a very good sign after just a few weeks. Really fun hour here with all wrestling and no story, which can work every now and then.

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

Smackdown – June 25, 2015: This Match. Again.

Smackdown

Date: June 25, 2015

Location: Huntington Center, Toledo, Ohio

Commentators: Jimmy Uso, Jerry Lawler, Tom Phillips

Well Lesnar is back and a full on hero now, complete with a knee injury and Kane attacking him. We're still a few weeks away from Battleground though and Seth Rollins needs something to do before he has to face the Beast. Other than that we have Bray Wyatt being creepy about Roman Reigns' daughter. Let's get to it.

We open with a recap of Lesnar and Heyman promising to hurt Rollins on Monday, followed by Rollins trying to get the Authority to help him again. This led to the team reforming for no obvious reason and Lesnar being beaten down to end Raw.

Here are Rollins, Kane and Joey Mercury (Jamie Noble was injured at the end of Raw as Brock rammed him into the barricade) to open things up. What an odd looking trio. The band is back together and they took a little road trip to Suplex City on Monday, but they burned it to the ground. Good line.

Things change in this business, such as Rollins going from a member of the Shield to the WWE World Heavyweight Champion in just about a year. Here he is now with a genius like Joey Mercury (the grin on his face from that line is awesome), but unfortunately they're missing a member of their family due to Noble having three broken ribs from Lesnar ramming him into the barricade. Tonight's show is dedicated to Jamie, who would want the Authority to celebrate.

No one in the Authority has more to celebrate than Kane, who got to beat up both Lesnar and Dean Ambrose on Monday because he is forever the Devil's Favorite Demon. Off to a completely different subject, Kane blames Ryback for Big Show not being here tonight. After a clip of Ryback laying Big Show out, here's Ryback himself. He defends his actions but Rollins criticizes him for not acting as a champion is supposed to. Ryback calls Rollins a sellout, earning himself a match with Kane tonight. That's some punishment.

The music plays but Rollins says cut it. He's sick of the lack of respect he's receiving as World Champion, so Kane can take care of Ryback tonight. Rollins isn't happy with Dean Ambrose though, as Ambrose is still walking. Let's remedy that tonight with a one on one match tonight. Ambrose will learn that the Authority always wins.

Sheamus vs. Dolph Ziggler

Ziggler knocks him to the floor with an early dropkick but here comes Rusev. He begs Lana to come back to him because he'll "kiss her the right way." Lana, with her hair down in a ponytail, walks towards the ring, as the match just stopped so Rusev could talk. A big knee puts Ziggler on the floor and we take a break.

Back with Ziggler in a chinlock before Sheamus takes his sweet time going to the top, allowing Dolph to run the ropes for a faceplant. A superkick

is blocked but Ziggler is able to crawl over Sheamus into a sunset flip for two. Back up and the superkick connects this time (Uso: "SUPERKICK PARTY!") for two, followed by a sleeper from Ziggler. Sheamus shrugs it off and puts Ziggler on the top rope, setting up the Brogue Kick for the pin at 9:26.

Rating: C. Run of the mill match between these two but it's nice to see Sheamus racking up some wins like this. They're actually treating him as something important instead of just letting him lose all the time so he can hold up the briefcase and beg us to believe that he still matters.

Rusev freaks out in the back until Summer Rae comes up and tells him that Lana isn't worth it.

Here's a clip of Rollins breaking up the Shield last year.

Alicia Fox vs. Naomi

Fox has the Bellas with her and remember that Jimmy is married to Naomi. Alicia gets kicked in the head and taken down with a nice hurricanrana, followed by a legdrop for two. They fall out to the floor with Naomi yelling at the Bellas, allowing Tamina to superkick both of them. Back in and Fox hits her reverse Fameasser for the pin at 3:10.

Rating: D. This was just a way to set up I'm assuming Naomi as Paige's new partner against the Bellas, which is about as uninteresting an idea as you could have. The match was your standard Divas fair: no time to go anywhere and too much other than the wrestling being packed into just a few minutes.

Recap of Cena vs. Owens, including everything that happened on Monday.

New Day says you can't live a positive life if you focus on the individual losses. They'll overcome all of their trials and tribulations at Battleground, but here are the Prime Time Players to interrupt and do their version of the clap. They laugh at the idea that New Day will be down a man at Battleground but here's Bo Dallas for a pretty obvious pairing. Dallas has been allowed to join the New Day against the Players and any two other partners. New Day likes him but Dallas can't get the

clap down. This has potential to be funny stuff.

Kane vs. Ryback

Non-title. Not so fast though as Big Show attacks Ryback during his entrance and beats on him for a very long time. Show chops him, kicks him, whips him into the barricade, steps on his throat, and finally throws him in for the match against Kane. Somehow this is totally fine and the bell rings with Kane quickly covering for two. Ryback tries some shoulders in the corner but gets stomped back down with ease. Kane is sent shoulder first into the post and the Meat Hook connects, only to have Big Show come in for the DQ at 2:25.

Ryback gets beaten down and chokeslammed a few times but keeps trying to pull himself up. I like the idea they're going for here, but it still ends with Big Show and Kane dominating, just like they have for over fifteen years now.

Clip of Rollins vs. Ambrose from Elimination Chamber.

Recap of this week's Tough Enough.

New Day/Bo Dallas vs. Lucha Dragons/Prime Time Players

Kofi and Titus get things going with O'Neil hitting some very loud chops in the corner. It's off to Young who doesn't do as well, with Kofi driving him into the corner for a tag to Dallas. I miss Jesse Ventura criticizing teams for tagging their normal partners and praising heels for tagging anyone on their team. Darren headlocks Bo to the mat but the threat of a Gutcheck has the heels on the floor as we take a break.

Back with Kofi dancing a bit before diving into a Sin Cara dropkick for two. Woods has some better luck by stomping away, followed by all three of his partners getting turns. It always amuses me to see someone get stomped about forty times total and just stagger to their feet. Off to Big E. for his abdominal stretch before handing it off to Kofi for a superbomb, only to be countered into a hurricanrana. The hot tag brings in Kalisto for his hurricanrana DDT to Woods but everything breaks down. It's down to Kalisto vs. Woods again with the masked man hitting a

handspring kick to the head and a springboard 450 for the pin at 10:30.

Rating: C. This was fine with the New Day losing again, though I'm not sure if I want to see them get a title shot after all these losses. That being said, you also don't want to have the champions lose so soon after winning the titles. In other words, it would have made sense here to have New Day just beat Lucha Dragons in a regular match, but why do that when you can have something like this?

Ambrose tells Reigns to not worry about Bray Wyatt because they can look through every inch of this building until they find him. Dean: "Cincinnati style!" Roman: "We're not even in Cincinnati." Reigns says he'll take care of Wyatt at Battleground and he'll have his back out there tonight. Dean leaves and Reigns finds a picture of himself in his jacket with the words ANYONE BUT YOU written in red.

After a break, Reigns searches for Wyatt but finds Kane instead. Kane won't tolerate Reigns yelling at a production guy so he's banned from the building tonight. Reigns was far more interesting here due to having something personal to deal with and I'm digging this feud a lot.

Dean Ambrose vs. Seth Rollins

Non-title. Dean starts with some armdrags into an armbar, followed by a clothesline to put Rollins on the floor. Back from a break with Rollins starting to go after the knee. Rollins puts on a complicated leg lock with Ambrose on his stomach but Seth laying like he's putting on a Figure Four. Either way Dean makes the ropes and Rollins is way too cocky. He's cocky enough to take forever getting to the top, allowing Dean to slam him down for a breather.

The tornado DDT is countered so Dean settles for a swinging neckbreaker instead. Dean gets all fired up but opts for a suicide dive to take out Kane instead. Back in and the standing elbow looks to finish but Mercury offers a distraction to earn his paycheck for the night. Scratch that actually as the look he gave earlier was more than worth it. A DDT gets two on Seth but Dean can't follow up. The rebound clothesline is countered into a buckle bomb which is countered into a hurricanrana to put them both on the floor. Dean dives on everyone but gets distracted

again, allowing Rollins to Pedigree him for the pin at 13:03.

Rating: B-. They accomplished the goal of showing that the reunited Authority is capable of beating anyone on the roster, but Lesnar isn't exactly the same as a guy that Rollins has drawn about even with over the last few weeks. That's the problem here: they've done this match so many times recently that they're running the risk of taking away its effectiveness. Reigns not being there to help Ambrose could lead somewhere, but I really, really hope it's not to an Ambrose heel turn.

Overall Rating: C. This was a totally fine show and the best part was it flew by. The show never dragged like so many Smackdowns have done over the last few years, but at least they had some decent matches and advanced a few stories, even though we're not likely to see those advancements until Monday. Totally acceptable show here but as usual, it's nothing you need to see.

Results

Sheamus b. Dolph Ziggler – Brogue Kick

Alicia Fox b. Naomi – Reverse Fameasser

Ryback b. Kane via DQ when Big Show interfered

Lucha Dragons/Prime Time Players b. New Day/Bo Dallas – Springfield 450 to Woods

Seth Rollins b. Dean Ambrose – Pedigree

New Idea For The Count-Ups

(You Can Vote!)

So I'll be doing the annual count-ups this year, but as usual I won't be redoing all of them. Instead I'll let you guys decide something for a change.

Here's the thing: I'm not going to redo all the shows again for two reasons:

1. It takes too long. It takes the better part of two and a half months to do nearly thirty pay per views given all the other shows I do every week. That would add up to about ten months to review shows for a third time. That brings me to the other point.

2. There's nothing left to say about a lot of the matches. Most of the matches on these shows don't really have a lot to talk about. How much can I say about Texas Tornado vs. Dino Bravo for three minutes at Wrestlemania VII? There are some matches worth looking at again, but I'm never been a fan of splitting up a show.

Therefore, I'll do something else instead and I'll leave it up to you. In addition to doing the show from the previous year for Royal Rumble, Wrestlemania, Summerslam and Survivor Series, but I'll also do one (or maybe two) show from each series.

You get to pick which ones I do. Let me know in the comments which shows you want me to do and I'll redo whichever gets the most votes.

Impact Wrestling – June 24, 2015: I Want To Believe

Impact Wrestling

Date: June 24, 2015

Location: Impact Zone, Orlando, Florida

Commentators: Josh Matthews, D'Angelo Dinero

Tonight is the go home show for Slammiversary, but it's also a special live(ish) episode which has been built up as a big deal. However, there's also the major show next week with the World Title showdown between champion Kurt Angle and the undefeated Ethan Carter III. It's not really clear which of these are the biggest or which is going to take a backseat to the others. Let's get to it.

Ethan Carter III and Tyrus arrive and have a great idea in mind for Kurt Angle's surprise opponent.

We recap last week with Full Metal Mayhem being announced for tonight.

Here's World Champion Kurt Angle with something to say. Carter's road to the title stops next week, so why doesn't he just bring out the mystery opponent right now. This brings out Carter and Tyrus with the former saying Angle looks like it's going to take an army of 10,000 men to drag him off his mountain. However, it's going to take one and guess who that one is going to be. Angle cuts him off and says two things are going to happen: Carter is going to tap next week and the mystery opponent is going to tap tonight.

Carter: "Tap-a-roo Kurt!" Ethan lists off all the people he's defeated and knows he can beat anyone. "Bring forth your heroes and I will sacrifice them on my altar of perfection." Angle says no one can help Carter next week because he's tapping out next week. Carter teases coming to the ring but instead introduces the mystery opponent: MATT HARDY! Yeah that Matt Hardy. It really doesn't make it any bigger of a deal when you think about it extra.

X-Division Title: Tigre Uno vs. Low Ki vs. Grado

Tournament final so the title is vacant coming in. Low Ki slaps Grado in the face to start but Grado comes back with some snap jabs, only to get chopped back down. Tigre gets back in and is knocked down just as fast but Grado takes too much time going up top, allowing Low Ki to shove him down and hit Warrior's Way for...an elimination at 2:24. That's the first mention of this not being one fall to a finish. Tigre gets a quick two off a rollup but Ki kicks him down. Ki gets crotched on top though and a Phoenix Splash gives Tigre the title at 5:11 total.

Rating: C-. I feel sorry for the X-Division guys because they're stuck with these five minute matches and no time to ever develop anything but it's supposed to be this big deal. Tigre Uno is just another guy holding the title for a meaningless reign before the main eventers take over around Destination X time next year.

Bram takes over an interview and again calls out any former members of the roster. He leaves and someone with a big glove grabs JB's shoulder. JB: "It's time!"

Taryn Terrell yells at Marti and Jade for not taking care of Kong and Brooke last week. This Sunday, it's a 3-2 handicap match, because why have a title match when you can have a match that belongs on any given episode of TV?

We run down the Slammiversary card: James Storm vs. Magnus, Jesse Godderz vs. Robbie E., Lashley/Mr. Anderson vs. Tyrus/Ethan Carter III. That's all we have so far, plus the aforementioned handicap match.

Velvet Sky vs. Angelina Love

If Velvet wins, she's back on the roster full time. Sky takes her down to start and throws Love to the floor for a whip into the post. Back in and Angelina pulls her off the middle rope and hits Lights Out for two, setting off a lot of screaming at the referee. A Stunner plants Love for the pin out of nowhere at 5:24.

Rating: D. Yay. I mean that with full sincerity. I'm so glad that a

Knockout who was nothing above average on her best day in the ring is back to take a spot and some of the spotlight away from the awesome Dollhouse act. Sky and Love stopped being interesting a few years ago when it was clear that nearly every story they were ever involved with was about the Beautiful People. Boring match here and the ending does nothing to me.

The Dirty Heels don't remember learning about tables, ladders and chairs in wrestling camp, but think the dirtier things get, the better their chances.

Another playtime is over vignette.

MVP is back and rips on internet journalists. The war with the Rising is still on. It should be noted that these backstage segments are being shot with a really bad camera, which makes everything look like it's about half a second slower than it should be.

Dirty Heels vs. Wolves

Full Metal Mayhem, meaning TLC but with pins. If the Wolves win they're champions, but if the Heels win then there's one more match. The Heels (Austin Aries/Bobby Roode) throw the weapons out before the Wolves (Eddie Edwards/Davey Richards) come to the ring. It's a brawl to start and all four get chairs, with the Wolves knocking the Heels' chairs out of their hands to send them back to the floor. Aries and Roode take a breather on the floor but are smart enough to raise a ladder to stop a double suicide dive.

We take a break and come back with the Heels in control and taking in seat in some chairs for stereo chinlocks. The Wolves fight up and bring in some weapons to clean house. They knock the Heels to the floor for three straight suicide dives before a trashcan lid shot/falcon's arrow gets two on Roode. Davey wraps a chain around his boot but gets caught in the Last Chancery, only to have Edwards make a save.

Back up and a missile dropkick/powerbomb combination puts Edwards through a table for two. The Wolves toss into a kick (with the chain over the boot) gets a very close two but Aries gets caught inside a trashcan for

chair shots and a double dropkick from the top. The Wolves load up Aries, still in the trashcan, for a powerbomb but Roode low blows Eddie to put Aries on top for the pin at 18:13.

Rating: B. I don't care. That's the problem with this series: it feels like they're trying to copy the awesome three way tag team series last year but the matches really aren't all that great. They're just going through the motions and having decent matches, but there's nothing that makes me want to watch them fight five times.

Matt Hardy doesn't think much of Ethan Carter III and doesn't explain why he agreed to fight for him tonight. Carter comes up and says if Hardy wants a title shot, he needs to kiss the ring. Hardy asks what happens if Carter loses next week.

And now, here are Jeff Jarrett and Karen Jarrett of Global Force Wrestling. Jeff says he's shocked that he's here too. A week ago, he got a message from TNA management, who asked him to come back for a match. He almost hung up there because he doesn't even wrestle for his own promotion. However, they said it was his own match: the King of the Mountain match at Slammiversary.

It brought back a lot of memories for him, such as Kurt Angle jumping to TNA and Samoa Joe headbutting Angle and busting him open and a punk kid from north Georgia named AJ Styles becoming the greatest wrestler this company ever had. Or a team called Beer Money becoming the best team this company ever produced and Eric Young having more TV shows than Ryan Seacrest.

Over the last fourteen months, Jarrett has spent all his time building up Global Force Wrestling, but he started thinking about what his wife would think about all this. Karen talks about all the time and effort they've put into Global Force Wrestling, which is now their life. But then Jeff started talking about all his memories and she understood what this meant to him.

She's still not sure why they're here, but she knows this is what they need to be doing. This morning she was on the phone with Sonjay Dutt, and it became clear to her that her husband didn't leave on his terms. This

Sunday, Jarrett is finishing this on his terms one last time. So yeah, after all the hype for the hours before this show, it seems that it's Jarrett coming in for one match on a nothing show and that's it for now. Some game changer.

Bram vs. Vader

Yes, that Vader, who wrestled one match for TNA back in 2003. Vader is in workout gear and runs Bram over to start before hitting his big clothesline. More power offense sets up the Vader Bomb for two and Bram hits him in the ribs with a pipe for the DQ at 3:40.

Rating: F. Considering Vader is about 58 years old, this wasn't bad. What is bad is the fact that they actually had Bram hit him with a metal pipe instead of pinning him like he should have done to a veteran like Vader. This dumb, dumb booking is so old at this point, but at least Vader looked fine.

Post match Matt Morgan comes out for the save and knocks Bram to the floor.

Sgt. Chris Melendez vs. Eric Young

This was set up a few weeks back when Young choked Melendez with his prosthetic leg. Young takes over to start as the announcers act like this is the biggest show in the history of ever. Young plants him with a DDT for two and gets the same off a neckbreaker. We hit a chinlock for a bit before Young tries to rip the leg off again. Melendez fights back, ducks his head and gets piledriven for the pin at 3:47. This was a squash.

Rating: D. The match sucked for the most part and I don't like Young, but this was the only way this booking should have gone. Young is a former World Champion and spent the last month fighting Kurt Angle. Melendez is a rookie with a handicap and no important wins to his name. There was no reason for this to be a competitive match and it wasn't in the slightest.

Back from a break with the Rising fighting the Beat Down Clan because THESE TWO TEAMS HAVE TO FIGHT FOREVER BECAUSE THERE IS NOTHING ELSE THEY CAN POSSIBLY EVER DO. Hernandez returns and helps the BDC clean house.

Match #5 in the Tag Team Title series is next week. Also next week: Taryn defends the Knockouts Title against Brooke and Awesome Kong.

Matt Hardy vs. Kurt Angle

Non-title. Hardy takes over to start as Josh (incorrectly) calls this a first time ever match. Angle slams Matt down and grabs a chinlock. A quick slugout sets up rolling Germans from Angle followed by an Angle Slam for two. With both guys down, Josh announces Aries vs. Richards for Slammiversary with the winner getting to pick the stipulations for the fifth match next week. Matt misses the moonsault and gets Germaned some more, only to come back with a Side Effect. The Twist of Fate gets two but Angle countered a second attempt into the ankle lock for the tap at 6:58.

Rating: C. This was fine. Matt was a weird choice for an opponent when Carter has his own personal bodyguard walking around but almost never having a match of his own. Still though, good enough here, even though it was just trading finishers for a few minutes until they got to the ending.

Ethan Carter III and Tyrus come out but Angle fights them off and makes Carter tap to end the show.

Overall Rating: D. This was like TNA's Greatest Hits in one night. Let's see: gimmick match that didn't need to be a gimmick match, a bunch of returns that don't mean much, a table war that no one wants to see, a legend beating a young up and comer for no logical reason and a meaningless title change.

When the big news broke about the Jarretts being back, I had hope. I wanted to believe that something was actually going to change around here because I want it to change. I want TNA to be fun again, but instead it's the same stuff we've seen forever: short term thinking with stuff like Slammiversary being treated like the least important show since....well since their last pay per view actually.

It's so frustrating watching a company that has so many good pieces consistently screw things up. There was so much potential over the years

in TNA but they've spent so much time messing up everything over the years that I can't bring myself to buy into them again. Now it seems like their time is measured in months and then...they're probably going to hang around because Dixie can talk people into letting her get on TV and then screw up another deal, all the while wasting all the talent and potential they have. The show tried, but as usual they were going in the wrong direction most of the night.

Results

Tigre Uno b. Grado and Low Ki – Phoenix splash to Low Ki

Velvet Sky b. Angelina Love – Stunner

Dirty Heels b. Wolves – Low blow to Edwards

Vader b. Bram via DQ when Bram used a pipe

Eric Young b. Chris Melendez – Piledriver

Kurt Angle b. Matt Hardy – Ankle lock

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NXT – June 24, 2015: In Which Mojo Rawley And Sami Zayn Sit On A Couch

NXT

Date: June 24, 2015

Location: Full Sail University, Winter Park, Florida

Commentators: Byron Saxton, Rich Brennan, Corey Graves

We're getting closer to the big July 4th showdown for the title and that means Finn Balor needs to rack up a few wins. Up first we have the second half of the big sitdown interview with Balor, which is likely focusing on his time in New Japan Pro Wrestling. Other than that we might get some fallout from Joe vs. Owens from last week. Let's get to it.

We open with the roster on the stage and HHH talking about the loss of Dusty Rhodes. Dusty was family to everyone on this stage because he thought they were his kids. HHH, barely able to keep his voice together, asks for a moment of silence as the bell rings ten times.

Opening sequence.

Here's Hideo Itami for his first comments since being injured. He acknowledges that he'll be out another 3-4 months due to his shoulder injury but promises to come back and win the NXT Title. This brings out Kevin Owens, who is glad Itami will be in Japan for the July 4 show, but it's cute to hear Itami imply that Owens won't be leaving Japan as NXT Champion. Owens slips up on the word delusional but makes up for it by saying he sounds like Itami trying to speak English.

However, there are two things Kevin wants to make clear. First of all, he didn't hurt Itami because if he did, there's no chance Itami would be standing there. The other reason is because Owens wants an apology for Itami implying that Owens attacked him. Itami calls him a terrible human being, so Owens thinks that if he's going to be accused of hurting Itami, he might as well do it. Kevin comes to the ring but Balor comes out for

the save, only to have Rhyno jump Balor and knock him off the stage.

Balor vs. Rhyno later tonight.

Enzo Amore/Colin Cassady vs. Jason Jordan/Sylvester LeFort

The entrance sounds a bit faster this week but Enzo makes up for it by saying he sees two mushrooms from Mario's world in the ring: they're about to get flattened. Cassady's part didn't sound very smooth but he got the lines out well enough. I had been wondering what happened to LeFort. Colin puts Sylvester down to start and slams Enzo down on top of him for two, only to have Jordan tag himself in and catch Enzo in a slam. LeFort's cobra clutch doesn't get him very far so it's quickly off to Jordan, who gets rolled up for the pin at 2:32.

After last week's main event, Joe talks about hearing the people chant LET THEM FIGHT. He got the fight he wanted but he didn't get the fight he wanted (not a typo) because Owens is still walking. Joe wants Owens again.

Dana Brooke vs. Cassie

Brooke has Emma in her corner and Cassie is K.C. Cassidy. A quick rollup gets two on Brooke and a headscissors puts her down again. That's enough for Dana as she throws Cassie down and gets two off a slam. Dana cranks on an arm and leg at the same time while advising Cassie to tap. Cassie comes back with something like a Thesz press and some clotheslines but Dana Whiplashes her off the top for the pin at 3:36.

Rating: D+. This wasn't quite a squash as Cassie got to show some spunk, which means she'll probably be pushed as something more serious when she gets some more ring time. Brooke is still definitely a work in progress, but if there's one thing NXT has shown it can do, it's take their girls and improve improve them about ten fold overnight.

Charlotte isn't worried about Dana.

It's time for part two of Balor's sitdown interview, which starts with some clips of Sami Zayn hanging out at his house. Balor likes to put jigsaw puzzles together (amen brother) and still plays with Legos while

watching old pay per views. Suddenly I'm digging the heck out of this guy.

NXT head trainer Matt Bloom (actually called that here instead of Jason Albert) talks about meeting Fergal Devitt in Japan about eight years ago. We get some pictures of them hanging out over the years, including Bloom pulling Devitt's pants down as they posed for a picture. Bloom explains the concept of a young boy and we see some stills and videos of Fergal's time in new Japan. Prince Devitt was someone obsessed with trying to master the Japanese style and he felt more like Prince than Fergal over there.

Then WWE came calling right around the annual Tokyo Dome show and Fergal wasn't sure if he could do it or not. He had to try though because there was nothing left for him to prove in Japan so here he is, with Sami Zayn and Mojo Rawley sitting on his couch in the background. He calls it an incredible journey but it's still continuing. Next week: the NXT days.

Bull Dempsey has been trying to get in better shape without much success. This is shown through a series of Instagram shots of Dempsey falling asleep while trying to train. So he's narcoleptic instead of just fat?

Hype Bros vs. Sawyer Fulton/Angelo Dawkins

That would of course be Rawley and Zack Ryder. You know what? Why not? It's not like Ryder has ANYTHING better to do. Mojo runs Dawkins over to start and it's off to Ryder for a nice dropkick to Fulton. Back to Rawley for HAMMER TIME, allowing the amateur guys to take over with the old Benjamin jumping over Haas' back onto Mojo's back spot. A backdrop ends Angelo's offense and it's off to Ryder for all his usual stuff. The Broski Boot gets two and everything breaks down. Rawley holds Dawkins up for a middle rope Rough Ryder and the pin at 4:00.

Rating: C-. Ryder and Rawley have a weird chemistry together and I've always been a fan of Zack so it's cool to see him do something other than losing to Rusev in 45 seconds. Fulton, Dawkins and Jordan seem like the perfect choice for a stable along with Chad Gable but for some reason the Shoot Nation stable was called off. They're still fine for roles like this though and you can easily rally them together later.

Eva Marie wants a match but Regal needs proof that she has more than charm.

Finn Balor vs. Rhyno

Kevin Owens comes out and shoves Byron away from his chair to do commentary. Balor takes it to Rhyno to start and slugs him down in the corner. Rhyno gets sent out to the floor as Owens denies attacking Itami again. A big flip dive puts Rhyno down again and gets two back inside. Owens promises to win on July 4, even though he doesn't know what it is. "I'm Canadian so it doesn't mean anything to me. Independence Day? Will Smith? Good movie."

Rhyno gets in his first offense with a spinebuster and puts on a bearhug. Owens has completely taken over commentary by ripping on Brennan, because Kevin doesn't believe that Brennan has talked to anyone on the roster. "I've seen them running away from you." Owens now has his arm around Saxton and has pulled Byron's head onto his shoulder. We take a break and come back with Balor fighting out of a second bearhug.

Owens is annoyed at all the questions Brennan is asking him as Balor gets two off a dropkick to the side of the head. That earns him a northern lights suplex but Balor staggers him with a Pele Kick. The Coup de Grace is loaded up but Owens comes down for a distraction, allowing Rhyno to hit the belly to belly. The Gore is countered by a kick to the face though and the Sling Blade sets up the Coup de Grace for the pin at 11:40.

Rating: C+. This was fine. The idea behind Rhyno is that he's intense enough to lose every big match he's in, beat some jobbers, and then come back for another loss to make someone look good. There's awesome value in that and it's something you can never have enough of. Balor vs. Owens is going to be awesome, especially if the demon shows up.

Owens comes in and double teams Balor until Samoa Joe comes in for the save, likely setting up a tag match next week.

Overall Rating: C. Not their best show this week but they did a good job of setting up Balor vs. Owens in less than two weeks. Other than that

they have enough feuds and stories going on to set up a big non-Takeover show before we get to the REALLY big stuff down the line. Good effort this week, even though it was mainly a placeholder outside of the main story.

Results

Enzo Amore/Colin Cassady b. Jason Jordan/Sylvester LeFort – Rollup to Jordan

Dana Brooke b. Cassie – Whiplash

Hype Bros b. Sawyer Fulton/Angelo Dawkins – Middle rope Rough Ryder to Dawkins

Finn Balor b. Rhyno – Coup de Grace

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Monday Nitro – January 31, 2000: That's About The

Dumbest Thing They Could Do

Monday Nitro #225

Date: January 31, 2000

Location: First Union Arena, Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania

Attendance: 7,514

Commentators: Tony Schiavone, Mark Madden, Mike Tenay

We're officially in the Madden era now, meaning things are clearly dying all around us. The big story here is that Sid is World Champion again after winning it back from Nash after having it stripped earlier in the night after an off air referee's decision. Also, Ric Flair is back. Let's get to it.

We get a quick clip of the Nash vs. Sid three day saga from last week.

Nash isn't going to be here tonight but he's named Jeff acting commissioner.

Here's the NWO to get things going complete with their girls. Jeff repeats that Nash isn't going to be here tonight but he's in charge. Well done with already changing the power. Steiner rips on the women here in Wilkes-Barre and offers the Harris Brothers a spot on the team. Well you had to expect that would happen. It's back to Jeff, who says he's going to get the first shot at Sid at SuperBrawl. Tonight it's Jeff/the Twins vs. Sid/two partners of his choosing. Jarrett is open to bribes and that's it. They kept this short and got right to the point so well done.

Sid, Flair and Harlem Heat arrive in order.

Funk asks Arn to go get Flair but Anderson tells him to go find Flair himself.

Cruiserweight Title Tournament First Round: Lash Leroux vs. Evan Karagias

Lash makes the mistake of going after 3 Count to start and walks into a powerslam from Evan. The band takes him to the floor and Evan hits a big dive to take them out again. Back in and Lash knocks him off the ropes and does the Bourbon Street Blues (the punches into the splits) but 3

Count makes another save. Evan's full nelson doesn't work but Lash comes back with a Diamond Cutter Russian legsweep (Whiplash 2000) for the pin. Really, really dull stuff here.

The NWO sends their bad catering to Sid.

Dustin Rhodes tells us not to try this at home. That's not something you often hear in WCW.

David, Crowbar and Daffney are insane and Crowbar talks like Gordon Solie. Now this actually sounds insane instead of some of the other modern CRAZY wrestlers. The Mamalukes attack and the match starts fast.

Tag Team Titles: Mamalukes vs. David Flair/Crowbar

They head outside to start with Vito being backdropped onto a bunch of snow. That's about it for being outside as everyone comes inside with Crowbar carrying a shovel. I'm going out on a limb and guessing this is a street fight. Vito drives a trashcan lid into David's crotch and the other two come inside.

Cue Ms. Hancock to watch from the aisle as Johnny slams Crowbar a few times. Crowbar fights back with a slingshot legdrop onto a chair onto Johnny's face. It's table time but Crowbar, being a bit off, puts the table on top of Johnny instead of the other way around. Disco breaks up a moonsault, allowing Vito to splash Crowbar through the table to retain.

Rating: D. Another ECW style brawl with too many moving parts to have any really stand out. I'm sure we'll get one more pay per view matches out of these teams, even though they've pretty definitively eliminated any chance of the titles changing back. At least Crowbar and Flair are entertaining with how out there they've gotten.

Brian Knobbs has a bribe for Jarrett in exchange for putting Finlay in the ring against Luger later. Jeff promises they'll be in there at the same time.

Here's Booker T. with something to say but his music stops halfway down the aisle. This brings out J. Biggs who says that music is the property of Harlem Heat, meaning only Stevie Ray and Big T. can listen to it.

Instead, Booker can use this song instead. A generic rock song plays and Biggs calls it a meaningless song for a meaningless man.

Now we get to the infamous part of this story: Biggs says that the T, as in of Booker T., is also Harlem Heat property, so Booker can't use it anymore, or the flames on his attire either. So yes, somehow this feud is over Harlem Heat, which is apparently an entity instead of just a tag team, owning the rights to a letter of the alphabet. Harlem Heat leaves and Midnight shows up to go after Biggs, but Harlem Heat comes back out for the save. We're officially in one of the dumbest stories WCW ever did and you know how much ground that covers.

3 Count beats up Norman Smiley.

Jarrett tells Finlay that he'll be in the same ring as Luger, as he referees a match between the Total Package and Brian Knobbs.

Norman gets inside the Demon's casket and the lid closes. Instead of fighting for the US Title, he's inside a coffin to help him fight off a boy band.

Kidman vs. The Wall

Rematch of that Cell match they had a few weeks back. Kidman slugs away to start but gets kicked in the face. A backbreaker sets up some choking from the Wall, before he blocks a sunset flip with even more choking. Well no one ever accused him of being the most versatile guy in the world. Wall plants him with a clothesline but YOU CAN'T PUT KIDMAN ON THE TOP ROPE, as he kicks Wall away and hits a missile dropkick. His high cross body is countered into a powerslam though and Wall grabs him by the throat again. This brings out Vampiro to kick Wall in the back, giving Kidman a roll up win.

Rating: D+. That ends the run of match of the night for Kidman but given who he was in there with, it's hard to argue against him being the hottest thing in the company at the moment. Kidman is trying really hard lately and was able to carry Wall to a passable match. That alone makes him into a more impressive performer than most.

Here's Flair for his big return speech. He brags about being bigger than the Steelers, Eagles and Pirates and lists off some hockey players who aren't as big a star as he is. Ten years ago there were some people who could run with him, but Space Mountain still has the longest line. A few weeks ago the Powers That Be asked him to be the commissioner, but he turned them down because he's the greatest wrestler alive today. He came up here because the deal was right and now he needs to say something to Terry Funk.

Flair can't believe that Funk has been implying that Flair would support him, because there's a big difference between Ric Flair and Terry Funk. This brings out Funk, who is loudly booed. He calls Flair banana nosed and horse toothed but praises him for all those World Titles. However, Funk senses some jealousy in Ric's voice. Maybe it comes from Mick Foley saying Flair isn't in Funk's league in his book? STOP PROMOTING OTHER COMPANY'S STUFF!

Anyway, Flair needs to grow up and help in the fight against the NWO, but then tells him to go be Governor of North Carolina and leave the fight to himself and Arn Anderson. Flair wants to fight, even though he's head to toe in Armani. Funk comes in, punches him down, and puts on the spinning toe hold until security comes out for the save. So yeah, they're fighting over who is a bigger legend and Flair seems to be a heel, even though the fans booed Funk. This is one of the top stories in the company at the moment.

Jarrett thinks Funk and Flair will be Sid's partners.

Sting is in some movie.

Sid isn't worried about the NWO.

Ms. Hancock wants to know why Lenny and Lodi haven't been wearing their suits but they say they're done. That's not cool with Hancock, who reminds them of the West Hollywood Blonds stunt that almost got them fired. Lenny, and I quote: "Oh yeah, we're REAL lucky to have a job in WCW." They're sick of this stupid "gimmick" and tell Hancock to come find them when the bun is out of her hair. So much for the fourth wall.

Total Package vs. Brian Knobbs

Liz and Luger have the Sting stuff with them. Fit Finlay is guest referee here for no apparent reason. Knobbs jumps Luger to start and elbows him in the face. The Pit Stop is loaded up but Finlay pushes Brian's arm down for some reason. Knobbs responds by....doing it anyway. They head outside with Knobbs whipping him into the barricade, only to have Finlay blast Knobbs from behind.

Back in and Brian, apparently not hurt by a shot to the head, fires off clotheslines and drops some elbows as this is the most motivated he's been in years. Brian goes up for a splash but Finlay stands in front of him, allowing Liz to hit Knobbs with a bat. That's it for Finlay as he leaves, allowing Luger to Pillmanize Brian's arm. We get some smack talk about Hogan and I'm assuming it's a no contest.

Rating: D-. So we have Finlay vs. Knobbs in an actually interesting feud (gah that's hard to say) and then Luger wanting to fight Hogan for no reason other than the script says so. Knobbs now has a broken arm, so maybe he'll be off screen for a bit? Somehow this was better than I was expecting.

Norman Smiley comes out of a coffin dressed as the Demon. Egads.

Dale Torborg is mad that someone has stolen his outfit. So much for staying in character.

Shane Helms vs. Norman Smiley

Norman is the Demon because he's the original Santino Marella. Helms starts fast with a Russian legsweep but Norman pops up like a skilled guy stuck in a horrible comedy gimmick and slams Shane down. In the middle of this match of all things, we hear that Hogan will be on Thunder this week. That doesn't get a big segment of its own? Well of course it doesn't. Helms busts out an airplane spin but Norman comes back with a giant swing. It's time to dance but the other 3 Count members have to be dispatched. The Norman's Conquest is good for the quick submission.

Cue Torborg with the cops to chase Norman off.

Page and Kimberly are in the back when the Mamalukes come up. Vito gets a quick feel of her but Kimberly thinks it was Disco, who calls her a bimbo for accusing him. Page beats Disco up out of principle.

Diamond Dallas Page vs. Disco Inferno

Page drags Inferno into the arena and they get all up in DJ Ran's area. DJ Ran still had a job in 2000??? They fight through the crowd with Page in control and the bell finally rings once they're inside. A top rope clothesline and Rock Bottom knock Disco even sillier (yet doesn't mess with that perfect hair) but he comes back with, what else, a low blow. Disco's usual neckbreaker and middle rope elbow set up the dancing, only to have Page plant him with a helicopter bomb. The Diamond Cutter ends this in a hurry, as it should have. I guess Page is a full on face again.

Jeff Jarrett/Harris Twins vs. Terry Funk/Sid Vicious/Ric Flair

And there's no Flair. It's a brawl in the aisle to start with Sid fighting the Twins and Funk not being able to keep up. Sid takes we'll say Ron inside and Funk throws in a chair, which the Twins quickly throw back out. You can hear a fan complaining about his eye hurting because the fans are that silent. Ron gets backdropped to the floor but Don breaks up a powerbomb on Jarrett. So the powerbomb is legal again?

Things settle down with Funk working on Ron's leg, only to get chaired in the back by Don. Off to Jarrett to hammer away in the corner, only to have Funk grab a quick piledriver for a breather. It's off to Sid to clean house and here comes Flair to go after Funk as we flash back to 1989. Actually that's a great thing. Security drags him away and Ron gets chokeslammed with Don making a save. That earns Don a powerbomb but Jeff comes in with the guitar to knock Sid cold for the pin.

Rating: D. So is Flair a heel? Because that would be about the dumbest thing they could do right now. Therefore, we'll go with the idea that Flair is a heel at the moment. The match was there so Flair could come out and attack Funk to set up their match down the road, even though I'm not sure how much interest there is in the two of them fighting, as they're a combined 106 years old at this point.

Overall Rating: D-. So they bring Flair back and turn him heel, again leaving Sid and Funk as the top faces in this company. At this point, I really can't bother getting annoyed anymore. Between that and Finlay and Knobbs having one of the most developed stories on the roster, this company really is just melting before our eyes. On top of all that, it's becoming clearer and clearer that Jarrett is just going to hold the US Title without frequently, or even occasionally, defending it, meaning a big chunk of the roster is just running around fighting for no reason. It's such a waste but it's what we're stuck with.

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