

# Wrestler of the Day – February 1: Jack Brisco

Today we'll be getting a good old American and my favorite old school wrestler: Jack Brisco.

Jack started off as an amateur wrestler at Oklahoma State University and would win an NCAA Championship. After kicking around what would become the Mid-South territory, Brisco would head to Florida and dominate the territory for several years. Brisco's greatest achievement saw him win the NWA Title from Harley Race in 1973 and would hold it for over a year. Here's a title defense from that first reign in Japan against Japanese legend Giant Baba.

## NWA World Title: Jack Brisco vs. Giant Baba

2/3 falls. Baba drives him down by the arm to start as the audience is silent. The Giant cranks on the arm in the slow start to the match. Brisco goes after the leg and they hit the mat for a bit. Baba leans up and puts on a chinlock but Jack goes back to the leg lock. The chinlock breaks Jack's grip again and they get back to their feet...before going back to the leg lock on the challenger.

Jack stands up and ties his legs into Baba's before leaning forward for a few two counts. Baba finally kicks him away but Jack casually takes him down and works over the leg even more. When he realizes that's only getting him so far, Brisco tries to keep Baba's shoulders down for a pin but Baba slips out and gets on top of Jack. He pulls on Brisco's arms to work over the upper body before adding a boot between Jack's shoulders for more pressure.

The hold stays on for a few minutes until Brisco tries to run away, only to drive his own shoulder into the buckle. It breaks the hold but Baba

comes back with a series of chops and a dropkick, followed by a Russian legsweep for the pin and the first fall. Brisco is dragged to the corner by a few men and looks like he was hit by a bus.

The second fall begins with a swinging neckbreaker from Baba for two before Jack grabs both of the Giant's legs to slow him down. Baba is taken down and a knee drop gets two before the champion grabs a chinlock. Giant finally fights up with a top wristlock and scores with a big boot to the face for two. Brisco looks terrified but comes back with a belly to back suplex and the figure four to tie things up at a fall apiece.

Baba is badly limping as we start the third fall. He hides in the corner until Brisco is tired of waiting and drives in knees to Baba's injured leg. A big elbow drop on the leg has Baba cringing but he chops his way out of another figure four attempt. He kicks out of another and gets his second wind. A few knees to the face and a second Russian legsweep get two but Brisco comes back with a knee crusher. Out of nowhere Baba hits a quick running clothesline for the pin and the title to send the crowd into....nothing resembling a frenzy.

**Rating:** C-. The match wasn't bad but the first fall was pretty dull stuff. Baba was a different kind of big man as he really just wrestled like a normal sized guy but happened to be huge. Brisco got so much better when he was fired up but the first fall didn't do the match any favors.

Brisco would get the title back a week later and hold it for another year before losing it to Terry Funk in Florida. Jack would be in Japan a lot over his career, primarily in All Japan. Here's a match against Abdullah the Butcher in the 1981 Champions' Carnival, a major tournament in Japan.

#### Jack Brisco vs. Abdullah the Butcher

Butcher jumps Brisco during the entrances and won't let him in as the streamers are thrown into the ring. Jack is sent into the post but

finally scores with some shoulders through the ropes as the opening bell rings. The fans actually cheer for Brisco as he scores with some hard left hands. Butcher will have none of that though and sends Jack outside but Brisco hits him in the head with the bell to get a breather. Back in and more left hands have the bloody Butcher in trouble but he headbutts Jack right back to the floor. They head into the crowd where the fist fight continues and I can't see anything until it's a quick double countout.

After several international tours as world champion, it was back to Florida where Jack would dominate the territory again, including this \$5000 challenge match against Buzz Sawyer from some point in 1981.

### Jack Brisco vs. Buzz Sawyer

Brisco snaps off a series of armdrags and Buzz rolls to the floor. Back in and it's a hiptoss into a short arm scissors on Sawyer with Jack rolling him around the ring without breaking the hold. Sawyer still can't break the hold as Gordon Solie tells us that the winner of this gets a shot at NWA World Champion Ric Flair soon after this. Back up and Jack cranks on the arm as Flair comes out to watch the match. Brisco cranks on an armbar until Sawyer counters into a hammerlock of his own. Some stomps to the arm have Jack in more trouble and he can't hiptoss out of the hold. Sawyer lets him up and tries a powerslam, only to have Jack fall on top of him for the pin out of nowhere.

**Rating:** D. This was pretty awful with the arm work eating up most of the match and then the ending coming out of nowhere. I guess the idea was to set up the idea of Flair being able to lose the title on a moment's notice, but it could have used a better match leading up to that ending.

Brisco would move on to the Mid-Atlantic territory for an awesome feud with Roddy Piper. The Hot Scot refused to fight Brisco for his Jack's Mid-Atlantic Title unless he was paid \$10,000. After months of Brisco going after Piper, here's the showdown from July of 1982.

## Mid-Atlantic Title: Roddy Piper vs. Jack Brisco

Brisco shoves Piper away to start and a hiptoss sends Poper to the floor. Back in and Roddy tries some amateur stuff and is just in over his head. Roddy tries to pull the hair and is easily sent out to the floor before heading back inside for a brawl. Jack grabs a headlock before drilling him with a hard clothesline and we hit the headlock again. They fight over rollups with the headlock still applied but Roddy can't break it up.

Piper gets back up and rams Jack face first into the buckle a few times but STILL can't escape. Jack tries to climb the corner with the headlock for a takeover but gets countered with a belly to back suplex to break the hold. Piper grabs a front facelock and actually has Brisco in trouble for a change. He rolls Jack over for a cover but gets caught with his feet on the ropes like a good villain is supposed to.

Brisco is sent face first into the buckle but comes back with some right hands from the knees. Piper throws him out to the floor and then back inside for a slugout followed by a sleeper from Roddy. Brisco almost breaks the hold and Piper pulls him back down by the hair to get it back to the mat. Jack comes back with a belly to back suplex and both guys are down. Now it's Brisco with a sleeper of his own and Piper is in big trouble until he rakes the eyes. Piper is rammed face first into the buckle and they slug it out with Roddy being knocked to the floor where he finds a roll of coins to knock Brisco silly for the pin and the title.

**Rating:** B-. I was really digging the drama here as Piper was finally backed into a corner and had to fight, which was something he did as well as anyone else. This is what a veteran like Brisco is supposed to do: put over a rookie like Piper at a level that he's never been able to reach on his own.

One of Brisco's last major appearances before his retirement in February of 1985 was at Starrcade 1983, defending the Mid-Atlantic Tag Team Titles with his brother Jerry against Ricky Steamboat/Jay Youngblood.

## Tag Titles: Ricky Steamboat/Jay Youngblood vs. Brisco Brothers

The Brothers would be Jerry, who you might remember as one of Vince's Stooges in the Attitude Era and the legendary former world champion Jack. They're defending here against the guys they took the belts from. Jack and Steamboat start things off in what sounds like a dream match. It's a feeling out process to start with neither guy being able to get any kind of advantage to start. Steamboat does some fast leapfrogs but Brisco grabs the ropes to avoid a chop. Mosca, the big guy mentioned earlier, is referee here.

Jerry comes in to work on the arm for a bit before it's back to Jack for an armbar. Jerry comes in again and pounds away in the corner but Ricky chops him down and tags in Jay. Youngblood counters a slam into an armdrag on Jerry before bringing Steamboat back in to pound on the arm as well. Jay jumps off the top onto the arm as well but it's off to Jack again to drop Steamboat throat first onto the top rope.

A quick suplex gets two for Jerry and he hooks a short arm scissors to keep Ricky in trouble. Ricky escapes in an impressive power display by lifting him off the mat and dropping him down on his back. Hot tag brings in Jay and things break down. The Briscos double team Youngblood to take over again but Jerry can only get two off a suplex. Jerry tries his abdominal stretch cradle but Jay kicks out again. He tries again but rolls Jay into the corner for another tag to Steamboat and the future dragon cleans house. A double chop puts Jerry down and Steamboat slams Jay down onto Jerry for the pin and the titles.

**Rating:** C+. Nice tag match here to give Steamboat and Youngblood their fifth tag titles. Yeah even back then there were teams who would get a bunch of titles in just a few years. Anyway, the Briscos would be retired

soon after this while Youngblood would die in 1985 due to injuries suffered in the match. Good stuff here though.

Jack would join up with his brother in the WWF in 1984 as he was almost done with his career. Here's one of his only matches in the company, from November 3, 1984.

### Jack Brisco/Jerry Brisco vs. Steve Lombardi/Charlie Fulton

Jack and Steve get things going with Lombardi being grabbed by the arm before it's off to Jerry to stay on that arm. Off to Fulton vs. Jack with the Brisco cranking on the Fulton's arm again. The Brothers change a few more times to work on the arm with Jerry beating up both jobbers like it's nothing. Jack puts Lombardi in the figure four and we're done quick.

Unfortunately Jack Brisco is one of those older generation wrestlers who doesn't have a lot of full matches available online. At the same time though, he's one of those guys that you often hear listed among the best of all time. If you want to see a guy that can build up a match into something special with patient and skill, you'll find no better than Jack Brisco. If you have time to watch his stuff, check him out and go to school.

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# Impact Wrestling – February 6, 2014: Same Problems With A Scottish Accent

## Impact Wrestling

Date: February 6, 2014

Location: Hydro Arena, Glasgow, Scotland

Commentators: Mike Tenay, Tazz

We're still in Scotland as we're setting the stage for Lockdown. The big story of course is the reveal of MVP as the new investor, starting the big feud for the year. MVP is a decent enough choice but they just need to do something else around here. The power struggle stuff is so played out in TNA but at least there's a new face involved in things. Let's get to it.

We open with a fight in progress.

## Eric Young vs. Abyss

This is Monster's Ball, meaning anything goes. They're fighting in the back with Young actually in control and bringing Abyss through the entrance. Abyss comes back with a big right hand and some forearms to the back and the opening bell rings. Young crawls over to a trashcan full of weapons and blasts Abyss in the back with a pipe to get the advantage, only to have Abyss backdrop him on the floor. It's table time but Young hits a quick dropkick to get a breather.

Young goes for the mast but Abyss slams him into the apron to get a breather. They head inside for the first time with Eric coming off the top, only to jump right into Abyss' hands. A hard clothesline drops Young again and Abyss goes outside to get a chair. The chair is placed on Eric's ribs but he manages to turn it on its side to crotch a charging

Abyss. Eric is sent into the corner and out to the apron where he comes back with a missile dropkick for two.

Just as Eric gets some momentum he gets sent face first into the chair in the corner and a chokeslam gets two. Abyss goes outside and gets his bag of tacks before loading up a superplex, only to have Young counter with a sunset powerbomb into the tacks for two. Eric goes up top but Abyss punches him off the top rope and out through the table in a huge crash. Back in and Young somehow gets his foot on the ropes to break the pin so Abyss pulls out the big weapon: Janice, the baseball bat full of nails. Young rips the mask off to save himself and reveal Joseph Park, earning himself the Black Hole Slam for the pin at 9:41.

**Rating:** B-. That might be a bit high but I was digging this match. It wasn't the best hardcore match I've ever seen or anywhere close to it but Young was working well out there. I can tolerate him much more easily when he's not being over the top and stupid which is what we got here. Abyss is a fun character too as there's something awesome about a guy who just breaks stuff.

Park picks up a broken piece of a mirror and sees himself, turning him back into Joseph.

Roode brings Dixie a contract for a title match against Magnus at Lockdown but Dixie is disgusted. She says things have changed around here and she can't just give out title shots. Roode says this isn't his problem so Dixie makes him face Joe tonight for the title shot at Lockdown. Bobby is still annoyed but Dixie implies a lot of help.

Here's MVP for his first speech as the new investor. He's been around the world for the last few years just living life. In his younger days he got in trouble for not realizing the consequences of his actions. It's become clear to him that there are people here in TNA making the same mistakes and he's tired of seeing that every week. Over his career he's made a nice income and then used that money to make more money.



He's found some people that think like he does and it's time for a change. TNA has so much potential but the bad leadership is killing it. That will not happen under his watch but here's Spud for an interruption. Spud thinks MVP should come meet Dixie in person because Dixie loves making new stars. MVP: "Yeah, herself." Spud says that if MVP were to come to Dixie, he would be greeted with open arms. MVP threatens Spud with violence and then announces Magnus vs. Kurt Angle in a non-title match.

Bully Ray says he'll bury Anderson next week but he'll put the next person he sees in a coffin as a preview.

Chris Sabin is in a purple room and says he doesn't accept that Velvet Sky has broken his heart. She's a woman worth fighting for and he's invited her here to this special room for later tonight.

#### Curry Man vs. Bully Ray

Ray comes out with the coffin and says that Curry Man is in the wrong place at the wrong time. He kicks Curry Man's head off and slowly takes off the jacket. This isn't even a match with no bell or referee. Curry Man is laid out with a piledriver and a shout of ANDERSON before Ray throws him in the coffin.

Magnus complains to Dixie but she reminds him that it's a non-title match before checking her makeup. Spud insists she looks beautiful as Ethan comes in. Dixie cuts him off before Ethan can say anything and Ethan isn't pleased, saying Dixie doesn't have time for her own blood. She'll talk to him in a week.

Here's Austin Aries with something to say. As X-Division Champion, he reminds us that it's not the title that makes the man but the man that makes the title. He's held every title in this company and is the man who invented Option C. His intention is to hold the X Title until he can cash it in again but here are the Bro Mans for an interruption. They're just a

distraction for Zema Ion to blast Aries in the back with his Feast or Fired briefcase. Zema wants a referee out here right now and the match is on.

#### X-Division Title: Austin Aries vs. Zema Ion

Ion gets two early near falls before a baseball slide to the back puts Aries down again. Austin comes back with a chop but is sent into the barricade to put him down again. A slingshot DDT gets two on Aries but Ion misses a corkscrew moonsault, allowing Aries to hit a discus forearm and a release belly to back suplex. There's the running corner dropkick and a brainbuster retains Aries' title at 2:11.

Dixie gets Spud ready to meet MVP.

We recap Samuel Shaw revealing his shrine to Christy Hemme last week. This week, Christy asks him what's going on before cutting off their personal relationship.

Roode is tired of appeasing Dixie Carter. Magnus comes up and says Dixie's orders are Roode's job, not favors. Roode needs to stop worrying about favors and start worrying about Joe. The loss last week is brought up and Magnus says he'll tap out anytime in a non-title match. Roode is annoyed and wishes Magnus luck against Angle.

MVP comes in to see Dixie (in her fourth appearance in an hour), who brags about building this company from the ground up. She talks down to him a bit and tries to speak the wrestling language to him, dropping terms like giving a rub and curtain jerking. MVP thinks we should start in the ring in front of the fans and they bicker a bit before MVP leaves. Spud thinks he's a bloody nice bloke.

#### Kurt Angle vs. Magnus

Non-title. Magnus tries to wrestle with Angle to start and it goes as well as you would expect it to. Kurt throws him down before hitting some Rolling Germans and posing a bit. The Angle Slam is blocked with a thumb to the eye but he takes Magnus down again for the ankle lock, drawing in EC3 for the DQ at 2:30.

Ethan goes after Angle's bad knee and blasts it with a chair. He puts Kurt in a leg lock, likely writing off Kurt for knee surgery.

Joe tells Dixie that she started a war with the wrong man. He'll fight a war of attrition or a blitzkrieg and win every time.

Eric Young had to expose Joseph Park for who he was because you have to treat crazy with crazy. He doesn't know what's coming next.

We recap Velvet Sky breaking up with Chris Sabin over the last few weeks.

We're in that purple room with Chris Sabin. This is where he and Velvet had their first kiss and tonight it's going to be special again. Marriage is implied before a confused Velvet comes in. Back from a break and Sabin apologizes to Velvet, calling this a big mistake. He pulls out the ring box and Velvet is very nervous. There's nothing in the box though because Sabin is asking her to get out of his life. He's tired of hearing about Velvet all the time, even when he was World Heavyweight Champion. Therefore next week, it's Sabin vs. Velvet in a match.

We recap the MVP vs. Dixie stuff tonight.

Clip of Joe making Magnus tap last week to become #1 contender.

### Samoa Joe vs. Bobby Roode

Physical start with Joe running over Roode and dropping a knee, only to have Bobby dropkick him off the apron. Back in and a neckbreaker gets two

on Joe and we hit the chinlock as the match slows down. Joe fights up but misses his backsplash, only to catch Roode in a powerslam to get a breather. There's a HUGE handprint on Joe's chest from a chop. Roode fights off the MuscleBuster and blocks the Koquina Clutch before getting caught by both moves for the pin by Joe at 6:54.

**Rating:** C. This was fine and did its job of making Joe look even more like a killer. Clean falls over former world champions are never going to make someone look bad and Joe is on a roll heading into Lockdown. Also, how nice was it to have a match end without any interference? Such a concept.

Here are Spud and Dixie to introduce MVP for the summit. Dixie brings up Magnus to start and talks about how far he's gone in such a short time. Carter complains about the fans not shutting up and tells them to give her the support she needs. This brings MVP to talking about changes that he wants to make. He's tired of Dixie making TNA a place for all her friends to run roughshod over and refuses to be "a butler at a Paula Dean party." Dixie's party is over and MVP smiles at her to end the show.

**Overall Rating:** C-. This show brings up TNA's long running problem of putting so much emphasis on one idea: if you don't like that story, you might as well not watch the show. It's not as bad as it was in the Aces and 8's days, but this show had five Dixie appearances and several other segments that were about her story. Yeah she's getting better in the role, but that's what people said about Aces and 8's and look where that went. There's other good stuff on the show now, but it's still dominated by a power struggle story which isn't what people want to see right now.

## Results

Abyss b. Eric Young – Black Hole Slam

Austin Aries b. Zema Ion – Brainbuster

Kurt Angle b. Magnus via DQ when Ethan Carter III interfered

Samoa Joe b. Bobby Roode – Koquina Clutch

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# NXT – February 5, 2014: The Darkness Is Creeping Up On NXT

## NXT

Date: February 5, 2014

Location: Full Sail University, Winter Park, Florida

Commentators: Byron Saxton, Tensai, Tom Phillips

We're getting close to the end of this taping cycle but things aren't looking all that sluggish for a change. The big stories continue to be Neville vs. Dallas for the title and Sami Zayn wanting another 2/3 falls match against Cesaro. I'm hoping that's it for Zayn in NXT as there's just nothing left for him to do, other than winning a title that he doesn't need anymore. Let's get to it.

Welcome Home.

## Sin Cara vs. Alexander Rusev

Gah with the stupid lighting. This is fallout from Cara saving Xavier Woods from Rusev a few weeks back. Rusev throws him around to start but Cara gets in a kick to the chest and tries a moonsault press. The camera does its best job to hide how short Cara leaves it before Rusev dropkicks

a diving Sin Cara out of the air for one. Cara is easily powered down and Rusev stomps on him even more. A quick springboard cross body and a Tajiri elbow get two on Rusev but he counters a victory roll into the Accolade for the win at 4:43.

**Rating:** D+. Rusev is being treated like the monster he needs to be and that's all that you need to do at this point. The guy is going to be a big time monster on the main shows and it's going to be awesome. Cara was fine out there and the short moonsault was an error rather than the norm like it was for Mistico.

### Alicia Fox vs. Emma

Renee Young joins commentary to add a little flavor. Even Tensai gets up to do the Emma dance and Renee does it as well but not on camera. Fox grabs an arm to start and takes Emma to the ropes but Emma dances a bit. A dropkick puts Emma down again and an elbow to the back breaks up a Dilemma attempt. The great looking bridging northern lights suplex gets two on Emma but she avoids a charge in the corner. The seated cross body in the corner crushes Fox and Emma catapults into the Emma Lock for the win at 3:19.

**Rating:** C-. Renee summed the Divas division up on commentary: they're good looking women in nice outfits and made up very well going out there and trying to entertain people. That's exactly what you had here and the fans were entertained. What more can you ask for besides good looking women in small outfits having fun and putting on a passable match?

Post match Emma says she wants her match with Paige for the Women's Championship but the BFFs hit the ring to beat her down. Natayla and Bayley make the save.

### Sylvester LeFort vs. Mason Ryan

If Sylvester wins, Mason joins his organization. LeFort is actually in great shape and fires off some right hands but walks into a hot shot. Ryan hits a quick big boot and cobra clutch slam for the pin at 50 seconds. This should keep going for awhile. Lucky us.

Aiden English gets a spotlight in the back and talks about threatening Enzo last week. He celebrates this action because it was retaliation to Enzo for running over his foot. That being said, he's looking forward to Tyson Kidd tonight and hopes to make O Canada cry.

LeFort swears revenge on Ryan.

### Tyson Kidd vs. Aiden English

English takes Tyson's knee out and drops a series of elbows for a fast two. A belly to back suplex gets the same and we hit the chinlock. Tyson fights up and hurricanranas English into the buckle to take over. A running dropkick to the side of Aiden's head gets two but he comes back with a knee lift and a suplex for two. Here's Big Cass at ringside to steal Aiden's scarf and beret, allowing Kidd to hit a Blockbuster (No Kidding) for the pin at 2:43. Fun match.

### Corey Graves vs. Adrian Neville

Adrian grabs a headlock to start before flipping over Corey and hiptossing him down. Graves bails to the floor and baits Adrian in to stomp the Brit. The pace slows down with Adrian in trouble in the corner but looking more annoyed than in pain. Adrian avoids an elbow drop and puts on a headlock before dropkicking Corey out to the floor.

Corey takes another breather so Neville cartwheels into a plancha to take him down. Yet again Graves beats Adrian to the punch as he gets back in and we take a break. Back with Corey working on Neville's leg in the corner and dropping a leg on the leg for good measure. He cannonballs down onto the leg a few times before pulling back on it to make Adrian scream. When Adrian doesn't submit, Graves simplifies things a bit by just hitting him in the face.

Back to the leg lock for a bit before Graves changes targets with a fireman's carry backbreaker for a series of two counts. They head outside again with Graves' piledriver being countered via a backdrop. Back in and some forearms have Corey in trouble before a middle rope dropkick gets two. Graves kicks the knee out again but Adrian rolls to the apron and kicks Corey in the head, setting up the Red Arrow for the pin at 11:08

shown of 14:38.

**Rating:** B-. Nice long match here with both guys getting to show off a bit. It's a simple story and Graves' work on the leg makes sense from more than one perspective. Nice TV main event here which is something NXT can do at the drop of a hat it seems. I'm still not wild on Graves though as he's just kind of there to me.

Post match a very serious Bo Dallas slowly walks to the ring and takes off his jacket. Before anything can happen though, here's HHH because NXT doesn't know how to operate without him. Somehow it takes him two minutes to make the title match a ladder match.

**Overall Rating:** C+. My fear for this company's future grows every week as the main show's influence grows more and more. With stuff like the distraction finishes, the boss having to make the major matches and feuds going on longer than they should, I'm starting to feel like I'm watching another Raw. That's not good but it's not past saving yet.

### Results

Alexander Rusev b. Sin Cara – Accolade

Emma b. Alicia Fox – Emma Lock

Mason Ryan b. Sylvester LeFort – Cobra clutch slam

Tyson Kidd b. Aiden English – No Kidding

Adrian Neville b. Corey Graves – Red Arrow

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# Wrestler of the Day – January 31: Fit Finlay

Today we look at one of the most well traveled wrestlers of all time: Fit Finlay.

Of course Finlay got his start in Europe, working for his father's promotion in Ireland. It's almost impossible to find anything that regional, but there's some more available stuff from his time in England. Here's a match against Young David, more famous as the British Bulldog, from March 12, 1982.

## Fit Finlay vs. Young David

Finlay is Irish Middleweight Champion. As is traditional with British wrestling, this is under a round system (eight five minute rounds here) and it's 2/3 falls. The ring is fall smaller than most that you would see in America. David cranks on the arm to start and gets a quick one off a sunset flip. They hit the mat for some arm work until Finlay grabs a wristlock. David spins around and grabs one of his own as we're firmly in technical mode here.

Finlay comes back with a leg lock as the well dressed crowd looks on intently. David grabs a wristlock but Finlay bridges out and snapmares David down. Off to an arm lock by Finlay as this is being treated as something serious. It's very interesting to see something as different as we're getting here. Finlay goes back to the wristlock and even a David slam can't break the grip. A snapmare puts Finlay down and the first round ends.

The match is clipped to the start of round four (every version I can find of this has the clip) and they stare each other down. Finlay takes over with some elbows to the back of the head before bending David's leg

around Finlay's neck. David escapes by KICKING HIM IN THE FACE but it's right back to the hold. Finlay drops a leg on David's leg and cranks on it even more until the Young one spins out to escape.

Not that it matters as Fit grabs the leg again and we can hear some fans shouting boring. David escapes again and, say it with me, it's right back to the hold. The round ends and they actually shake hands while going back to their corners. No clipping here so it's straight to round five. They put their heads together and try to ram the other for a few moments until Finlay grabs a front facelock.

A hard whip across the ring has David in more trouble and Finlay puts him over his shoulder for a backbreaker submission hold. David won't give up because he's a good blue eye (British term for face) but Finlay clubs him down and pins him for the first fall. Apparently the sixth round automatically begins after the previous fall.

Finlay cranks on the arm but David falls on top of him in a slam attempt for two. Now it's David slamming Fit down as the fans get into it a little bit. A cross body out of nowhere is good for a pin on Finlay to tie things up. Due to the fall we automatically start round seven and it's Finlay tripping David down to the mat. David reverses to a chinlock before hitting his powerslam (impressive as he's TINY here) for one.

Finlay goes right back to the armbar before David kicks him in the chest to escape. They slug it out and a quick suplex gets two for David. Back to the leg hold by Fit but David reverses into a body scissors. Finlay pushes off the mat but can't break the hold, even as he's standing on his feet. He finally flips David down and grabs a standing arm hold, only to be backdropped down for two. Finlay does the same thing to him and the round ends with Finlay throwing David down.

Last round now and both guys are clearly tired. Finlay cranks on the arm again before they slug it out with forearms from their knees. David grabs a headlock and cranks on it so much that Finlay can't slam him for the

break. A piledriver, the high spot of the match, gets two on Finlay but he comes right back with a suplex for the pin and the match.

**Rating:** C+. This is an entirely different kind of match and I would understand why most fans today would find this boring. That being said, it's actually entertaining when you get down to the style here. You had two guys working on each other's bodies for thirty seven minutes until any big move was going to beat the other. Well other than the piledriver but you get the idea. It's not my style of wrestling but it's definitely worth checking out if you're interested in something that is as pure as you're going to find.

Since he wouldn't get to WCW for thirteen years and stuff from England is really hard to find, we'll stop in New Japan for a tag match from April 30, 1992. You should know most of the people involved.

#### Eddie Guerrero/Negro Casas vs. Fit Finlay/Chris Benoit

Finlay and Casas get things going with Finlay cranking on a headlock before driving Casas down with an armbar. Casas changes it to a leg lock but Finlay quickly makes it to the ropes and takes it to the floor for a quick chop off. Back in and we hit the chinlock on Casas before it's off to Benoit for a moderate pop. Casas rolls out of an armbar and we get the match that would be the backbone for several WCW shows for years to come.

Eddie charges right at Chris with a dropkick but it's off to Finlay almost immediately. Casas comes back in as well and slugs it out with Finlay, which is a stupid idea no matter who you are. A few hard shots send Casas flying across the ring but he punches Finlay square in the jaw to get a breather. Eddie comes back in for a double team leg crank, only to miss an elbow drop.

Back to Benoit who drops Eddie with an enziguri but takes too long going up, allowing Eddie to score with a superplex. Eddie's top rope splash (not the amphibious type yet) hits Benoit's knees but he comes back with

a victory roll for two. Finlay gets the tag and hits a hard shoulder to Eddie's ribs in the corner and a Vader Bomb for two. Eddie easily makes the tag to Casas who takes Finlay to the floor and sends him into the barricade.

Finlay sends him into something much more painful: a Benoit clothesline. Back inside and it's Benoit hammering on Casas but getting taken down by a headscissors to pop the crowd. Benoit reverses a crucifix attempt into a slam and hits the Swan Dive for two. Eddie and Casas get in some double teaming on Finlay before taking him to the floor to drop him onto the barricade.

Everything breaks down with Finlay and Benoit sending the opponents together, only to have them reverse into stereo dropkicks. Everyone but Eddie heads over the barricade so Eddie hits a HUGE springboard plancha to take them out. It's Eddie vs. Benoit in the ring again with Guerrero reversing a tombstone but being reversed back into it for two.

Casas makes the save and launches Eddie into a dropkick on Benoit for two but Finlay makes the save. Everything breaks down again and Benoit accidentally baseball slides Finlay. Back in and Eddie's springboard missile dropkick hits Casas, allowing Benoit to reverse an Eddie hurricanrana into a sunset flip for the pin.

**Rating:** C+. Not the best match in the world to start but the last four minutes or so were very exciting. Finlay didn't look used to this style yet but he was still looking decent out there. Benoit vs. Eddie is a match that you can't mess up no matter how hard you try and Casas was fine so the match worked quite well.

It was off to America and WCW for Finlay, who was immediately placed in a feud with fellow European tough guy William Regal. The two would meet in a match ahead of its time on August 29, 1996: a parking lot brawl.

Belfast Brawler vs. Steven Regal

This is joined in progress and is in the parking lot with a circle of cars around them. It's a rematch from Uncensored and they fight over a cinder block. A bumper comes off a car and it goes into Regal's stomach. Very stiff shots here. It's so weird to see Regal being all young and flexible. Finlay gets choked by a seatbelt and Regal does as well.

I know this probably sounds commonplace by today's standards but this was unheard of at the time. It helps that it's a very stiff fight also and feels more like a street fight than a match called a street fight. Finlay goes through a windshield and the throw punches until Regal grabs a bumper. Tombstone (Finlay's finisher) on the concrete doesn't work so Regal tries a Piledriver of his own on the car. They're on a wide shot here as Regal manages to get the Piledriver on the hood for the pin. Brain: "He's out of gas!"

**Rating:** B. Like I said by today's standards this isn't a great match but for its time this was awesome stuff. They were pounding on each other out there and it made people want to watch WCW and find out what was going on here. Good stuff overall and a rather fun match which is still talked about today.

After a few months off TV, Finlay would come back and do very little. Eventually he would get a TV Title shot on May 9, 1998.

#### TV Title: Fit Finlay vs. Booker T

Fit takes him into the corner to start and hits a hard kick to the champion's back. Finlay cranks on the leg as Tony is thrilled to have Nitro back to three hours next week. Booker fights up with a good looking spin kick to the face before backdropping Finlay to the floor. Back in and Finlay hits a hard clothesline, only to be taken down by a running forearm. The ax kick puts Finlay down and the whip spinebuster does the same. There's a flapjack from the champion as Benoit saunters down to the

ring. The distraction lets Finlay tombstone Booker down for the pin and the title.

**Rating:** D+. Nothing special here but it furthers the Booker vs. Benoit feud, which has already had developments since the last time we saw them. Over the last week, Booker and Benoit traded the TV Title at some house shows, but neither of Benoit's two wins were acknowledged tonight. Instead we need Finlay to get the title. That's not a knock on Finlay, but he hasn't done anything of note in months and he gets a title?

Finlay would defend the title against random opponents for a month and a half before dropping it back to Booker T. The rest of the year wouldn't go anywhere for Finlay and he would head into 1999 with nothing going on. Eventually WCW would start doing hardcore stuff and a tough guy like Finlay would be perfect for something like that. The first big hardcore match was a junkyard battle royal at Bash at the Beach 1999.

### Junkyard Invitational

Ciclope, Jerry Flynn, Johnny Grunge, Hak, Horace Hogan, Brian Knobbs, Fit Finlay, Hugh Morrus, La Parka, Steven Regal, Rocco Rock, Silver King, David Taylor, Mikey Whipwreck

It should be noted that no one knew who was going to be in this match until it starts and it just starts with no intros or anything. And yes, they're actually in a junkyard with almost no lighting. This must be THRILLING for the live audience too. Oh and Hak (Sandman) made the invitation. Now remember, we have no idea who is in this, you can't see anything, and since they're in a real junkyard it's all over everywhere. We go to an aerial shot for no apparent reason.

Public Enemy, who are here for one night only, throw a car over off a pile of them. Jimmy is running around with his helmet. We have sparks. No idea how to call this because YOU CAN'T SEE ANYTHING. Ciclope (I think) dives off a car with a swanton that misses, sending him into another car. Steven

Regal and Dave Taylor are here and no one can believe it. Seriously this looks like an action scene from a bad movie and since they're in fighting clothes rather than ring gear, it's almost impossible to tell who is who.

It's very clear that most guys are just walking around and not really doing anything. Occasionally they'll do something but it's not very much at all. Murrus jumps off a car and misses an elbow to Finlay. Various weapons shots go around and La Parka has a tail pipe. Bobby: "I hit a guy from behind with a transmission once but never a tail pipe." Some luchador dives off a car onto a bunch of people.

Horace throws Rocco through a windshield. Heenan goes into a used car salesman pitch which is kind of funny. La Parka has a chair. This is just boring anymore. Finlay hits people with various objects. No one has gone for the exit yet. Tony and Bobby suggest ways to escape. Murrus misses a charge at a car. Finlay gets all superheroish and blocks a shot with a garbage can as a shield.

Dave Taylor gets a tire put over him and is stuck on the ground. Rocco and Horace finally try to get out. Rock gets halfway over the gate but Horace makes the save. Finlay rams a bumper into someone's chest. Taylor finally dances out of the tire. Hak gets smacked in the head with something and just keeps walking. He and Finlay go over by a Chevy and Finlay is put in it. Someone comes over with a forklift and picks up the Chevy. Finlay gets out of it and the car gets crushed, exploding for no apparent reason at all. Finlay kicks over a barrel of fire and climbs out as something else blows up.

**Rating:** N/A. This wasn't wrestling. I don't know what it was but it wasn't wrestling. I've seen a lot of stupid stuff in my time, but this very well may have been the stupidest. I mean seriously, who in the world thought this was a good idea? This apparently cost over \$100,000 to put on, no one in the audience would have been able to see the video of this

(remember that they more or less had to sit around for fifteen minutes) and about four of them got hurt in the process and were out for a long time. So freaking idiotic. This company deserved to fail

Unfortunately Finlay would be injured later in the month at a house show, putting him out for most of the year. Again in 2000, Finlay would have nothing to do and would be done with the company in November. That was pretty much it for Finlay as an active wrestler for several years as he would spend most of 2001-2005 as a trainer, basically building the Divas division from the ground up. Eventually he would return to the ring in late 2005 and win the US Title shot on the July 14, 2006 episode of Smackdown. He would defend it against old rival William Regal at the 2006 Great American Bash.

### US Title: Finlay vs. William Regal

Lashley was supposed to get the shot here but was sidelined by legitimate high liver enzymes. JBL goes on a hilarious rant before the match. "LIVER ENZYMES??? AS MUCH AS I'VE DRANK I'M LUCKY TO HAVE A LIVER!!! MY LIVER LOOKS LIKE JAKE ROBERTS' AND MY LIVER ENZYMES HAVE NEVER BEEN HIGH!" I'm having issues having Cole as a neutral commentator. Regal is worried about Horny (not yet named) interfering. Regal goes a-leprechaun hunting and before the match starts.

Regal says he'll just leave but Finlay tries to roll him up anyway. They lock up and go all the way to the floor without breaking it. They walk around and back up the steps and into the ring without breaking that lockup. Regal grabs a single leg and works the leg but that gets him nowhere. Regal throws him to the floor and here's Horny! He pops Regal in the leg and JBL freaks out. "I want one for Christmas!"



Regal loses track of him and stands on the steps instead of, you know, GETTING IN THE RING. Horny sneaks up on him and Regal nearly jumps out of his skin. Back in Finlay gets a clothesline for two and it's off to a nerve hold. This heel vs. heel thing is only kind of working so they're going for comedy. JBL gives us a European soccer lesson as Finlay takes over. Regal gets in some kicks and a butterfly suplex for two.

Horny is back! He bites the fingers of Regal and Regal has to rake the eyes of the tiny leprechaun to escape. Back in and Finlay takes over, working on the hand. Regal gets in a shot to the leg to break the momentum. This is a highly technical match to go with the comedy which is an interesting mix. Regal hooks a chinlock but Finlay fights out with some shots to the ribs.

Back to the floor and you can hear them hitting each other incredibly hard. This was the same thing they did back at Uncensored 96, although this is a more entertaining match. Now Finlay hooks the chinlock. Regal throws him into the corner and they ram heads. In a great old school heel move, Regal drops to a knee, putting his leg on Finlay's throat, while he talks to the referee. Exploder suplex puts Finlay down and there's a knee drop for two.

The fans call this boring. I call them uncultured slobs. This is a European style match and it's entertaining to see a different perspective. Regal runs off the apron and gets crotched on the apron skirt. Finlay hammers him back into the ring and takes Regal's shoe off. It's possible Horny stole it. Finlay misses a charge and hits the post. The fans are loudly

booing now. Regal gets the Irish club that I can't spell. Horny slips Finlay Regal's boot though and a shot with that is enough for the pin to keep the title on Finlay.

**Rating:** C-. I'm going to be in the fairly extreme minority here but I enjoyed this. The technical aspect of it is really good but the comedy stuff is going to be very hit or miss. To be fair though, this was a hard one to work out as the styles really clashed. I was entertained by it though and that's the point of this.

2006 would continue to be a good year for Finlay as he would get his only PPV main event in a four way for the Smackdown Title at No Mercy.

Smackdown World Title: Booker T vs. Lashley vs. Finlay vs. Batista

No tagging here. Cole talks about the numbers and JBL replies with this gem. JBL: "QUIT WITH THE MATH!!! I count money jackass!" Batista goes after Booker as Finlay throws Lashley to the floor. Finlay hooks up with Booker as Cole keeps talking about percentages. Lashley back in now and he throws Finlay to the floor. Batista is down in the corner. Spinebuster gets two on Booker.

Finlay pulls Lashley to the floor and a double teaming begins. Back in and the double team is on Batista until Finlay double crossed Booker. JBL freaking out is great but Cole is just awful at giving him stuff to play off. We're down to Finlay vs. Booker with the pale one taking over. Lashley tries to get in but Finlay casually knocks him away. Booker is knocked to the floor so Finlay works on Big Dave's arm.

Batista hits a Samoan Drop but Finlay hangs on. Cool. Lashley comes in but Finlay takes him down too. Cole calls Finlay Lashley because they look so much alike. Half crab to Lashley but Booker superkicks Finlay down for two. Booker takes Batista down with another sweet kick for two. Big Dave sideslams him down for two. Their one on one match is over as Lashley clotheslines Booker to the floor.

Finlay brings in a chair but Lashley kicks it away. Horny comes in to low blow Lashley and the club to the head gets two for Finlay as Booker saves. Everyone gets in for a bit and Batista hits a Jackhammer to take Finlay out so it's face vs. face. Batista is like screw fighting and spears him down for two. Lashley comes back and somewhere (even Cole isn't sure where) Batista gets his head busted open.

Batista gets thrown to the floor as does Finlay but Booker comes in with a Bookend for two. Just the two of them in the ring now and Bobby counters a suplex for two. Booker doesn't know what to do here so he takes his hair down. Finlay breaks up the ax kick and gets two. Batista hits spinebusters on everyone and a Batista Bomb to Finlay. Lashley spears him for no apparent reason, allowing Booker to steal the pin on Finlay.

**Rating:** B-. Not bad here at all with the formula working pretty well. I like the four man matches much better than three man as you get more combinations out of it. Booker winning was obvious but it was still good enough at times. Finlay was really impressive here as he ran most of the match, which is what he's great for.

A few months later, Finlay would be entered into his biggest storyline ever. Vince McMahon was revealed to have an illegitimate son in the form of Hornswoggle, but this would eventually be retconned to Finlay really being the father but having Vince hide the fact for reasons that were never quite explained. JBL attacked Horny, setting up a Belfast Brawl at Wrestlemania XXIV.

### John Bradshaw Layfield vs. Finlay

This is a Belfast Brawl which means street fight. Finlay was revealed to be Hornswoggle's dad and JBL beat up the tiny man as a favor to Vince. Tonight it's about revenge. Horny comes out with Finlay to appeal to the kids. Finlay charges at the ring and gets drilled by a knee to the head. JBL pounds away on the floor but gets sent shoulder first into the steps. We head inside for the opening bell and Finlay slides right back out to find some trashcans.

As he gets back in though JBL CRACKS him with a can and picks up some cookie sheets. Now the steps are brought in but JBL can't powerbomb Finlay onto them. Some cookie sheet shots to the head put JBL down for two but a big boot does the same to Finlay. JBL stops to yell at Horny, allowing for the shot with that Irish club that I can't spell. Since this is a WWE hardcore style match, it's table time.

The table is set up in the corner but Finlay picks up the steps instead. JBL bails to the floor and beats on Horny, only to be rammed into the announce table by Papa Horny for his efforts. A trashcan lid to the head stops Finlay and gets two back inside, allowing JBL to pick up a trashcan and LAUNCH IT at Horny. That looked great.

Speaking of trashcans, a shot to JBL breaks up the Clothesline and Finlay blasts him with a lid for good measure. JBL is sent through the table for two and the fans are pleased. Finlay picks up the steps but gets blasted in the knee by a kendo stick, allowing JBL to knock him out with the Clothesline for the pin.

**Rating:** C+. This was fine. The whole point of this was to have a power brawl with some basic weapons which is what we got. I'm really not sure on JBL winning as the fans were solidly behind Horny and Finlay, but at least the match was entertaining and there were some hard shots in there. Good stuff here.

The partnership with Hornswoggle would continue in an actual team at Night of Champions 2008 where the pair actually received a Tag Title match.

Smackdown Tag Titles: John Morrison/Miz vs. Finlay/Hornswoggle

Please make it short. They already did that didn't they? Do I need to explain to you why this is a dumb match? And the fans pop for the challengers because that's what Satan told them to do. The tall guy and the Monday Night Delight start us off. Ross and Foley are a weird pairing on commentary. Horny is listed at 4'4. Why did Vince wonder why we didn't like the company in 08?

We do get a spot that I haven't seen before as Morrison jumps over the rope and gets crotched on the ring skirt. I've never seen that before. Finlay starts throwing Horny into Miz and Morrison as a projectile. This is a comedy match that forgot the comedy. How weird is it to think that two years later Miz could be a potential MITB winner? I wouldn't be surprised if he won it. Miz and Morrison were really starting to get good here but wouldn't hit their stride for a few more months.

Horny comes in and beats up Miz, hitting a Stunner and a bulldog. None of these do anything of course since HE IS TINY. The problem becomes clear here very soon: the heels have to either beat up Horny or have him get the hot tag. Finlay beats up everyone after such a tag and the fans care for some reason. Horny goes up for the splash and Morrison finally realizes how stupid this is and more or less chokeslams him to the mat, ending this annoyance.

**Rating:** D. I mean seriously, it's a freaking midget and an old man against a good and young team. Was this really the best option they had? They wanted this to make this a serious match and it just completely failed. It was a hybrid comedy match and mess and just didn't work. They wanted Horny to be something serious and it just didn't work so of course they kept going with it forever.

It would soon be off to ECW where Finlay would be one of the old guys putting over the youngn's, including in a Championship Scramble at the Bash in June 2009.

ECW Title: Christian vs. Tommy Dreamer vs. Jack Swagger vs. Mark Henry vs. Finlay

This is a Scramble match which is more or less a gauntlet. Every three minutes someone else comes in and whoever gets the final pin is champion but you have to pin the champion for the pin to count. Uh...sure. Christian and Swagger start us off. Wow it's weird to see Swagger as champion before Christian. I miss the pushups.

Ok so if Swagger pins Christian he's IT more or less? I guess that makes sense. I'm assuming that there will be a clock once everyone comes in. Striker implies a heel turn for Christian but nothing ever came for that. The clock begins far before three minutes is up and it's Finlay. Striker talks about Irishmen from centuries ago as no one cares at all. Swagger pokes Finlay in the eye and rolls him up to become IT.

Christian and Swagger do a nice little sequence that gets two for the Canadian. He beats Christian down as Dreamer is number four. Dreamer beats up everyone with incredibly basic stuff but throws out a Sky High. Ok apparently it's not Swagger that has to lose the title as it's just the last pin. Uh...that kind of makes sense I suppose.

They blow a spot where Christian is on the mat and Dreamer

gets thrown onto him. It just looked really awkward. Finlay finally comes back to life and hits the Celtic Cross on Swagger to become IT. Finlay and Dreamer don't work well together to put it mildly. And here's Henry to suck the life out of the match. Ok so now we have five minutes left and whoever gets the last fall is champion. Got it.

Dreamer takes the World's Worst Finisher with 4:15 to make Henry IT. Everyone not named Dreamer beats Henry up and the people start booing for some reason. Finlay hits a freaking suicide dive onto Swagger. Have to love old men flying all over the place. Henry teases a top rope dive but for the sake of the gravitational pull, Swagger saves him and gets the pin to become it with about 2:20 to go.

I like knowing how much longer to go at times and this is one of them. Christian hits the Killswitch on Swagger but Dreamer DDTs him at 1:20 to become IT. It becomes a big mess now which makes sense at least. On instinct Dreamer goes for a cover which they don't point out the stupidity of. Everyone goes for covers but the clock runs out and Dreamer retains. He screams "I WON???" in a funny moment.

**Rating:** C+. These matches are hard to call but I liked it. Thankfully they haven't killed them by having them every two weeks or something like that. This still feels fresh though and it comes off as a good way to be different. Also it makes Dreamer look like a competent champion and not a jobber which I can't complain about. This worked but was still a little bit weird.

We'll wrap it up with a win from Smackdown on January 22, 2010.

### Finlay vs. Batista

Batista, the heel here shoves him into the corner to start but Finlay comes out with some hard right hands before raising a boot to stop Big

Dave. Finlay slugs him down and hits the rolling fireman's carry followed by a running seated senton. They head outside with Batista gouging at the eyes and throwing Finlay over the announce table for the very fast DQ.

Finlay is a guy that was never a focus of an American company but he could work a very physical style and make anyone look interesting. His British and European stuff certainly isn't for everyone but it's a very different style and interesting if you can get into the style. Finlay in America was a very tough guy who worked an entertaining style and that's all a veteran like him was supposed to be. He's an underrated talent who really has been all around the world.

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## **Wrestler of the Day – January 30: Demolition**

My main option today was Rockstar Spud so we're going to go with the next best option: Demolition, as Brian Adams (Crush) was born on the 30<sup>th</sup>.

Demolition is of course Ax and Smash, but the Smash you most commonly know was the second person to portray the character. Originally the character was portrayed by Randy Colley, more famous as Moondog Rex.



People soon caught on to the identity though and the role had to be recast. They did have a few matches with Colley as Smash though, including the debut on the January 17, 1987 episode of Superstars.

#### Demolition vs. Salvatore Bellomo/Mario Mancini

Demolition is managed by Johnny V here and have black and yellow face paint on instead of the usual red and white. Smash pounds on Bellomo to start and it's quickly off to Ax. These guys actually look alike which is more than can be said about the future team with Barry Darsow as Smash. Ax rams Mancini into the buckle as we get house show ads on commentary. Back to Smash to slam Mancini face first into the mat and then his entire body out to the floor. The Demolition Decapitation (Smash puts a guy over his knee and Ax hits a middle rope elbow) is good for the pin on Mario.

Smash would be replaced by Darsow a few weeks later and Mr. Fuji would take over as manager. Here's one of their traditional squashes from September 27, 1987's Wrestling Challenge.

#### Outback Jack/SD Jones vs. Demolition

Smash gets things going with Jones who somehow looks younger than he did at the first Wrestlemania. The announcers spend the first part of the match talking about Demolition's theme song. Heenan says that the local radio station is playing WWF songs from the Piledriver album. I don't buy it but it's a cool story. Off to Jack (from Humpty Doo, Australia) who cranks on the arm and gets punched in the face for his efforts.

Ax slams him down for two before it's back to Smash for right hands to the ribs. Jack tries a comeback but a few shots to the back put him down again. A kick to the chest finally allows for the hot tag to Jones but he charges into a backbreaker for the Decapitation (called by name for one of the only times I can ever remember) and the pin.

**Rating:** D+. Not much to the match but it's cool to see the traditional Demolition doing what they do best. We also got the always awesome looking rapid sledges to the back which became a trademark of the team over the years. There's nothing to the match but the team always looked great.

Demolition would go on to win the Tag Titles from Strike Force at Wrestlemania IV. Most of you have probably seen that match, so here's the rematch from about two months later on June 1, 1988.

### Tag Titles: Strike Force vs. Demolition

This is the rematch from Mania where Demolition began the longest reign in the history of the titles, holding them for over a year. No date or location listed here but this is at a Superstars taping given the banners. I'm a big fan of both of these teams, even though Strike Force is considered weak and forgettable by most people. Commentary says this is in Oakland but it's not like it really matters.

Gorilla and Hayes do commentary here so at least we have one competent guy talking now. Demolition starts the beatdown early as you would expect, just totally overpowering the far lighter team. They use their double teaming and take over for a bit, working on Smash's arm. So much for that as Smash realizes he's half of Demolition so screw this getting beaten up thing.

Hot tag to Martel and the crowd is pretty clearly liking what they're seeing here. Boston Crab to Axe but it gets him nowhere. Everything breaks down and a chair to the back of Martel and then the Decapitator on the floor which Martel sells like DEATH. He didn't wrestle again until the Rumble, 8 months from this, so I'd bet on that being rather legit. Demolition wins by countout.

**Rating:** C-. Decent and mainly for the angle but this wasn't all that great. I'm probably biased in this though so take it with a grain of salt. The Decapitator at the end was AWESOME so they nailed that to say the least. Strike Force had one more televised match at Mania 5 where Martel turned heel, so this is more or less the end of the team

Demolition would hold the titles for over a year which is one of those records that is never going to be broken. Part of that reign was at the

1988 Survivor Series which saw one of the few double turns in wrestling history. Demolition was becoming more and more popular and it was clear that something had to change. The teams here are captained by Demolition and their main rivals at the time: Warlord and Barbarian, the Powers of Pain.

### Team Demolition vs. Team Powers of Pain

Powers of Pain, Rockers, British Bulldogs, Hart Foundation, Young Stallions

Demolition, Brain Busters, Bolsheviks, Fabulous Rougeaus, Conquistadors

Now here's a famous match. Demolition won the titles at Wrestlemania and are rapidly becoming faces based purely on fan reactions. They're with Mr. Fuji here. These are the same rules as last year, meaning if a member of a team is beaten, he and his partner are both gone. Los Conquistadores are masked guys and would probably be played by different guys every night. My guess here would be Jose Estrada and Jose Luis Rivera here.

British Bulldog starts with let's say Conquistador Uno. It's quickly off to Jacques who was having legit backstage issues with the Bulldogs at this point. Off to Zhukov vs. Shawn and Michaels moonsaults out of the corner ala Daniel Bryan. Marty comes in and I'm not likely going to mention every tag here given how fast they're happening. Ax comes in to pound on Jannetty and it's off to Arn Anderson of the Brainbusters. Tully comes in and gets beaten up in the face corner for his efforts.

Jacques is tagged to be the fourth heel in about a minute and a half. Dynamite pounds on Jacques which is probably the most interesting pairing in the match given their real issues. Jim Powers comes in for about a second before it's back to Dynamite to face Raymond Rougeau. A sunset flip gets two for Dynamite and it's back to Powers to face Zhukov. Smash comes in and Powers is in trouble. Jacques dropkicks Powers into the corner and here's Bret to a BIG pop. Bret quickly small packages Raymond to get things down to 5-4. There are still a ton of people on the apron though.

Off to Roma vs. Volkoff with Roma being in trouble quickly. Roma comes

out of the corner and in an impressive spot, he jumps from the mat to the top rope and hits a spinning crossbody for two. Volkoff comes back with a dropkick of his own and it's off to Smash vs. Neidhart. Jim quickly tags out to Barbarian for the real feud of the match: Powers vs. Demolition. Smash, still a cowardly heel, brings in Conquistador Dos.

Warlord comes in to pound on Dos as does Bret. Ax comes in and kicks Bret down before it's off to Tully. Bret clotheslines Tully down and from the mat they tag in Shawn (he and Bret have to interact at Survivor Series. It's like law or something) and Smash respectively. Volkoff and Smash double team Shawn with Nikolai hitting the gorilla press backbreaker. Back to Tully who immediately tags in Arn for the wicked spinebuster for two.

Uno comes in again and slams Shawn down but it's off to Marty even faster. Back to Volkoff who tosses Marty around with ease. Davey comes in and the power advantage is negated. Nikolai brings in Tully who drops a lot of elbows on Davey before it's off to Dos vs. Warlord. Warlord no sells everything and gorilla presses Dos into a tag to Ax. They slug it out with Ax taking over and handing it off to Smash.

Smash doesn't do as well and it's a double team from the Powers to take over on him. Tully comes in with a middle rope elbow to the head of Barbarian but Barbie clotheslines Blanchard's head off. Barbarian tags Neidhart for a powerslam on Tully and then it's off to Dynamite. Arn slows him down and brings in Uno who brings in Zhukov. Powers gets the tag and backdrops Boris, but Zhukov rolls through a crossbody for the pin out of nowhere to eliminate Powers and the Stallions.

It's 4-4 now and Shawn comes in with a fist drop for two on Boris. Barbarian comes in and Tully gets tagged in. Tully realizes who he's facing so he immediately tags in Nikolai without making a single bit of contact. Ax pounds away on Barbarian with current champion taking over. Off to Nikolai again with nothing of note going on. Shawn comes in to face Zhukov and makes a blind tag to Marty, who sunset flips Boris out of nowhere for the elimination.

Marty rolls up Dos for dos and it's off to Uno for a BIG backdrop. Ax vs.

Marty now as Ax takes over and brings in Arn. Davey gets the tag as does Tully and Blanchard is scared to come in again. I'm not sure why as he whips Marty into the corner and Jannetty is turned upside down. Smash comes in and puts on a front facelock but he tags off to Dos. It's downhill for Demolition's team now as the Harts pick apart both Conquistadores, including hitting something similar to the Demolition Decapitator on Uno. Amazingly enough that only gets two.

Shawn dropkicks Uno down and it's off to Marty with another dropkick for two. Dynamite comes in and there's the snap suplex. A middle rope kneedrop gets two and Jesse is impressed by Uno's toughness. Back to Barbarian with a powerslam and a fist drop but he headbutts Uno into the wrong corner and it's off to Tully. On Bobby's advice, Tully goes right for the eyes and takes over.

Demolition double teams Barbarian and it's off to a chinlock from Smash. Uno comes back in and is carried to the corner by Barbarian, but Ax makes the save and puts the chinlock on again. The Brainbusters come in for some offense but Arn puts his head down and gets kicked in the face. Off to Jannetty with a jumping back elbow and it's time for Anvil. Neidhart immediately does the same thing Anderson did and gets kicked in the face as well.

Blanchard can't suplex Neidhart and it's off to Bret. Can we watch these two for 20 minutes or so? Bret pounds away in the corner and the Canadian tries a German on the American, but Blanchard gets his shoulder up and Bret is pinned. It's now Demolition, Los Conquistadores and the Brainbusters vs. the Powers of Pain, the British Bulldogs and the Rockers. The Bulldogs beat up Tully and it's off to Shawn. The Busters double team Shawn, drawing in Marty for a four man brawl. Both referees come in and both teams are disqualified and eliminated. It's down to two teams apiece.

The four eliminated guys brawl to the back as Smash puts a chinlock on Dynamite. Off to Dos with a knee to the ribs, followed by Uno with a top rope forearm. Uno misses a kind of Swanton and it's off to Warlord with a gutwrench slam. Barbarian comes in with the Kick of Fear followed by the delayed vertical suplex from Davey. Ax comes in for a power showdown with

Davey.

Dynamite comes in and clotheslines Ax down before bringing in Davey to hit the gorilla press and powerslam on Dos. Barbarian hits a backbreaker to knock Dos into the corner for another tag, this time to Ax again. The Conquistadores take over on Barbie which isn't something you say all that often. Dynamite gets a tag because Barbarian only has to fight off Uno.

Warlord gets a quick tag in and drops a leg but doesn't cover, much to Jesse and Gorilla's dismay. Dynamite comes in and ducks his head, allowing Uno to tag out AGAIN. Smash charges into a boot and there's the snap suplex. The Swan Dive misses and a basic clothesline pins Dynamite, getting us down to three teams. That would be it for the Bulldogs as a team in America, mainly due to the medical issues of Dynamite and those fights with the Rougeaus I mentioned. Smash and both masked dudes work over Barbarian in the corner but he easily powers over to Warlord.

Warlord misses a charge and hits the post shoulder first and it's time for Ax to pound away. Off to Smash who stays on the arm as Fuji gets on the apron. Off to Dos and then Uno with a top rope shot to the shoulder. Fuji is back on the floor now and Ax is in, cranking on the arm some more.

Fuji gets back on the apron and Warlord makes a comeback, only to be clotheslined down again by Smash. Fuji pulls down the top rope as Smash hits the ropes, sending him out to the floor. Remember that Fuji is Demolition's manager. Demolition gets counted out and we're down to one team apiece. Ax goes off on Fuji and Fuji hits him with the cane, only to get laid out with a slam.

Demolition leaves Fuji laying as we've got the Powers of Pain vs. Los Conquistadores left. They have a standoff until the Powers go out and help Fuji to his feet. Ladies and gentlemen, I present the ultra rare double turn. Back in the ring, Dos comes in to pound on Barbarian and it's off to Uno. Fuji trips Uno and a headbutt from Barbarian gets the pin to win the match.

**Rating:** A. What a great match this was. It had EVERY tag team you could want to see in one match as well as a major move at the end with

Demolition turning face. You had mini-stories in the match itself which is always a nice touch, with teams having short matches against each other. Also this was about five minutes shorter than the one last year which helped it tremendously. Great match and the 42 minutes that it runs flew by.

The Powers put Fuji on their shoulders post match. Demolition runs in and cleans house.

Ax and Smash were officially huge faces and would feud with the Powers of Pain and Fuji until Wrestlemania V where they would successfully defend the titles in a handicap match. After not much of a summer, Demolition would team up with Jim Duggan in a six man tag against a massive team of Andre the Giant and the Twin Towers.

#### Twin Towers/Andre the Giant vs. Demolition/Jim Duggan

Duggan is King of the WWF and has his face painted like Demolition but is rocking an American flag pattern of course. Akeem starts with the King with Duggan absorbing the trash talk and pounding away on the big man before it's off to Ax for some pounding on the arm. Smash comes in and Demolition pounds Akeem down before bringing Duggan back in to crank on the arm as well.

Akeem finally gets in a shot to Ax's ribs and it's off to Boss Man who is immediately pounded down by the fresh Smash. Boss Man rakes the eyes to slow Smash down but Smash rakes the eyes right back in a good bit. Ax comes in again and cranks on the arm but gets sent into the wrong corner so Andre can come in and pound away with big right hands.

Akeem comes back in but misses a slow motion splash, allowing for the hot tag back to Smash who slams Akeem down in an impressive power display. Everything breaks down and Akeem hits a bottom rope splash on Smash, but Duggan hits Akeem in the back with the 2x4 to give Smash the pin.

**Rating:** C. It wasn't much of a match but for above seven and a half minutes with these six guys, this was as good as you were going to get. Duggan was about as big as he was going to get in the WWF at this point as the fans were WAY into his Hogan-Lite character. Demolition was fresh off losing the tag titles but but they were still the most popular tag team in the company. Good, fun little match here which was much better than I was expecting.

The amazing title reign would FINALLY end in December of 1989 in a squash at the hands of Andre the Giant and Haku, the Colossal Connection. This led to a rematch in Toronto at Wrestlemania VI.

#### Tag Titles: Colossal Connection vs. Demolition

Only the challengers get an entrance. Andre is old and banged up here but they gave him a token title at the end of his career. The champions, the Connection, takes over to start as it's Haku vs. Smash to get us going. Off to Ax to pound away but Andre comes in to break it up. Smash will have none of that and the beating continues on Haku with the challengers taking turns on him.

Haku and Smash fight over a backslide for awhile until Andre breaks it up. Demolition keeps control though and Haku gets beaten on even more. Andre finally cheats enough to let the give the champions the advantage. The giant headbutts Ax from the apron for a very delayed two before Haku rams Ax's head into Andre's head for two more. This was during the time when Andre would be officially in for about 15 seconds which was all he was capable of anymore.

Off to the Tongan nerve hold by Haku for a bit before Andre chokes in the corner. Andre hasn't actually been in the match yet. A shoulder breaker gets two for Haku but he misses a charge into the corner. Hot tag brings in Smash to clean house and a flying forearm gets two. Everything breaks down and Andre is taken down by a double clothesline. Haku accidentally superkicks Andre into the ropes and the Decapitator gives Demolition



their third tag titles.

**Rating:** C-. This was decent stuff but it was basically a handicap match. Andre was just too old to do much else after this and I don't think he ever had another match in the WWF. Demolition would go on to have a summer long reign before turning heel and losing the titles to the now face Hart Foundation. Decent stuff here and the fans loved it.

Over the summer the team would turn heel again and add Crush as a third member of the team due to Ax developing health issues, including a heart condition which healed over time. This led to Crush subbing for Ax at times as the team began defending the titles under the Freebird Rule. One of these matches, and perhaps their most famous as a team, was against the Hart Foundation in a 2/3 falls match at Summerslam 1990.

#### Tag Titles: Hart Foundation vs. Demolition

This is 2/3 falls and Demolition is defending. Basically the Harts have about as much chance coming into this as I have at being Miss America 1974. Bret starts with Smash but the Harts knock Crush to the floor before anything gets going. Things settle down and Bret gets a quick rollup for two. Anvil comes in to crank on Smash's arm before Bret comes back in with a fist to the back. Smash tries to get into a technical match with Bret and gets caught in an armbar for his stupidity.

Smash finally slams Bret down and brings in Crush, only to have Bret avoid an elbow and pound away. Crush charges into a boot in the corner and gets rolled up for two before it's off to Neidhart vs. Smash, only to have Crush kick Jim in the back to give the champions the advantage. Crush comes in again and misses a charge into the corner, allowing for another double tag to Bret and Smash. Neidhart falls to the floor as everything breaks down. Smash is whipped into Crush and Bret gets two off the middle rope elbow but here's Crush again. The Decapitator to Bret is enough for the first fall.

The second fall begins with Crush hitting a hard clothesline on Bret and Smash pounding on the chest. After a quick neck crank by Crush, Bret fires off the Hart Attack clothesline on Smash, allowing for the hot tag to Neidhart. A powerslam gets two on Smash and Bret launches Anvil into

Smash in the corner. The Hart Attack takes Smash down but Crush breaks up the pin for the DQ to make it 1-1. Why they didn't let the Harts get the pin there is beyond me.

During the break between falls, Demolition knocks Bret to the floor, allowing Ax to run down and sneak under the ring. The third fall starts with Bret getting two off a sunset flip before taking Smash down by the leg. Neidhart picks Bret up for the reverse powerslam for two on Smash. Now things get tricky as Smash rolls to the floor and rolls under the ring, switching places with Ax.

The idea is that Ax and Smash look so much alike that the referee can't tell them apart. This is fine except for one problem: THEY DON'T LOOK ALIKE! Ax is taller, heavier set and has a rounder head, not to mention a deeper voice. This reasoning never made sense to me as a kid and it still doesn't to this day.

Anyway the fresh Ax destroys Bret and gets two off Bret's chest bump in the corner. Anvil comes in sans tag as Smash takes Ax's place again. They try to switch again and the Legion of Doom come out to break it up. Smash goes after Hawk and Animal as Anvil shoulder blocks Crush into a rollup by Bret for the pin and the titles. The place comes unglued as the Harts have shocked the world.

**Rating:** B. That's probably a bit high but I love this match. The wrestling is just ok but the storytelling is as good as you'll get in a tag match with the LOD coming out to even things up, allowing the Harts to finally do the impossible and win the titles. This is a popular match among old school fans and if you watch it you'll see why.

Legion of Doom vs. Demolition was a dream match in the 80s but it just never happened due to the timing. The match most people call the closest thing to the showdown was at Survivor Series 1990 in an eight man tag, but here's the LOD vs. Smash/Crush from Supertape 3.

#### Demolition vs. Legion of Doom

Don't freak: it's Smash and Crush. This was the attempt at the new Demolition but without Axe and putting them back with Fuji

for some reason the fire wasn't there anymore. They would be gone just after Mania and this is apparently from late November. Crush and Animal start us off which doesn't last long as it's a big brawl quickly. Animal hits a belly to belly suplex to send Demolition running. I guess they did have an escape after all.

Back into the ring with Smash vs. Hawk and Smash wanting a test of strength. That doesn't work so Hawk hammers away. Ten punches in the corner and a clothesline put Smash down again. Fuji trips up Hawk and the momentum shifts. A cane shot shifts it even more and some heel shenanigans follow. Crush comes in off the top with a double axe handle to the back which sets up a bearhug.

We go through some rest holds by both teams as I guess the working that they've done has worn them out in the past five minutes. The Decapitator with Crush dropping the elbow is awful as it only gets two. Granted I'm not a fan of that move in the first place. Clothesline puts both guys down and it's off to Animal vs. Smash. Animal cleans house but Fuji breaks up the Doomsday Device. A top rope knee by Crush gets two and everything breaks down. Smash tries a Piledriver but Hawk hits the top rope clothesline to end this.

**Rating:** D+. Very basic match here but there was nothing great about it at all. This was a big brawl which is exactly what you would expect here. That being said it still wasn't incredibly good, as both teams were gassed a few minutes in. The right team won, but there's nothing to Smash vs. Crush.

Demolition was clearly an attempt at ripping off the Legion of Doom but they were also one of the best tag teams the WWF ever produced. They were only the third team in company history to be three time Tag Team Champions and hold the record for longest reign by a wide margin. Ax and Smash are as dominant of a team as you'll get and that's all they needed to be. Believe it or not they still show up in indy companies every now and then, even holding some indy tag titles. They're a great team, but

unfortunately not as well known as LOD.

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# Monday Nitro – September 14, 1998: One of the Finest Moments In Wrestling History

## Monday Nitro #154

Date: September 14, 1998

Location: BI-L0 Center, Greenville, South Carolina

Attendance: 12,236

Commentators: Larry Zbyszko, Bobby Heenan, Tony Schiavone

Fall Brawl has come and gone and it was little more than a pit stop for Halloween Havoc. The match disguised as WarGames did little more than set up the double main event for next month while offering one of the worst shows I've ever seen. The main event tonight is Goldberg vs. Sting for the title because WCW cares more about TV than PPV. Something else of note happens tonight as well. Let's get to it.

The Nitro Girls look great in stomach baring red tops and skin tight black pants.

The announcers talk about DDP earning the title shot at Halloween Havoc last night. Mike Tenay is off trying to find out about the Horsemen, including the return of Ric Flair. Nice job of keeping secrets Tony.

The fans alternate between WE WANT FLAIR and GOLDBERG as we go to the airport where Tenay talks about Flair possibly returning tonight. A limo pulls away from an airplane but Mike isn't sure who was in it. He chases down a pilot and asks if Flair was on the flight but can't get an answer. Some reporter.

Opening sequence.

We look at Ernest Miller attacking the Armstrongs for the third time in a week.

### Alex Wright vs. Van Hammer

Van Hammer is now a hippie. He shoves Wright into the corner to start as Tony runs down tonight's card. Alex grabs a headlock and stomps away in the corner before sending Hammer to the floor. Ernest Miller comes out and kicks Hammer in the head, drawing the DQ in a quick ending.

Miller runs his mouth and is arrested. We follow him all the way to the squad car and nothing happens.

We get some stills from the main event last night and Tony says Bret was injured.

Here's a limping Bret with something to say. Bret says that he's been a jerk lately and now he realizes that Hogan has been lying to him all along. After last night, he's going to be out of action for awhile and he doesn't deserve this US Title or know what he's doing with it in the first place. This brings out Roddy Piper who says he called Bret a jerk weeks ago because Bret was hanging out with Hogan and ruining a lot of careers. Bret's parents must be disappointed in him but they're proud after what he said tonight. Piper leaves and Bret asks the fans for once more chance, which they seem willing to give.

Stills from Saturn beating Raven last night to break up the Flock.

### Saturn vs. Kendall Windham

Kendall pounds Saturn down to start but a nice series of kicks knocks Windham out to the floor. Back in and Saturn snapmares his way out of an armbar but Windham goes after the injured fingers to take over. Kendall drives in more right hands to the side of the head and puts on a chinlock for a few moments. A knee to the ribs (Tony: "A great move!") puts Saturn back down and a clothesline to the shoulder is good for two.

Back to the chinlock for a bit longer this time before a big boot clearly misses Saturn's face by nine inches or more. Kendall cranks on the arm a bit more and chops away in the corner but misses a middle rope elbow drop. Saturn comes back with a quick t-bone suplex and shows him how to hit a the elbow from the middle rope. Kendall counters a suplex into a swinging neckbreaker but walks into the Death Valley Driver for the fast pin.

**Rating:** C. Better match than I was expecting here but it was almost entirely because of Saturn. Kendall was just a big guy in jeans with no charisma at all but he could do basic moves in a ring. Saturn should be ready for a rocket push at this point but since this is WCW, he'll be lucky to be in the TV Title scene.

Post match the former Flock comes down as Raven and Kanyon are seen in the stands. Raven says the Flock had their day of freedom but now it's time to join him again. Saturn tells the individual people that they can be a star. Horace is a natural athlete, Kidman is so talented that he could win the Cruiserweight Title, Lodi....."How's your neck bro?" Everyone but Lodi walks out but Kidman won't let Lodi go back to Raven.

### Renegade vs. Wrath

This isn't going to last long. Renegade tries to get a good start in the corner but Wrath comes back with one of the hardest chops I've ever heard. The handspring elbow has no effect on Wrath and the Meltdown is good for the pin.

Here are Hogan, Bischoff, Liz (good lord with those chaps and jeans) and Disciple with something to say. Eric loves that he's here and Flair isn't. Hogan can't stand cowards like Bret Hart with his pathetic injury and Warrior for sneaking up on him and stealing his chance at beating up Goldberg. Hogan will be at Hollywood Havoc (his words) if Warrior wants to fight him man to man....and there's the smoke. Hollywood talks the entire way through but there's no Disciple when the smoke clears. Eric and Liz aren't asleep either. Hogan: "WARRRRRRRIOR!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!"

Hour #2 begins.

Apparently Kaz Hayashi is injured and can't get his title shot tonight. Kidman will take his place.

#### Cruiserweight Title: Kidman vs. Juventud Guerrera

The fans aren't sure who to cheer for here as things start fast. Some chops take Kidman down and Juvy rains down right hands in the corner to take over early. A missile dropkick sends Kidman to the floor as the fans are way into this. Kidman comes back in with a slingshot headscissors followed by a powerslam for two. We hit the chinlock on the champion but he fights up and gets a headscissors of his own.

A cross body from Juvy sends both guys to the floor and we take a break. Back with Guerrera getting two off a rollup but getting crushed by a slingshot legdrop. We go back to the chinlock for a bit before a lifting powerbomb (Sky High) takes Guerrera down for two. A wheelbarrow suplex gets the same but Juvy counters a belly to back suplex into a German suplex for two.

Guerrera goes up for a not great looking hurricanrana for another near fall before the Juvy Driver is countered into a reverse suplex from Kidman. The Shooting Star is countered with another hurricanrana but Juvy dives into another powerbomb. Kidman hits the Shooting Star for the pin, the title, and a BIG pop from the crowd.

**Rating:** B+. Excellent match here with both guys just going nuts for about fifteen minutes and one upping each other all match long. Kidman was one of the few guys that could hang with Guerrera in a high flying match and he more than did that here. The fans were going nuts here and the match was as good as anything we've seen on Nitro in months.

Saturn comes out to applaud Kidman.

Gene flags down a tuxedo clad JJ Dillon and thinks he saw Ric Flair. JJ won't reveal anything.

Jackie Chan introduces us to a clip of his new movie Rush Hour.

Eddie Guerrero asks Bischoff for a meeting but Eric says he made Eddie a star and sends him to Japan. "No burritos over there!"

### Barbarian vs. British Bulldog

Smith eventually knocks Barbarian down with a series of shoulder blocks and sends him to the floor off a clothesline. He follows Barbarian outside but gets rammed back first into the post to stop any momentum Bulldog had going. Back in and shoulder and backbreakers get two each for Barbarian and he be clubberin in the corner. Smith loads up the powerslam but Jimmy Hart grabs Barbarian's foot to break it up. Another shot to the back puts Smith down so Barbarian can load up the big boot but he walks into the powerslam (minus the power and slam parts) for the pin.

**Rating:** D. I feel sorry for Smith given how bad his back was messed up at



Fall Brawl and all the back work he had to get through here. The match itself was pure filler which isn't the most exciting thing in the world, but at least it went on after a great match and let the fans come back down to earth a bit.

JJ is in the ring with Gene and says what Buff did last night was unacceptable. Unfortunately Scott Steiner went into the ring with his brother as he was ordered but the ending was a joke. Therefore, we're getting the match again at Halloween Havoc. JJ gets ready to leave but the lights flicker and we get some maniacal laughing. I'm not a horror movie expert but that sounded like Chuckie from Child's Play.

Nitro Girls in silver and the Nitro Party winner.

Jim Neidhart comes out for a match against a member of the NWO but the Warrior smoke fills the ring. The smoke clears and Warrior is in the ring with an unconscious Disciple. Neidhart leaves as the Black and White comes out. Warrior says we can live our lives as warriors or ordinary men. Hogan's actions have only enhanced the OWN revolution and the actions of those men who will find the courage. The match is on for Halloween Havoc but Warrior warns Hogan that the graveyards are full of cowardly men. More smoke and Warrior and Disciple are gone.

#### Silver King/Norman Smiley vs. Scott Steiner

Norman starts for the team but Silver King comes in for his beating at the same time. Steiner casually beats up both guys with hard forearms and knees to the back. Silver King is powerbombed onto Norman and an awesome looking double Steiner Recliner gets the submission.

Nitro Girls again.

We look at Thunder with Eric Bischoff interfering in an Arn Anderson promo and issuing an arm wrestling challenge for Flair's in ring future.

Hour #3 begins.

### Giant vs. Meng

Meng slaps Giant back into the corner and kicks at the legs before they get into a brawl with neither guy going anywhere. Meng staggers Giant with a kick right to the face so the strap comes down. Giant hits him again and Meng is all FOREIGN SHOUTING. A headbutt has no effect on Meng and neither does a right hand to the head. Another kick to the face staggers Giant and Meng loads up the Death Grip, but Giant uses his reach advantage to grab the chokeslam as Meng can't get to his throat. REALLY fun match for two minutes.

### Scott Hall vs. Lex Luger

This is one of the most uncomfortable things I ever remember in wrestling. Hall comes out with a drink in his hand and is acting intoxicated. I get the idea of the character but when Hall has had so many issues in real life, it just never sat well with me. We get the survey and Hall is stumbling around. Hall tries to jump Luger at the bell but gets stared back down. No contact in the first minute.

Hall throws the toothpick in Lex's face but backs away from a lockup attempt. They finally lock up but Hall can't keep a hold on him. Hall walks around a bit more before going over for a drink. Vincent reluctantly gives him the cup and Hall falls on his way back inside. Luger tries a hiptoss and Hall stumbles some more, laughing all the way. A clothesline puts Hall down and he acts like he's dead before rolling to the floor.

Scott comes back in and Luger takes him into the corner for a lecture. Here's a ticked off Bischoff to ask Hall what he's doing. Hall mocks him as Bischoff says he can't save Hall from everything. Nash and Konnan come out as well and Scott gets upset, asking Nash where he was when his life was falling apart. Even Luger is on the floor around Hall now.

Scott has another drink but vomits all over Bischoff and the camera. Eric says go to a break. No rating of course as this was an angle but I'm not a fan of this at all. I get what they're doing with it and everything, but I don't like it being inspired by Hall's real life troubles which weren't under control at this point.

Here's JJ in a tuxedo as you can feel the fans getting excited. Dillon has to talk over a WE WANT FLAIR chant and he asks Arn Anderson to come to the ring. Anderson comes out in a suit as well and the wildcat mascot is bowing. JJ apologizes to Arn for the things he said to him recently because that's not what a friend is supposed to say to a friend. Anderson says you could smell the pop when these fifteen thousand people blew the roof off the building.

People have been asking him for a year for him to bring back the Horsemen. He has to start at the beginning because tonight is a new beginning for the Four Horsemen. Anderson always knew he wanted to be a wrestler and in 1986 he started coming to towns just like this as a member of the Horsemen. Then a year and a half ago he had a neck operation and his in ring career was over. Another Flair chant starts up. Anderson: "Trust me. You'll get what you want tonight.....Bischoff."

Then Chris Benoit came to Arn and said this can all happen, so here are Benoit, Malenko and McMichael, all getting individual entrances. Anderson says there's no finer wrestler than Chris Benoit in the world. McMichael is hard headed but all man and will mean to wrestling what he meant to football. Malenko has done his job while Anderson spent the last year talking about what it meant to be a Horseman. He told Malenko that he didn't get it, but it was Anderson that didn't get it.

People have told Anderson for years to bring back the Horsemen. Well the lesson is be careful what you ask for because they're not nice guys that wear white hats. Mongo taps him on his shoulder and Anderson says he's been accused of being hit in the head one too many times and having a touch of Alzheimer's. "My God. I almost forgot the fourth Horseman. RIC

FLAIR! GET ON DOWN HERE!"

The crowd doesn't pop or explode. Instead they stand and applaud as Flair, with tears in his eyes, walks down the aisle, rocking a tuxedo as only he can. Arn: "Greenville, I give you the champ." Flair can't talk because of all the emotion. The ovation doesn't stop and the Horsemen just drink it all in. Ric says this moment proves to him that the 25 years that he's spent trying to entertain these people has been worth it. Someone told him that the most elite group that Eric Bischoff said was dead is alive and well.

Flair gets right to Bischoff, saying that this might be his only shot so he's giving it his best. Is this what Bischoff means when he says he wants good TV? This is much more than that because it's REAL. He goes back to a year ago when the Arn announced his retirement and says Sting was crying in the dressing room because it was so real. Bischoff crushed Anderson in one night with the NWO parody and then said disband the Horsemen because they're dead. The next morning Flair looked himself in the mirror and saw a defeated man.

This brings out Bischoff but Flair calls him out for abusing power before Bischoff can even get to the ring and tells the technical guys to cut him off before he goes too far. Flair keeps ranting anyway with every insult he can think of for Bischoff and tells Eric to fire him because he's already fired as we go to a break.

For those of you that remember WCW as being the clueless putz of a company that couldn't do a thing right, this is as perfect of a moment as you'll ever find in wrestling. I'm not the biggest Horsemen fan in the world and even knowing everything that was going to happen here, the hair on my neck was standing up for every word Flair was saying. It's as good as WCW ever got and is one of the best moments I've ever seen in wrestling.

The announcers have no idea what to say and Heenan has the most genuine

smile you'll ever see on his face.

Here's DDP, more commonly known as the unluckiest man ever for getting to follow that, with something to say. Actually he comes up to do commentary on the main event, but first welcomes Flair back. We get some stills of the cage match last night before we go to the title match.

### WCW World Title: Goldberg vs. Sting

Goldberg immediately slams Sting down as the fans are behind the champion but not entirely. Sting picks Goldberg up in a powerslam position and rams him back first into the corner in a nice power display. A suplex puts Goldberg down but he's on his feet before Sting, sending the challenger out to the floor. Back in and Sting's slam attempt is knocked down. Sting dropkicks the champ for the same result as the suplex.

A headlock takes Goldberg down as Page says that's what he would have done as well. Goldberg shoves him off and wins a test of strength before channeling Undertaker with a tombstone. Sting counters into one of his own and Goldberg is actually in trouble. A pair of Stinger Splashes have the champion staggered so there's a third. Goldberg shrugs it off again but the spear hits the corner.

Sting chop blocks him down and puts on the Scorpion as the fans go nuts again. Goldberg pushes out of most of the hold and Sting can't get it back on all the way. Hogan comes in and kicks Sting in the head which the referee somehow misses. Goldberg didn't see Hogan either so the spear and Jackhammer retain the title.

**Rating:** C-. They had me going there for a bit even though the ending didn't work. Goldberg vs. Sting is the kind of a match that should be headlining a major PPV but instead we get it on a Nitro after a single day of promotion. As usual, they care more about the single night of success rather than something that could have made millions on PPV.

Hogan goes after Goldberg until Hart comes out. The three heroes pose to end the show.

**Overall Rating:** B+. This is one of the best episodes Nitro has ever produced but it's still not perfect. The Hall stuff doesn't work for me and the lack of build for the main event gets on my nerves. On top of that you have a lot of filler here which didn't build anything and just wasted time.

Then we get to perhaps the best segment Nitro ever had with the Horsemen. Since it's WCW though the interesting question is how can they screw it up as we go forward, but at least the first night of the new Horsemen was as good as it could have been. Other than that there was an awesome Kidman vs. Juvy match to give us some excellent wrestling, meaning the good stuff more than outweighs the bad.

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## **TNA One Night Only – Hardcore Justice 3: TNA Has A Lot Of New Problems But This Isn't**

# One

## Hardcore Justice 3

Date: January 16, 2014

Location: Lowell Auditorium, Lowell, Massachusetts

Attendance: 1,000

Commentators: Jeremy Borash, Mike Tenay

So apparently this show aired over two weeks ago. This comes as a surprise as I watch every episode of Impact and I NEVER heard about this airing. They usually talk about this for at least two weeks but I didn't hear about it at all. The title of the show should tell you everything that you need to know about TNA: they can't count because this is at least the sixth PPV called Hardcore Justice. Let's get to it.

We open with the traditional One Night Only highlight package of the show we haven't seen yet. We're getting Lethal Lockdown tonight which should be pretty cool.

This show was taped a few weeks ago so it's at least up to date.

To say this show looks low rent is an understatement. No video screen, no set, nothing. It's literally just a curtain and an aisle leading to the ring, making it look like a house show. I kind of like that.

JB is in the ring and tells us what we're going to see but not the participants in the matches. The card is actually stacked. Borash is cut off by Ethan Carter III who isn't all that familiar to TNA fans yet but he's getting there. The fans know the advertised cards though and chant WE WANT DREAMER. Carter says keep chanting, because the more the fans want to see him means the more money is in his trust fund. After all, he's a Carter and the world needs him.

### Tommy Dreamer vs. Ethan Carter III

This is a tables match and as expected, the fans are entirely behind Tommy. Carter works on a wristlock to start but Dreamer comes back with right hands and a running clothesline to send Ethan outside. Tommy takes

a beer from a fan and spits it in Carter's face, messing up the camera lens. They head into the aisle where Dreamer gets crotched on the barricade. Tommy comes back with chops out of the corner but gets sent shoulder first into the post.

A belly to back suplex puts Dreamer back down again but Carter covers like someone always does in TNA tables match. Carter misses a middle rope elbow and gets punched in the corner as we're waiting on the first table. Dreamer hits something like a downward spiral to send Carter into the middle buckle before going outside to look for some plunder as Dusty Rhodes would say.

The first table is set up on the floor but Carter stops Dreamer from coming in with a dropkick. Dreamer comes right back with a swinging neckbreaker before pulling out his second table. They head back inside with a table down on the mat which Dreamer lands on back first. Carter goes up top but gets pulled down into the Tree of Woe. Dreamer puts the table in front of his face for the baseball slide and the fans are into this. The table is set up in the corner but Carter comes back with a quick bulldog driver. Tommy's Death Valley Driver is easily escaped and a spinebuster through the table gives Ethan the win.

**Rating:** D+. This was there so they could say they had a tables match on the show and nothing more. Dreamer losing was obvious the entire way as he's one of the biggest jobbers in the history of wrestling. Carter is a guy that I like more and more every time I see him and having him get a win over a fan favorite is only going to help him.

Austin Aries is ready for Chris Sabin later tonight. See what I mean about how much better these are when they're tied to current storylines?

### Austin Aries vs. Chris Sabin

This is an Xscape match meaning it's in a cage and the first person to climb out wins. Christy isn't doing the commentary tonight but the guy they have (never shown or named) has a good deep voice. Aries sends Chris into the corner to start and quickly pulls Sabin down on an escape attempt. Back down and Aries scores with some armdrags and goes up for a top rope ax handle. A big running elbow drop sets up the pendulum elbow



and Sabin is in trouble.

Luckily it's not deep enough trouble for Aries to get out as Chris pulls him back down, sending Austin's head into the mat. He goes for a cover to make sure the fans get the idea because wrestling fans aren't that bright. The cage is used for the first time with Aries being slammed back first into the steel as Sabin extends his advantage. Chris hits his own brainbuster followed by a swinging facebuster (think a spinning backbreaker but with the recipient's face down) but Aries makes another save.

They fight on the top rope with Aries climbing onto Sabin's shoulders and taking him down with a nice hurricanrana. A running clothesline in the corner and a bulldog set up the Last Chancery. Sabin knees his way out of a brainbuster but takes the running dropkick in the corner. Another running dropkick against the cage looks to allow Aries to escape but Sabin crotches him down on the ropes.

Sabin gets all heelish and takes the belt out of his shorts and ties Aries' feet to the ropes but apparently he wasn't a good Boy Scout because Aries easily unties it and stops the escape. They slug it out on the top rope again with Sabin getting crotched and knocked down to the middle of the ring. Austin goes up, headbutts Sabin down through the cage, and drops to the floor for the win.

**Rating:** B-. That might be a bit high but I liked this a lot more than I was expecting to. There's a story here (not much of one but it's a story) so it's automatically easier to care about these two fighting. It's no masterpiece or anything but it was entertaining enough to fill in fifteen minutes and that's all it needed to be.

James Storm, a member of Team Angle in Lethal Lockdown, won't reveal the fourth member of the team along with himself, Kurt and Samoa Joe. They're facing Team Roode tonight.

Here are the Bro Mans to add some comedy. Robbie asks Jesse who are more hardcore than the Bro Mans before revealing that they're in Lethal Lockdown along with Roode and Magnus. They talk about Team Angle and make sure the fans know the participants in the main event. None of their

opponents are hardcore though and there's no fourth man because everyone is scared of the Bro Mans. They've found someone willing to try their lucky though: Dewey Barnes.

Dewey comes through the crowd and throws out t-shirts before getting in the ring and not understanding fist bumps. The Bro Mans ask him to tell the fans a bit about himself and what do you know: he used to spend his summers here. Apparently Barnes is going to run the Bro Marathon with the first step being a dance off with Robbie E. The fans give it to Barnes so he's a step closer to being on Team Angle. Now it's a posedown with Jesse and Barnes might be in trouble. He does the Hogan poses and you can figure out the results here I'm sure.

That brings him to the final challenge: a pushup contest. If Dewey can do ten pushups, he can be in the main event tonight. He gets to nine and the Bro Mans channel their inner DiBiases and attack. This was longer than it needed to be to get the idea but it's better than some stupid countdown or flashback sequence like the rest of these shows use to fill in time.

Bobby Roode is going to step up for his team against Samoa Joe to earn the advantage in the main event.

Video on Lethal Lockdown and steel cages in general.

### Bobby Roode vs. Samoa Joe

The winner gets the advantage in Lethal Lockdown. Joe still has his mohawk here to date the show a little bit. Feeling until Joe starts peppering him with right hands and a shin breaker. After a quick trip to the floor it's more right hands to Roode's face followed by a knee drop for two. Bobby heads outside again and Joe gets caught chasing him to change momentum.

Back in and an elbow to the jaw puts Joe down again for a Hennig necksnap and a two count. Joe gets caught in a front facelock but fights him off and grabs an Orton powerslam for two. He counters a PerfectPlex but walks into a spinebuster for two by Roode. The Roode Bomb is easily blocked by the powers of fat and Joe loads up the MuscleBuster but has to settle for the Clutch instead.

Roode jawbreaks his way to freedom and the referee is bumped on the landing. Bobby brings in a trashcan and pulls an Eddie Guerrero by slamming it against the mat, throwing it to Joe and falling down as the referee turns around to call the DQ. The gullibility of referees never ceases to amaze me.

**Rating:** C. Just a basic wrestling match here with an ending that ties into the hardcore theme at the end. Joe is starting to get back to what he used to be but he needs to actually win a few important matches first. Given the history of team cage matches, there really was no doubt on the winner here.

Velvet Sky is ready for her street fight with Tapa. She's absolutely gorgeous here.

#### Velvet Sky vs. Lei'D Tapa

Street fight as mentioned. Velvet is in one of her regular tops and torn jeans which is a nice change of look for her. She charges at Tapa over and over but keeps getting shoved away with ease. A few kicks to the leg have little effect on Lei'D so Velvet tries even more. Tapa charges into two boots in the corner and gets low bridged to the floor. Velvet is pulled outside and sent into the steps for good measure.

Tapa throws her into the apron a few times as the match slows down despite not going that fast in the first place. Velvet is still down and Lei'D goes through the curtain and comes back with a chair but hits the post instead of Velvet. Some kicks slow Tapa down a bit but she rams Velvet into the apron again to take over. The chair is wedged between the top and middle ropes in the corner but gets knocked out when Velvet crashes into it. Tapa puts it back in but charges head first into it herself. Sky gets in some very weak chair shots but Lei'D knocks it out of her hands and the fireman's carry Stunner is good for the pin.

**Rating:** D. This just didn't work at all and was only good because Velvet looks good in jeans. Tapa just sucks the life out of any match she's in and Velvet wasn't the right kind of character to carry her to a good match. It just didn't work and the weapons stuff was nothing special. Bad match, good view for part of it.

Bad Influence knows Joseph Park is Abyss and that he bleeds blood instead of nougat. They can't make him bleed but they can beat the stuffing out of him and his fishing buddy.

We recap Bad Influence vs. Young/Park, which started as the two of them vs. Young before Park got involved. Bad Influence began going after Park and looking into his background and found out that he was in fact Abyss.

### Eric Young/Joseph Park vs. Bad Influence

This is Full Metal Mayhem which means TLC but you win by pinfall. Park grabs a mic but is stopped by a WE WANT ABYSS chant. He says he would love Abyss to walk through the curtain right now because this isn't his kind of match. Young comes out second and says that he and Park are friends but he has to do something to bring out Abyss. He goes to open up Park's head but Bad Influence hits the ring to start the fight and prevent the blood from flowing.

Young is quickly sent to the floor and Park gets double teamed with shots to the ribs instead of the face. Eric comes in with a double missile dropkick before bringing in a chair. He pulls it back to hit Park but Kaz steals it away, only to hit the rope and knock the chair back into his own face. Now it's Eric getting double teamed with a Daniels kick to the head getting two. Back outside with double teaming on Park but Young gets in a few shots, allowing Joseph to put the ladder around his head and spin around to put Bad Influence down again.

Daniels backdrops Young onto a ladder in the corner and a double suplex puts Park onto the same ladder. The fans want blood but get chairs to Park's back instead. Bad Influence stays on Park with Kaz hitting a baseball slide into the ladder to knock Young down on the floor. Daniels drops an elbow off the apron to Young while Kaz blasts Park in the chest with the chair. Young finally comes back in and fights both guys off but Bad Influence takes him down again.

Eric low bridges them to the floor as Park is back to his feet and things speed up a bit. Shoulder blocks and a Samoan drop get two on Kaz but he's still able to break up a Boston crab on Daniels. Daniels comes back with ladder shots to send Park outside but Young dropkicks the ladder into

Daniels' chest. Chris pops back up and hits Young with the ladder before going for a climb, only to be pulled down and caught with a running powerbomb onto the ladder. Young goes up but Kaz makes a quick save and loads up the Wave of the Future (C4) off the top. Eric fights him off, shoves Kaz to the mat and drops a big elbow for the pin.

**Rating:** C. Not bad here and the ending spot looked good but there wasn't much in between. They never even had Abyss show up after hyping him up for the entire match and promo at the beginning. That's the problem with the whole Park story: everyone knows the ending and wants to get there, but there's nowhere to go once we get there.

Post match Park's mouth is busted but he controls himself.

Bully Ray calmly rants about Anderson ending the Aces and 8's, saying he can never forgive Anderson for what he took away from him. He quotes Behind Blue Eyes by the Who to continue a strange but awesome trend. Ray saw Anderson as his brother but tonight he takes him out like an enemy.

We recap Anderson joining the Aces and 8's but then costing Ray the title and ending the team. Ray wants revenge in a stretcher match tonight.

### Bully Ray vs. Mr. Anderson

Anderson calls Ray a creepy man and says he doesn't want to see Ray receive medical attention on a stretcher. Therefore, this is now last man standing. Anderson quickly punches Ray down but walks into a bad looking spear from Bully. Some elbows to the head have Anderson in trouble again and he's sent into the steps to bust him open badly. Ray rips up a fan's sign and rubs Anderson's blood on his face.

Bully throws the steps into the ring before whipping Anderson with the chain a bit. Back inside and the steps are stood up in the corner but Ray's big boot kicks them instead of Anderson. Mr. still can't fight back though and gets caught in a Rock Bottom for five. More chain shots have Anderson in trouble but Hebner interrupts for no apparent reason.

Anderson finally gets up and takes the chain away before getting in some whips of his own.

Anderson drops the chain and brings in a piece of barricade but Ray kicks through a bar and into Anderson's face for a nine count. Ray takes too much time though and gets slammed down onto the barricade followed by a swanton from Anderson for a VERY close nine. Anderson goes up again but gets crotched back down, setting up a superplex onto the barricade. The referee gets bumped in the corner right before we get a Mic Check onto the barricade but there's no one to count. The distraction lets Ray hit a quick low blow and beat the count for the win.

**Rating:** C+. By the numbers last man standing match here but you can't expect them to do anything huge on a show of this magnitude. This was fine for what it was supposed to be and these guys have some solid chemistry together. I'm sure the big blowoff match between them will be solid enough.

Magnus says he's allowing the team to be named after Bobby Roode out of the kindness of his heart.

We recap the world title tournament semi-finals and finals plus Roode vs. Angle.

#### Team Angle vs. Team Roode

Kurt Angle, James Storm, Samoa Joe, ???

Bobby Roode, Magnus, Bro Mans

It's Lethal Lockdown, meaning WarGames. The first two men fight for five minutes, then Roode's team sends in another man for a two minute advantage. After those two minutes it's Team Angle sending in its second man to tie it up for two more minutes. They alternate every two minutes until all eight are in and then first fall wins.

Storm and Jesse Godderz get things going after a LONG stall by Jesse before the bell. Storm will have none of that and rams Jesse into a few fans' shoes. They head inside for the opening bell and more punishment from James. He finally misses a charge to allow Godderz to get in some choking but Storm comes right back with clotheslines and a running neckbreaker.

A running knee drop and a powerslam have Jesse in even more trouble and there's a suplex for good measure. Godderz comes back with some more right hands and a leg drop but Storm hits a Thesz Press as Robbie E makes it 2-1. The Bro Mans start their double teaming with choking and stomping as this isn't really interesting stuff. Samoa Joe ties it up after nothing of note takes place.

Joe easily beats up the tag team champions as the problem of the match becomes clear: you have two comedy guys as half of one team and the other team has at least three former world champions. It's kind of hard for the heels to have a fighting chance you know? Joe hits ten elbows to the head in the corner and it's all good guys as Roode makes it 3-2. The exact same sequence follows with the heels taking over with punches and kicks for two minutes until Angle, looking as bored as I've ever seen him, comes in to tie us up at three apiece.

Kurt goes right after Roode with right hands and a lot of suplexes. Angle escapes a Roode Bomb and grabs the ankle lock on Bobby until everyone is down in the corner. Magnus comes in for the final heel advantage and brings in a trashcan full of weapons. All of the good guys are hit with various metal objects until Abyss's clock chimes and things get very serious very fast.

Eric Young wheels out a shopping cart full of weapons as Abyss runs over all of Team Roode with ease. Again, there's a case to be made that any combination of two Team Angle members could win this four on two but at four apiece it's totally lopsided. No roof full of weapons this time either.

The good guys easily clean house and it's an Eye of the Storm for Jesse. Magnus takes Storm down but gets caught in a MuscleBuster. There's no heat to this match at all. The Bro Mans hit the Samoan low but get chokeslammed by Abyss. He finds a barbed wire board and a Last Call sends Robbie into the Black Hole Slam on the wire for the pin.

**Rating:** D-. I feel bad about this because the match isn't really doing anything wrong but MAN was this dull. Like I said, there was absolutely no drama at all to this because the rosters were so one sided. That's an

all-star group on Team Angle and if you put Abyss in one of these things it's even more unfair for the heels. The rating is misleading though as it's definitely not a bad match, but it's just 50 uninteresting and basically 25 boring minutes of waiting for the inevitable.

A highlight package takes us out.

**Overall Rating:** B-. As usual, TNA continues to screw up the good stuff they have. If you watch this show, turn it off before the main event and you'll be thanking me immensely. I can't tell you how important it was to have current stories on this show. The One Night Only shows are so dull because the stories begin and end on those nights. This was a show with feuds that didn't need an introduction because they're (mostly) still going. I could easily see this being Lockdown if it was held at the end of January.

Therefore, of course TNA didn't talk about it. I'm serious when I say I had no idea this show aired. I knew it was taped but that's the last I had heard of it. The show is really entertaining and I'd have no problems paying \$15 to see this. The main event sucks but it's because of the lineups being so one sided. I really liked the atmosphere too. The regular One Night Only shows have the same set as Impact and it doesn't look interesting at all. Nice touch and one of the best One Night Onlys yet.

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# Complete List of Pay Per Views Available on WWE Network At Launch

There are some extras in here as well.

## WWF/WWE

WrestleMania

The Wrestling Classic (1985)

WrestleMania 2

The Big Event (1986)

WrestleMania III

Survivor Series (1987)

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WrestleMania IV

SummerSlam (1988)

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WrestleMania V

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WrestleMania VI

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Road Wild (1998)  
Fall Brawl (1998)  
Halloween Havoc (1998)  
World War 3 (1998)  
Starrcade (1998)  
Souled Out (1999)  
SuperBrawl IX  
Uncensored (1999)  
Spring Stampede (1999)  
Slamboree (1999)  
The Great American Bash (1999)  
Bash at the Beach (1999)  
Road Wild (1999)  
Fall Brawl (1999)  
Halloween Havoc (1999)  
Mayhem (1999)  
Starrcade (1999)  
Souled Out (2000)  
SuperBrawl 2000  
Uncensored (2000)  
Spring Stampede (2000)  
Slamboree (2000)  
The Great American Bash (2000)  
Bash at the Beach (2000)  
New Blood Rising (2000)  
Fall Brawl (2000)  
Halloween Havoc (2000)  
Mayhem (2000)  
Starrcade (2000)

Sin (2001)  
SuperBrawl Revenge (2001)  
Greed (2001) **ECW**  
Barely Legal  
Hardcore Heaven '97  
November to Remember '97  
Living Dangerously '98  
Wrestlepalooza '98  
Heatwave '98  
November to Remember '98  
Guilty as Charged '99  
Living Dangerously '99  
Hardcore Heaven '99  
Heatwave '99  
Anarchy Rulz '99  
November to Remember '99  
Guilty as Charged 2000  
Living Dangerously 2000  
Hardcore Heaven 2000  
Heatwave 2000  
Anarchy Rulz 2000  
November to Remember 2000  
Massacre on 34th St. 2000  
Guilty as Charged 2001  
ECW One Night Stand (2005)  
ECW One Night Stand (2006)  
December to Dismember (2006)

ECW is now added and you even get the three W/ECW PPVs as bonuses. That's a nice touch that I didn't expect but am glad to see. I'm planning on doing an ECW PPV E-Book in the future and those things are hard to find in complete form.

Greed (the company was out of business two months after Greed aired) and SuperBrawl IV (never heard a concrete reason) were never released on home video by WCW so it's something nice for people who like completeness to have available for the first time ever. Starrcade 1983-1986 weren't PPVs at all but they're shows you have to put into something like this.

The Big Event and the Wrestling Classic are completely forgotten one off PPVs that didn't mean anything but are nice additions. Actually the first Wrestlemania wasn't a PPV (mostly) but you know that wasn't getting left out. The

interesting show here is Over the Edge, which was never commercially released and is a hard show to track down. On a lighter note, I'm very happy that Survivor Series 1989 is there (presumably) in complete form. The VHS was hacked to death and cuts nearly an hour of match time off the show and I wasn't shilling out 50 bucks for the Anthology collection. As has been said since the launch was announced, TAKE MY MONEY NOW.

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## More In Depth Thoughts on Raw – February 3, 2014

Last night's show was polarizing to say the least. I've seen people calling it a classic to a decent show to the worst show in a long time. As usual I found myself right in the middle. We'll start with the beginning of course.

First and foremost, the crowd was chanting for CM Punk throughout the night. Here's the thing that people keep forgetting: Punk walked out on the company and the fans. In a word, he quit. Punk wasn't being held back by the company, he wasn't being misused and he wasn't some kind of a martyr. He quit a job that he wasn't happy at anymore and that's all there was to it. The fans chanting for him comes off as more anti-WWE than pro-Punk, but that's not what it should be.

This brings me to the Authority, who interrupted Orton while he was fighting the Punk chants. To clarify, HHH didn't want Bryan to be champion but now that Orton has done everything HHH wants, HHH doesn't want Orton as champion either and keeps setting up new hoops for Randy to jump through. Then he's all pro-Bryan even though nothing seems to have changed between the two of them. Whether he's acting like one or not, HHH

is supposed to be a heel but isn't acting like one at all. Last week was great when he was acting like a corporate jerk to Bryan but being the same to Orton is just confusing.

Next up was the further murdering of the midcard title scene. JBL mentioned that Ambrose never defends his US Title and Langston loses the fall. Big E. suddenly has nothing to do at all after spending weeks fighting off a challenger of the month for the title which was as basic of a story as you can get but it worked fine. Now both champions are making the titles look more and more worthless despite being strong to start. In other words, they're the same as every midcard champion has been for years.

Shield vs. Wyatts is going to be amazing. I don't think I need to go any further than that.

I don't get the deal with Lawler interrupting Bad News Barrett. I don't think they're building to a match between the two of them, but Barrett needs ANYTHING to do right now and Jerry Lawler isn't going to make things better for him. He was a good character when he was pointing out how bad stuff was, but saying stuff like "eating junk food is bad for you" isn't going to get anyone to care about him.

Swagger losing is little more than another losing streak angle that they've used a dozen times before. Stop with the same ideas over and over again and come up with some actual stories for the split. Say Swagger is in love with a foreign chick or have Sin Cara help him so Swagger realizes Colter is wrong or something so people can actually RELATE TO HIM instead of just making him look pathetic and going for pity.

Betty White as the guest host is just....there. She'll make some people chuckle, she'll interact with some comedy guys, she'll make fun of low level heels, and then she'll leave and will be mentioned once more in about a year or so and people will say "Oh yeah. She was on Raw once." Seriously, that's it.

Now on to the biggest disaster of the night: that cage match. This was just horrible for a few reasons. First and foremost, the Outlaws just aren't any good in the ring and I have no idea why people would expect them to be. Do you remember the Outlaws in the 90s? They were the Honky Tonk Man of the division, winning by cheating in ways that no one had even invented yet and stealing the belts from every team that deserved them until the fans found their antics funny and turned them face as a result.

Now they're beating a good team clean because people remember them as awesome and think that means they used to be good in the ring. It doesn't help that they're playing to the crowd and can do that as well as any team in history so the fans are always going to cheer for them, making Cody and Goldust, as in the team that has worked harder than anyone to get over, look like afterthoughts as we set up their singles feud (which no one wants to see) through ANOTHER losing streak angle.

In other words, we're pushing nostalgia as faces (nothing wrong with that) at the expense of good faces (a lot wrong with that). Have the Outlaws doing this stuff to 3MB or the Real Americans or ANY heel team and the act is much more fun and logical than anything else. Instead it's hurting Goldust and Cody to make a team with an average age of 47 years old and who are only out there on a nostalgia run. On top of that, their matches have SUCKED and Road Dogg nearly let Cody kill himself by not taking a step to the left to catch him. Oh and why can Road Dogg swear during the in-ring entrances but not the song opening?

Moving on to the next match we have Titus O'Neil as a monster heel which I really dig. The guy was the best thing not named the Usos about the dying days of the original NXT and I'd love to see him pushed as something that matters. The Clash of the Titus is a great power move and looks awesome when used.

During that same match we had Miz come out and complain that he couldn't get on the show while a guy that makes internet championships and a guy who barks like a dog get TV time. Word on the street is that he's being paired with Ziggler (check out the promo from the App on Smackdown to see more. We'll be back to Dolph later) as two disgruntled performers who want to be higher on the card. Sounds like they're parodying/mockng Punk to me but maybe not.

What I liked here though was Miz felt spontaneous. How many times have you seen a match end and we cut to the back where two people just happen to be standing in front of a camera so it can catch their conversation, which clearly hasn't started until the match ended? That kind of thing drives me insane because it looks SO scripted. Miz coming out during a match made it feel like he had to get this off his chest and didn't flag down a cameraman and demand time so it could be aired after the match. It happened right then and there, making it feel more realistic. I miss that so much anymore.

This brings us to the dance off with Summer Rae and Emma. They did this same bit in NXT which worked better there because of one simple reason: the fans know who Emma is. This is the same reason why Diamond Dallas Page never got over in the WWF. See, down in NXT it's a much more close knit atmosphere. The fans feel like they're a part of the show and they've embraced Emma and want their people to be the little engines that can and show they can be just as good as WWE (same as ECW when you think

about it).

Well WWE fans have no idea who Emma is for the most part. She's just some chick that dances in the crowd and holds up a sign that says EMMALUTION while Cole says "Oh she's from NXT", which a lot of fans have no idea exists. The people didn't care about Emma because they have no reason to care about Emma. She's just some chick that has been at Raw for the last month and apparently dances a lot. Why should I care about that unless I watch NXT?

Next up was Sheamus not squashing Curtis Axel in seven minutes. Sheamus is in the world title match at the next PPV and took seven minutes to beat a jobber to the stars. That's not acceptable.

Batista was up next but thankfully was cut off by Alberto Del Rio. Why are these two fighting? Because Del Rio thinks Batista doesn't deserve that title shot. Not that Del Rio wants the title shot for himself or anything, because that would just be a stupid thing to add to the match. It might actually intrigue people or something and we wouldn't want that.

The Wyatts squashed the dancers and Ziggler to further make my head hurt. The announcers acknowledged the promo Ziggler cut and then he goes out and gets destroyed in five minutes like nothing has changed at all. This is what I'm talking about when I say the writers don't remember anything that happened five minutes ago. Have Dolph be frustrated or try extra hard or SOMETHING, but don't have him say one thing then do another and expect us to care about him. Or maybe you could, I don't know, SHOW US THE PROMO instead of just hyping the App. You show us stuff from it every week but not that?



There was a Divas match between Naomi and Aksana which was just embarrassing. Near the end Naomi caught Aksana in a head scissors position out of the corner but didn't take Aksana down. Instead she just wiggled her hips in the air and let go. From a kayfabe perspective, what does that accomplish? How does that help Naomi win the match? It makes her look like she doesn't take this seriously, so why should I take her as a serious challenger to AJ?

Last up was the main event, which made things even worse. First of all let me clarify: the match was very entertaining, but the story made no sense. Kane interfered at the end, presumably sent by the Authority (unless the Authority complains about him interfering later, we have no reason to assume they disagree with what he did) to help Orton win. Why would they come out and help Orton win if they seemingly had no problem with Bryan beating him?

Again, the Authority tries to play both sides without ever playing heels ON CAMERA. Their interference is implied here, but whenever they're on screen they'll be talking down to Orton like he's a child (imagine someone saying that to Rock, Austin, Hogan, or any other champion. The reaction alone would turn them face but instead Orton just nods and accepts it because the Authority is all powerful and cannot be questioned) and say Orton has to regain their trust before starting this cycle all over again.

To put it into one sentence, the Authority storyline makes no sense. What do they want? Orton as face of the company? Fine, but if they want him as face of the company, why constantly move the goal posts on him? You do that to people you hate, not people you want to be the top guy. Vince did it to Austin and Bischoff did it to WCW when he ran the NWO. And why is HHH backing Bryan after spending months telling him he was worthless? The Authority is Johnny Ace without the goofy charisma and that's not a good thing at all.

A few other notes here:

Were there any backstage segments last night? There weren't a ton on Smackdown that I remember and now there were none last night. I rather like that idea as there are usually WAY too many and they drag the show down. One or two is fine but keep those things quick and have them mean something.

No Cena due to the eye injury which is all you can ask for. He ran in for the post show beatdown of Orton and Kane but I'd assume his eye was too messed up to be seen on camera. That's the right idea as you need him healthy for Elimination Chamber and Wrestlemania, not a Raw in early February.

Overall I thought Raw was good last night, but this Authority nonsense has been going on WAY too long. The Authority is fine as a heel idea, but have them be HEELS, not people who treat everyone like garbage. It makes your heels look weak and keeps fans from caring about seeing them get beaten up. A double standard is a heel tactic, but when you use it on another heel, it just confuses people.

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# Monday Night Raw – February 3, 2014: I Welcome This Show

## Monday Night Raw

Date: February 3, 2014

Location: CenturyLink Center, Omaha, Nebraska

Commentators: Michael Cole, John Bradshaw Layfield, Jerry Lawler

The big story from last week is CM Punk walking out on the company due to reasons that aren't entirely clear. There's always the possibility that it's a work, but as of right now there's a very good chance Punk isn't at Wrestlemania. Other than that we're three weeks away from Elimination Chamber and the card is already getting filled in. Let's get to it.

Here's Orton to open the show and he immediately has to talk over the CM Punk chant. He says the Authority is trying to teach him something, even though he won the title with hard work. Orton asks the fans how many times he has to beat all five of his opponents inside the chamber. Randy says he'll keep the title there and at Wrestlemania against Batista. Back in Evolution they were equals but now Orton is simply the better man.

This brings out the Authority (with Stephanie showing off some large arms) to talk down to Orton about how he needs to calm down. HHH goes into the same speech he's had every week for months now: he's not sure if Orton is worthy of being the face of the WWE and they might be losing faith in him. Stephanie says Orton is going to be facing all five of his opponents in the coming weeks and if he loses tonight, we might have a new face of the WWE: Daniel Bryan. HHH stats a YES chant, basically erasing the entire end of 2013 from existence.

## Shield vs. Big E. Langston/Rey Mysterio/Kofi Kingston

Not a bad group of midcard challengers. Langston takes Ambrose into the corner to start before it's off to Kofi who cranks on the arm for a bit.

The announcers bring up the fact that Ambrose never defense the US Title as it's off to Rollins who gets taken down by a monkey flip and a running clothesline in the corner for two. Ambrose comes back in and takes Kofi down before handing it back to Rollins for a front facelock. Seth cranks on Kofi's head but misses a knee drop, allowing for the hot tag to Mysterio.

A seated senton from the top and a kick to the head are good for two but Rollins makes a blind tag to Reigns. Rey tries a hurricanrana on Rollins but gets caught by a jumping clothesline from Reigns which allows Seth to powerbomb him down for two as we take a break. Back with Reigns holding a chinlock on Mysterio before it's back to Ambrose for some jumping stomps. Dean puts on a chinlock of his own before Rey fights up and slams him down, allowing for the real hot tag to Langston.

Big E. runs over Reigns and hits the belly to belly and Warrior Splash for two until the other Shield members save. Everything breaks down until we're back to Reign vs. Langston with Big E. hitting the Superman Punch. Reigns loads up the spear but Ambrose tags himself in and hits the bulldog driver for the pin on Big E. at 11:34.

**Rating:** C+. Shield looks good as expected and there's drama at the end to set up the potential split even more. It's going to be a big moment when Reigns Superman Punches Ambrose's head off or spears the vest off of him. A Kofi loss would have been better than Langston here though. I never care to see champions lose.

Post match the Wyatts pop up on the screen with Bray talking about knowing Shield's blueprint. They spend their days crawling to that beautiful moment where they can sacrifice themselves in the name of their king. That moment is closer than they think because Bray is building his empire close to the see so he can watch his enemies drown with a smile on his face. Harper says that he (presumably meaning Bray) has always been their king. Rowan leans forward with the sheep mask and says run.

Bad News Barrett thinks it's funny that 112 million people who watched the Super Bowl and ate so much junk food that they won't be alive for next year's game. Jerry Lawler of all people gets on the announce table

and says hopefully Barrett won't be here next week. Nothing more to it than that.

How to download the WWE App. Even JBL and Lawler make fun of him for this. Cole turns it into a plug for the WWE Network, spelling out the savings on buying all the PPVs. We also get a clip of the Countdown show.

### Christian vs. Jack Swagger

Rematch from Smackdown. Jack takes him right to the mat and puts on Luke Harper's Gator Roll before driving him into the corner. Christian sends him to the floor but Jack trips him up to send Christian face first into the apron. A whip into the steps gets two for Jack and a beat gets the same. Swagger rams him back first into the buckle and puts Christian down with a powerslam for another two.

The fans get behind the Canadian and he gets a boot up to stop a charging Swagger. A middle rope missile dropkick puts Swagger down again but Jack knees Christian in the ribs to slow him down. The gutwrench powerbomb is countered into a reverse DDT for two and Christian starts clapping. He snaps Jack's back across the ropes but has to fight out of the Patriot Lock. The Killswitch is countered as is the middle rope sunset flip. The Vader Bomb hits feet though and now the sunset flip out of the corner is good for the pin on Swagger at 5:55.

**Rating:** C+. I liked this much more than I thought I would. Swagger is good in the ring but he needs to shake off this loser stigma that he's acquired. He's a guy with a lot of ability but he's in need of repackaging at this point. Still though, good match here with both guys looking better than I expected.

The cage is lowered.

Betty White is guest starring next week. Just...why?

### Tag Titles: New Age Outlaws vs. Cody Rhodes/Goldust

The Outlaws are defending and you can only win by pinfall or submission, not escaping. We get the big match intros after a break and we're ready to go. Goldust grabs a headlock on Road Dogg to start before taking Dogg

down in something like an armdrag. He gets on all fours to chase Roadie to the corner but Goldust lets him go. Road Dogg asks Billy what they're doing in here before tagging Gunn in to face Goldust.

Cody comes in with a sunset flip out of the corner for two and a small package gets the same. Back to Road Dogg who takes Cody into the corner as a CM Punk chant starts and quickly dies. Billy comes in again and pulls Cody's bad elbow around the top rope before putting on an armbar. The announcers talk about the tag division until it's back to Goldust for an armbar on Road Dogg. Not exactly inspiring stuff so far.

Goldust pounds on Dogg in the corner with right hands but misses a cross body and crashes into the cage to change momentum as we take a break. Back with Goldust still in trouble via a Road Dogg chinlock until it's back to Gunn who walks into a clothesline out of the corner. Goldust finally makes the hot tag to Cody as everything breaks down. The Disaster Kick gets two on Billy and Cody is frustrated. He looks up at the top of the cage, tells Billy to suck it and starts to climb. Cody goes to the top of the cage, totally misses the moonsault press on Road Dogg and gets caught by the Fameasser to give Billy the pin at 16:10.

**Rating:** D+. This was a very boring match that didn't need to be in a cage except for the big spot at the end. I'm assuming the Brothers are going to be splitting up soon which isn't the worst idea in the world. It also helps that they didn't go with the losing streak angle to set up the title change.

### Zack Ryder vs. Titus O'Neil

Titus has new heel music which starts out sounding like the reveal of a villain in an over the top action movie before transitioning into something more like the Prime Time Players' song. Titus gets in a hard shot to the face to start and sends Ryder out to the floor. Miz comes to commentary to complain about a guy barking like a dog and a guy with a fake internet championship being on Raw when he isn't.

Miz says there's something wrong with that and immediately walks off. That sounded like a heel turn. Titus puts on a bearhug before taking Ryder down with a clothesline. Ryder makes a brief comeback with the

Broski Boot but walks into a BIG Clash of the Titus for the pin at 2:46.

Profile on Ernie Ladd for Black History Month.

Time for a dance off because that's what WWE is all about. It's Fandango vs. Santino Marella but Santino thinks it should be Summer vs. a member of the audience. Naturally he picks Emma and it's the same bit they did in NXT: Summer actually dances and Emma does her goofy stuff that the fans like and cheer for. Notice the difference here: Emma is a fun character doing goofy stuff whereas Vickie Guerrero can't dance and we're laughing at her instead of with her. Emma wins and JBL says he's going to be sick.

Ad for Legends House on the WWE Network.

### Sheamus vs. Curtis Axel

Sheamus easily takes Axel down to start before pounding him around the ring. Axel gets to the apron and tries a neckbreaker because he's not that bright. Sheamus easily counters into the ten forearms before a big clothesline sends Curtis outside. Back in and Axel avoids a charge to send the recently repaired shoulder into the post. Curtis drops an elbow on the shoulder before cranking on an armbar. Sheamus fights up after a good while in the hold and hits the rolling fireman's carry. The Brogue Kick is enough for the pin at 7:03.

**Rating:** D-. WAY too long here with that armbar draining the life out of the match. There's nothing wrong with Sheamus getting another win to show off after being gone for so long. Axel still isn't great but I like him in the ring. He just didn't have a chance at all here though and everyone knew it.

Here's Batista to speak but Del Rio interrupts. Blast it all. He says Batista has been in Hollywood while Del Rio was winning titles and it takes cahones to be a champion. Thankfully they get right to the brawl with Del Rio punching Batista in the face, only to have to bail to avoid a Batista Bomb attempt.

### Dolph Ziggler/R-Truth/Xavier Woods vs. Wyatt Family

Rowan runs over Woods to start and all three of the Wyatts get their turn on him. Bray hits his especially violent stomps as the fans want Ziggler. That's exactly what they get as everything breaks down. Wyatt hits something resembling a chokeslam on Truth as things settle back down. Bray leans upside down to look at Ziggler before Sister Abigail lays him out for the pin at 5:08. Total squash.

**Rating:** D. This was another of those moments that gets on my nerves: WWE has Ziggler cut a great promo after Smackdown about how angry he is and they acknowledge it here, only to have him squashed in the same match as Woods and Truth who aren't going anywhere. Nothing to see here other than the Wyatts being creepy.

Shield comes on screen post match and says they're coming for the Wyatts. Bray says he welcomes this war.

Alexander Rusev and Lana are coming.

#### Naomi vs. Aksana

Alicia Fox is in Aksana's corner but AJ and Tamina come out to watch as well. It's a dance off to start with AJ calling Naomi a baked potato. So she's good with sour cream? Naomi hits a Bubba Bomb and rolls Aksana round on the mat for two. Aksana comes back with a wheelbarrow slam as AJ says Tamina failed her in the tag matches where Naomi pinned her.

Aksana puts on a chinlock as we randomly go to a wide shot of the arena. Back with Aksana holding Naomi in a figure four necklock. Naomi fights up with some dropkicks and a headscissors with some gyrations. A knee to the face puts Naomi down as the match grinds to a halt. Naomi quickly takes her down again and hits the split legged moonsault for the pin at 4:51.

**Rating:** D. I can't stand the Divas at this point. The hip swivel stuff was just annoying with it being nothing more than trying to make the crowd chuckle. Aksana looked horrible out there and the ending with the knee to the face stopped the match cold. It sounds like we're heading to AJ vs. Tamina though which makes sense.

#### Randy Orton vs. Daniel Bryan



They have a lot of time for this and it's non-title. Feeling out process to start with Bryan taking over by throwing Orton down. He sends Randy into the post and wraps the knee around the steel before hitting a running dropkick to drive it into the post. Back in and Bryan throws on a leg lock before turning it over for a two count. Off to a modified Indian deathlock but Randy bites Bryan's hand to escape.

Daniel will have none of this being in trouble nonsense and gets two off a backslide before taking Orton down with a dragon screw leg whip. He cannonballs down on Orton's leg to send the champion outside but Bryan follows him out with more kicks to the leg and ribs. All Bryan so far and he throws Orton over the announce table for good measure. Back inside and Bryan gets two off a top rope hurricanrana. There's the double knee stomp out of a surfboard and Orton is reeling.

Orton gets caught in a half crab and Bryan drags him back to the middle of the ring. Orton gets all serious and crawls to the ropes before heading outside. Randy finally gets in some offense with a belly to back suplex onto the barricade and Daniel is in some trouble. Back in and Randy mouths YES before going off with right hands in the corner. Daniel comes back with kicks to the ribs and knee before moonsaulting over Randy in the corner, only to have the clothesline countered with the powerslam. I love how Orton learns from his past matches and counters signature spots. He's done that throughout the years and it's smart.

Back from a break with Bryan hitting more YES Kicks but having his last one countered into a capture suplex. Orton takes him to the floor and sends Bryan's shoulder into various metal objects for two back inside. Randy cranks on a Fujiwara armbar before just stomping at the arm instead. The bad arm is draped across the top rope but Daniel fights out of a superplex with rights and lefts to the ribs.

Bryan puts Orton down with a missile dropkick but injures his arm again. They slug it out with Bryan taking over with kicks until Randy grabs the arm and wrenches it to the mat to get the advantage back. There's the YES Lock out of nowhere but Orton is quickly in the ropes. Bryan goes back to the alternating kicks in the corner but hurts his arm again on a running dropkick. The injury slows him down enough that Orton is able to hit a

running dropkick of his own to put Bryan back down. Sell the freaking knee Randy.

The Elevated DDT would look to set up the RKO but Bryan kicks him square in the head to block. Bryan goes up, points with one arm, and hits the flying headbutt for a VERY close two. There are the YES Kicks to the chest and the big one to the head has Orton down. Here's Kane who is dropkicked off the apron almost immediately. Orton is low bridged to the floor as well and the FLYING GOAT puts both of them down. Kane is sent into the steps and the RKO is countered into the running knee for the clean pin at 26:58.

**Rating:** B. Good but not great match here. The biggest in ring problem here was Orton forgetting about the knee injury after the break. It was a very good match and I'm so glad they didn't have Bryan lose because of the interference. That being said, I'm not wild on Orton losing clean in the middle of the ring to anyone at all, but at least it was Bryan.

Kane and Orton double team Bryan with no one making the save to end the show.

**Overall Rating:** C. There were some bad parts here but in perhaps the only instance of this ever, I don't think there were any backstage segments tonight. It was all about the in ring action tonight and it was a very nice change of pace from the usual Raw formula. That being said, there were a lot of problems tonight as well.

First of all, there wasn't a standout match until the main event. The first two matches were decent enough but they're nothing I'm going to remember in a few days. I liked Miz coming out in the Titus match to protest stuff but at the end of the day it's still Miz. Things are shaping up heading into the Chamber, but with the amount of stars missing, there are a lot of ways they could go heading into Wrestlemania and that's not the best thing in the world. Different but not great show, making this a decent birthday show for me.

## Results

Shield b. Rey Mysterio/Big E. Langston/Kofi Kingston – Bulldog driver to

Langston

Christian b. Jack Swagger – Sunset flip

New Age Outlaws b. Cody Rhodes/Goldust – Fameasser to Rhodes

Titus O'Neil b. Zack Ryder – Clash of the Titus

Sheamus b. Curtis Axel – Brogue Kick

Wyatt Family b. Xavier Woods/R-Truth/Dolph Ziggler – Sister Abigail to Ziggler

Naomi b. Aksana – Split legged moonsault

Daniel Bryan b. Randy Orton – Running knee

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