

205 Live – November 28, 2017: A Very 205 Live Anniversary

205 Live

Date: November 28, 2017

Location: Rupp Arena, Lexington, Kentucky

Commentators: Nigel McGuinness, Vic Joseph

The show is in a weird place for the next few weeks at the moment as they're setting up a new #1 contender but it's going to take a little while to get there. We have one member of the #1 contenders match but since the matches are taking place on Raw, there's only so much need for this show to even exist right now. Let's get to it.

Of note: I was in the arena for this show so it's my second time seeing it.

The opening recap looks at last night's fatal four way with Rich Swann qualifying for the #1 contenders match in two weeks.

Opening sequence.

The announcers thank us for watching 205 Live for one year now. Sweet goodness how low does the viewership have to be for us to not thank us?

Here are Enzo Amore and Noam Dar for an opening chat. Enzo's mic doesn't seem to work on the way to the ring so he waits until he gets inside to talk about having the Zo Train getting to the top of the cruiserweight Mount Rushmore. Last week the Zo Train got a little derailed because someone thought we were playing Mario Kart and slipped on a banana peel. That would be Dar, who needs to TOTALLY redeem himself tonight.

Rich Swann vs. Noam Dar

Before the match, Swann says he hasn't been Cruiserweight Champion in about a year (closer to ten months actually) but he's getting closer every day. Not much to say there Swann. Dar hits the floor at the bell (must be a Kevin Owens fan) before heading back in to crank on a

wristlock. That's reversed into another wristlock, sending Dar back outside.

Swann isn't waiting this time and takes Dar out with a flip dive from the apron, much to Enzo's chagrin. Swann's Rolling Thunder gets two but an Enzo distraction lets Dar get in a kick to the knee. A clothesline to the back of the head gives Dar two but he keeps holding his knee. Enzo: "What are you, Big Cass? GET THE JOB DONE!" Back up and Swann kicks him in the head, setting up the Phoenix splash for the pin at 4:42.

Rating: D+. Dar continues to do nothing for me and Swann winning here was hardly a surprise. The problem here is the continuing story of the Zo Train: how much difference does it make to have Swann win here? Enzo will just talk a lot and the wins will be traded over and over until no one but Enzo and the eventual #1 contender gets anywhere.

Enzo threatens to fire Dar if he keeps screwing up.

Kalisto is ready to start his comeback against Jack Gallagher.

Kalisto vs. Jack Gallagher

Brian Kendrick is in Gallagher's corner. Gallagher works on the arm to start but is quickly taken down into a wristlock. They fight over the same hold until Kalisto realizes that's not the best idea against Gallagher. Instead he fires off the kicks, only to have a Kendrick distraction let Jack take over again.

There's a knee to the gut to cut Kalisto off again and Gallagher stays on the ribs like an evil Englishman should. We hit the cross arm choke with Gallagher bending him back onto the knees. That goes nowhere so Kalisto hits his rolling kick to the head, followed by the springboard seated senton. A quick Salida Del Sol drops Gallagher but Kendrick comes in for the DQ at 6:23.

Rating: C. Kalisto vs. Kendrick/Gallagher could be fun, though I'm not sure how many times you can trot the two of them out there for pretty much the same feud. At least Kalisto is entertaining and fast paced enough to keep up the entertainment, which should make for a nice

dynamic. He'll need a partner though, which hopefully means more Gran Metalik.

Hideo Itami is coming.

Rich Swann, Cedric Alexander and Mustafa Ali are watching the Itami video in the back and say they're worried about those strikes. It turns into a discussion of who will be facing Swann but everything is cool.

Mustafa Ali/Cedric Alexander vs. Drew Gulak/Tony Nese

These four will be in the other four way on Monday. Before the match, Gulak praises Nese's physique and says Enzo has dubbed them Team Power Point. See, Nese has power and Gulak always gets straight to the point. Drew thinks the Zo Train is like the Justice League with Enzo acting as their Superman. As a bonus though, Drew has a POWERPOINT PRESENTATION! I never would have believed it but he's got something with that bit. As usual, entrance music cuts him off and we're ready to go.

Drew gets annoyed at the POWERPOINT chants, allowing Cedric to get the better of a wristlock. It's off to Nese vs. Ali for some more wristlockery, which has been really common tonight. Nese gets armdragged into an armbar but Cedric goes over to yell at Gulak, meaning he's not there for a tag. The tag works a few seconds later but Cedric walks into one of the loudest chops I've ever heard.

Throw in a running elbow to the jaw and Alexander is in some quick trouble. Back in and Nese hits the ab crunch kicks to the ribs. Gulak grabs something like half an STF before switching to a regular chinlock. Cedric makes the expected escape and the hot tag brings in Ali for the comeback. The rolling X Factor gets two and a Doomsday Device with a high crossbody instead of a clothesline is good for the same. Face miscommunication sends Cedric outside though and Nese gets a rollup for the pin at 9:31.

Rating: C-. This was a lifeless match and it was clearly just there to help set up Monday's match. That's not the most thrilling thing in the world and the time didn't make things any better. Gulak is getting more entertaining now that he's found his personality niche but the story

still isn't much.

Overall Rating: D+. As usual, the wrestling is passable for the most part but the storytelling is just dreadful for the most part. Everything is setting up the title shot against Enzo but why should I believe that would be anything more than Enzo cheating to retain the title all over again? At least there's something else now in the form of Kalisto vs. Gallagher, which is a necessary update.

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Ring of Honor TV – November 29, 2017: I Don't Like the Bullet Club

Ring of Honor

Date: November 29, 2017

Location: 2300 Arena, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Commentators: Ian Riccaboni, Colt Cabana

We've got three shows left before Final Battle and for the first time in

longer than I can remember, I'm digging the heck out of ROH. They're putting on good matches and telling interesting stories, which is a lot more than you can say about most wrestling shows these days. Let's get to it.

The Bullet Club is in the back and ready for the eight man tag main event. They're ready to face the spot monkeys and Flip Gordon will never flip again.

Opening sequence.

Jonathan Gresham vs. Silas Young

The winner is the final entrant in the four way TV Title match so TV Champion Kenny King is on commentary. Gresham gets sent into the corner to start but Gresham goes after the arm to slow things down a bit. A Beer City Bruiser distraction doesn't get Young very far so Gresham sends him outside without much effort.

Back in and we hit a crisscross until Young grabs a sunset flip for two. Gresham ties his legs together to...I guess mildly annoy Young. Back up and Gresham pulls Young up by one leg and it's time for a comedy spot. After nearly thirty seconds of waiting, Gresham pushes him back and scores with a dropkick. Back with Gresham slugging away with some really bad looking punches. A suplex puts Young down and a good looking high crossbody gives Gresham two.

The octopus hold goes on but Bruiser throws in a keg for a distraction, allowing him to sneak in and break things up. In other news: ROH referees are really stupid. Bruiser grabs the leg but this time Gresham takes him down with a suicide dive. Another distraction allows Young to avoid a second high crossbody, allowing Young to hit Misery for the pin at 11:19.

Rating: C-. The Bruiser stuff got really annoying with three different interferences. I can go for Young being in the title match but he needs something a little better than the Bruiser cheats and then Misery. Young is a good promo and a passable worker but more importantly he's more interesting than Gresham, who is a technical guy with no personality.

The Kingdom is ready for their Tag Team Title match next week.

We look at the end of last week's show with Mark Briscoe turning heel and helping to beat down Bully Ray.

War Machine comes out for a match but the Addiction jumps them in the aisle. The brawl is on with War Machine throwing the Addiction into the barricade, including a hard shot that takes down a plant.

It's time for Coleman's Pulpit with his first returning guest: Kenny King. Kenny is ready to be a fighting champion and doesn't want to hear Coleman's speech about reality. Coleman thinks King is being played for a fool because he's just a pawn. He's being pimped out, which King doesn't care for. Somehow this gets Coleman a TV Title shot in Florida, which seemed to be Coleman's idea.

We look back at Bullet Club beating down Dalton Castle from last week.

Flip Gordon/Scorpio Sky/Coast to Coast vs. Bullet Club

It's the Bucks/Adam Page/Marty Scurll here. Jay Lethal is on commentary and Cody comes out for a bonus. Before we get going, Cody says Gordon's dreams of beating the Bullet Club is the same as Castle winning the title: a pipe dream. Scurll takes LSG down by the wrist to start and it's time for an early wrestling sequence. You don't do that to a British guy though as he pops up with a bird pose, only to have Cody come up on the apron for the same. That earns him an ejection though and it's off to Matt vs. Sky.

Neither can hit much of anything until Scorpio nails a dropkick. Nick comes in and of course the fans are mostly behind the Club. It's off to Gordon, who refuses a series of handshake offers. Flip makes the mistake of doing his dancing handstand, allowing Nick to dropkick him in the ribs. Back up and Gordon keeps nipping up to avoid superkicks and because this is a Bucks match, Nick keeps trying the same stupid move over and over. A standoff takes us to a break and we come back with Gordon still refusing a handshake.

Matt comes in and grabs him by the hand though, allowing Scurll to break

the fingers. Naturally, the partners just STAND AND WATCH ALL THIS, including the triple superkicks. The fans think this is awesome because they'll cheer anything the Bucks do. Coast to Coast gets sent outside and it's time for a bunch of dives, as you might expect. Gordon nails an even bigger dive and comes back in to face Nick...who promptly pokes him in the eye to take over. Sky gets sent into the corner and it's time for a Bullet Club train of clotheslines.

Back from another break with Flip having to bail out of a 450 and getting superkicked down. Flip grabs a reverse Regal Roll but backflips into the chickenwing. Sky makes the save and grabs a dragon sleeper, only to have the superkick party begin. Ali and Matt slug it out on the apron until LSG hits his partner by mistake. A belly to back suplex onto the apron drops Ali, leaving Flip all alone in the ring. He tries his own dive, and, say it with me, lands on a bunch of superkicks.

More Bang For Your Buck doesn't work and Gordon springboards into a mostly missed dive to the floor. Nick is caught in the Tree of Woe for a double Coast to Coast but Gordon's 450 only gets two. Scurll does the chickenwing dance but gets kicked in the head. A blind tag brings in Ali...which doesn't matter as it's ANOTHER string of superkicks as the Bucks cut off another comeback. Matt superkicks Scurll by mistake but Page comes back in for a Rite of Passage/Tombstone/Indytaker combo to Gordon and Sky for the double pin at 20:07.

Rating: B-. Well that was maddening. This match was designed to push Gordon as a young up and comer but all I saw here was the Bullet Club superkicking everyone in sight and hitting a big team move for the win. As usual, the problem with the Club's matches is the same: they're never made to look like they're in any kind of danger. Every time the good guys got something going here, it was a bunch of superkicks to cut them off again. Sure there were some exciting moments here and there but I should buy the idea that the underdog faces have a chance. That wasn't the case here and it got old in a hurry.

Overall Rating: C+. This show was much more about the in-ring work instead of the storytelling but you can tell they're especially working hard around this time. You also would have expected something from Lethal

vs. Scurll here but that was barely discussed in the slightest. It's still a good show, though it wasn't exactly the same formula they've been using, or the one they should have been using for that matter.

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Impact Wrestling – November 30, 2017: Help Us Santa

Impact Wrestling

Date: November 30, 2017

Location: Aberdeen Pavilion, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada

Commentators: Josh Matthews, Jeremy Borash

We're back to a normal show this week after the Thanksgiving episode last time around. Tonight's featured attraction is Alberto El Patron vs. Johnny Impact in a match that should probably main event a pay per view if this company had more than two of them a year. Oh and we'll be getting more footage from outside the promotion. Let's get to it.

JB is in the back talking to the various women who will be in the Knockouts Title tournament.

We get a mostly silent preview of tonight's show with only El Patron vs. Impact getting any comments from either.

Knockouts Title Tournament Semi-Finals: Madison Rayne vs. KC Spinelli vs. Laurel Van Ness

They waste no time here with the early rollups, including Laurel spinning Madison around for two. Spinelli breaks it up but spends a bit too long dancing, allowing Madison to take her down. Laurel is back up to deck both of them but gets sent into the corner. A slugout is broken up with a double missile dropkick to give Laurel two each. Madison gets flipped off the top, only to have KC catch Laurel in an electric chair drop for a crash onto Rayne. Back up and something like a jumping Unprettier gives Laurel the pin on KC at 5:47.

Rating: D+. This felt like any given X-Division match: three people who don't have much of a character (well two don't at least) doing moves to each other until someone got a pin. On top of that though, there's the issue of these people fighting to replace Gail Kim, who is nowhere to be seen anymore. It took away a lot of the title's importance, which really hurts whatever the new champion can get out of this.

We look back at Taiji Ishimori having issues with the Cult of Lee.

Taiji Ishimori vs. Hakim Zane

Ishimori wastes no time, coming in with a springboard seated senton. Zane fights up and kicks Ishimori down as the announcers explain how awesome it is to have all these promotions around. Some double knees to the chest put Zane down though and the 450 is good for the pin at 3:25.

Rating: D+. Similar problem to the first match: why should I care about these guys? This company really needs some extra promo time as I feel like I barely know anyone in most of the matches. Zane won some reality show that you had to watch elsewhere and Ishimori's character is mostly "he's awesome in Japan". Also, is there a reason to have the reality show winner getting squashed?

Post match the Cult of Lee comes in and takes Ishimori out.

James Storm is ready to prove that he's the real cowboy tonight against Texano. After that, he's ready to take care of American Top Team.

LAX is ready to take care of OVE and Sami Callihan with various weapons available. Beer is consumed.

From Defy Wrestling in Seattle.

Sami Callihan vs. Randy Myers

I believe Myers was a big deal in the last incarnation of Stampede Wrestling. Joined in progress with Callihan knocking Myers outside and piling a bunch of chairs on top of him. Clipped to Callihan chopping him against the barricade and again to a rollup getting two on Myers back inside. A Batista Bomb gets two more on Myers and we're clipped again to a slugout. A hard lariat puts Myers away at 3:46 shown. Way too much clipping to give this a rating but it was little more than a squash for Callihan. Side note: I have no idea when this match took place and even Cagematch has never heard of it.

Alberto El Patron is ready to beat the heck out of Johnny Impact. Johnny has gone crying to the bosses of this company to get a fight and now he can't wait to beat Impact all over Canada. Alberto leaves and we pan over to KM beating up unidentified people while shouting about how that should be enough for American Top Team.

Texano Jr. vs. James Storm

Before the match, American Top Team is walking in the back when KM comes up to ask if that was enough. Dan Lambert says he doesn't care because they have a cowboy to deal with. Back with the two of them heading outside for a brawl but Texano steals some beer to spit in Storm's face.

Storm is sent into the barricade and a hiptoss sends him up the ramp. A chinlock with a knee in Storm's back doesn't do much good so it's off to a half crab. The announcers talk about Storm being in a war against AAA and another against ATT. We're really considering the AAA thing a war? Seriously? Back up and the Eye of the Storm is broken up so Texano can hit a superkick. That goes nowhere though and it's the Last Call to give

Storm the pin at 6:45.

Rating: C-. Is it too late to write to Santa and ask for something more interesting for Christmas? This AAA nonsense hasn't been any good since it started and the fact that it's going to be American Top Team after this doesn't exactly help things. Storm is on his way out and deserves something a little better than this to say the least.

Indeed, the MMA guys come out and beat Storm down as Josh names all of them off in a vain attempt to give us a reason to care. Storm gets in a Last Call on the one in a neck brace and the big beatdown is on. Moose comes out for the save and chairs down one of the fighters. Lambert calls wrestling a circus and says he's out of bug spray for all the fleas around here. A tag match is proposed for next week: Storm/Moose vs. Lashley/Lambert himself (with Lambert describing himself as the biggest heel in professional wrestling today).

Side note: how worthless of an appearance did Stephan Bonnar have? He showed up, wrecked an MMA gym and then had a horrible match before leaving. Again I'd love an explanation for why it wasn't just Lashley vs. Moose in the cage at the pay per view. Novelty maybe? The idea that this company doesn't think anything of its own roster and thinks they need guest stars?

We get a commercial for Park Park and Park law offices, including Joseph's cousin Chandler, who is better known as indy wrestler Ethan Page.

Here's the end of Kurt Angle vs. Samoa Joe from Genesis 2006. That should have been the main event of Bound For Glory 2007 but why waste time when you can make it clear that the former WWE guy is better than one of your best guys? I also wouldn't point out how much hotter the crowds were eleven years ago.

Johnny Impact calls Alberto a speed bump on the road to the World Title. Tonight, Alberto goes to Slam Town.

Eli Drake and Chris Adonis are ready for Alberto or Johnny. They run into Jimmy Jacobs but nothing is said.

Ethan Carter III comes out for commentary.

Tyson Dux vs. Matt Sydal

Sydal takes him into the ropes to start before hitting a standing legdrop for two. A reverse Muta Lock has Dux holding his knee but Dux kicks at Sydal's knee to even things out. Dux gets two off a delayed vertical suplex and we hit a Boston crab. That goes nowhere so Sydal kicks him in the face and gets two off a standing moonsault. Dux breaks up the shooting star and grabs a running DDT for two of his own. Sydal's jumping knee to the face sets up the shooting star (with Dux taking a very long roll over to the corner) for the pin at 5:44.

Rating: C. Dux is hardly a big name but at least Sydal seems to have a story going at the moment against a fellow Impact wrestler. Sydal not being able to win the big one is an interesting idea and giving him the Grand Championship would be a nice way to pay the thing off. It's certainly better than "hey, he's from another company".

Video on Johnny vs. Alberto.

Johnny Impact vs. Alberto El Patron

Alberto wastes no time in taking Johnny down but Johnny pounds him out to the floor without too much effort. A good looking corkscrew dive over the top drops Alberto again. Some kicks to the chest have Johnny in trouble and Alberto throws Johnny's sunglasses into the crowd. Alberto has a seat on the top rope and is greeted with a WE DON'T LIKE YOU chant. Well at least the fans get to the point. Johnny gets sent over the top in another heap and we take a break.

Back with Alberto in a chinlock after being crushed underneath the steps during the commercial. Alberto misses a top rope ax handle and gets kicked in the face for a double knockdown. Johnny wins a slugout and ducks the corner enziguri. A second kick to the face connects though and Johnny is staggered.

The armbreaker is broken up though and the Flying Chuck drops Alberto for a near fall. Starship Pain is broken up as well and Alberto's reverse

superplex gets two more. Alberto can't hit the top rope double stomp (good) so Johnny hits one to Alberto's back for a close two. The Countdown to Impact misses and OF COURSE the ref gets bumped.

A low blow cuts Johnny off but can't put him away. Instead Alberto ties him in the Tree of Woe and tries to put Johnny's wrist tape in Johnny's mouth. That goes nowhere so here's Drake for a distraction. Alberto decks him with a right hand and belt shot but gets pulled back in by a sitting up Johnny. Starship Pain gives Johnny the pin at 19:53.

Rating: B. It was entertaining but felt like every major Impact match: longer for the sake of being longer and with too many things going on. The ref bump wasn't necessary and Drake coming down felt like it was there to protect Alberto (which is fine). It also should have been presented on a larger stage but you can't expect this company to build anything up very well, especially if it's a top level match like this.

Post match Drake and Adonis beat on Johnny until Petey Williams makes the save to end the show.

Overall Rating: C-. And we're back to the same old problems: matches that feel like they're taking place because they have nothing else to put on, wrestlers we've barely been introduced to in big matches (Spinelli hasn't actually wrestled a match in this company yet and she's a win away from a title match) and what felt like a lot of filler. The show wasn't horrible or even bad, but it's completely lacking steam or anything that would make me want to keep coming back. They really need to develop some characters though because this has been a problem for a very, very long time. Anyway, good show but lacking a lot.

Results

Laurel Van Ness b. KC Spinelli and Madison Rayne – Unprettier to Spinelli

Taiji Ishimori b. Hakim Zane – 450

Sami Callihan b. Randy Myers – Lariat

James Storm b. Texano – Last Call

Matt Sydal b. Tyson Dux – Shooting star press

Johnny Impact b. Alberto El Patron – Starship Pain

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New Column: The Balor Problem

I think you get this one as I look at why Balor isn't working, which really makes no sense.

<https://wrestlingrumors.net/kbs-review-balor-problem/>

Monday Night Raw – June 30, 2003: And It's Bad, Bad Bad

Monday Night Raw

Date: June 30, 2003

Location: HSBC Arena, Buffalo, New York

Commentators: Jim Ross, Jerry Lawler

We're closing out the first half of the year with the big story of Kane losing his mask. After the better part of six years with no one knowing what he looked like, Kane lost his mask last week in a match given one whole week of build up. You know, on the show that has needed back to back Kevin Nash pay per view main events. Let's get to it.

We open with a long recap of the end of last week's show, including Kane laying out Rob Van Dam with a chokeslam.

Opening sequence.

Chris Jericho is in the ring for the Highlight Reel. While everyone has been talking about Kane, let's have a beauty instead of a beast. Therefore, his guest tonight is Stacy Keibler, who comes out with Scott Steiner, much to Jericho's chagrin. Before we get going, Steiner removes her garter. Jericho asks Steiner to leave and I'll let you figure out how that goes.

We move on to Stacy's photo shoot for Stuff Magazine and Lawler rather likes the pictures. Jericho hits on Stacy and calls himself legendary. Stacy makes references to Jericho being, ahem, legendarily small. That's enough for Jericho to bring out Test as his second guest so the beatdown can ensue. Eric Bischoff comes out to call it off and say that he's in charge tonight because Steve Austin isn't here. As for the people in the ring, it's Steiner/Stacy vs. Test/Jericho.

Here's Lance Storm to say that he is NOT boring, and he has the dictionary definition to prove it. This doesn't go far as some music cuts him off.

Goldberg vs. Lance Storm

And no match as Rodney Mack jumps Goldberg from behind. Not that it matters as a spear cuts Mack in half and the Jackhammer (Jackknife as JR says) has Teddy Long hopping mad.

Bischoff is in the back with Kane, who has a towel over his head. Eric

wants Kane to address the people in the name of ratings. Kane shakes his head no so Bischoff offers him a World Title shot tonight. That's still no so Bischoff gives RVD the title shot instead. If Kane doesn't go out into the arena though, he's fired.

Women's Title: Battle Royal

Trish Stratus, Victoria, Jazz, Ivory, Molly Holly, Jacqueline, Gail Kim

Jazz is defending and this is Gail's debut. It's a brawl to start with Gail hitting a decent looking hurricanrana on Molly. Ivory is catapulted out, making the last few weeks of her defeating Jazz over and over pretty much a waste of time. Jazz gets hurt somewhere in there and is taken out by the trainers (she would be out until December with a shoulder injury, which may be why it's this instead of a regular match).

Molly and Jacqueline are out too and we're down to Gail, Trish and Victoria in less than two minutes. The Stratusphere is broken up and Trish is knocked out, leaving Gail to armdrag Victoria. A powerbomb attempt is countered into a hurricanrana to put Victoria out and make Gail champion.

Rating: D-. I'm guessing that was due to Jazz's shoulder injury and if so, that's fine. Gail winning the title was a nice little surprise, though it's not like it matters much anyway. The division isn't going to get better without something resembling a story and this isn't exactly thrilling. Somehow this is the only title Gail would win in WWE. You would have expected her to win another just by the amount of time she was around but somehow it never happened.

Intercontinental Title: Booker T. vs. Christian

Christian is defending and jumps Booker in the aisle before the bell. They head into the crowd with Booker beating Christian around as referees can't break it up. We're joined in progress after a break with Booker slugging away and getting two off a backdrop. Christian snaps the back of Booker's neck across the ropes though and we hit the chinlock.

The second version keeps Booker down again as JR and King talk about how

Test can do ANYTHING he wants to Stacy tonight because it's a wrestling match. You know, because there are no rules to a wrestling match at all. Back up and Booker misses the side kick into the ropes, setting up a backbreaker for two. Christian dives into a side kick though and both guys are down with Christian's stunned face being a nice bonus. Another kick to the face gets two but the Book End is broken up.

The ax kick is countered into a rollup with trunks for two but Booker plants him with a flapjack. But first, a Spinarooni. Booker gets crotched on top so Christian superplexes him down, right into the small package to give Booker the pin and the title. I'm not even going to bother going to the rating as Bischoff comes out to say all four shoulders were down. Therefore it's a draw and Christian retains the title.

Rating: C. This is another good example of a feud where they don't know how to just get it over with already and it's making for a bad story. Booker vs. Christian is fine for a once off but this is several weeks now with nothing being all that great in the first place. Get to something else already or just give Booker the title.

RVD goes to try and talk some sanity into Kane but Kane says he hates the fans. Rob hopes Kane doesn't hate him when he wins the title. He leaves, and Kane says he does hate him.

Stacy Keibler/Scott Steiner vs. Chris Jericho/Test

Steiner and Jericho get things going (you want to save the Test vs. Steiner money match for later) with Chris being shoved down like he's nothing. A belly to belly powerslam plants Jericho and Steiner starts in with the swearing. It's off to Test, who JR thinks has no testicular fortitude. A suplex tosses Test but he's right back with a clothesline to put Steiner on the floor.

The slow double teaming begins until Jericho misses a charge and crotches himself on the ropes. There's no one for Steiner to tag though so Test decks him again and stops for some jumping jacks. Test crotches himself though and Stacy bounces the ropes up and down for some bad measure. Jericho comes in and shoves the referee down....but here's Bischoff to say restart it as a No DQ match. A chair to the head puts Steiner down and

Test forces Stacy to tag Steiner. That means a pumphandle powerslam to give Test the easy pin a few seconds later.

Rating: F. Do you get the idea yet? I didn't know if the last few weeks had explained the concept so far but WWE seems rather fine with hammering it into your head over and over. JR is getting insufferable with his SOMEONE HELP THE HELPLESS WOMAN stuff too and I continue to question why what could be a good story is being wasted on Test and Scott Steiner. This just kept going and it never approached entertaining.

Rico vs. Maven

Rico grabs a quick pinch of the trunks to start and Lawler wants to know if Maven liked it. A cartwheel earns a nose rub from Miss Jackie but Rico needs to stop and pull his room key out of his tights. With Rico taking forever to bend over and get the key, Maven tries a sunset flip, earning himself a sit on the face. Rico kisses his way out of a headlock as the beating you over the head motif continues.

In case that's not enough, we stop for some dancing with the referee. Maven finally blocks a middle rope ax handle and hits some clotheslines as JR tries to say the fans are stunned into silence. The middle rope bulldog gets two with Jackie putting the boot on the ropes. That and a shove off the top sets up the spinning kick to end Maven.

Rating: F-. Let me guess: Vince found this hilarious and the shots of Jackie split pants were enough to validate the character. This was HORRIBLE with every low level gay joke you can imagine in one match. It comes off as a case of "well, he did something similar once so let's turn it way up this time". It's a total waste of Rico and that's quite the shame.

Randy Orton vs. Tommy Dreamer

This is fallout from Orton beating up Mick Foley last week. Dreamer wastes no time in taking him to the floor for a fight, only to have Orton whip him into the steps. Back in and Orton gets two off a hard whip into the corner. Well he's no Whipper Billy Watson. The always great dropkick gets two more but Dreamer grabs a Sky High of all things for the same.

There's the DDT but Flair puts the foot underneath the ropes. The tease of Flair vs. Dreamer (which sounds oddly fascinating) is enough for the RKO (I believe debuting the name) and the pin on Tommy.

Rating: D. They're clearly trying to do something with Orton and that's the right idea. He's everything you could want out of a prospect and the good finisher makes things even better. It's easy to see why he became the star he would become but he's still needing the big win to get him over the hill.

Bischoff tells Van Dam that if Kane doesn't come out, it's on Rob's head.

Post break, Bischoff sends Terri to get Kane's thoughts. She doesn't want to so Bischoff threatens another firing.

La Resistance vs. Hurricane/Spike Dudley

Non-title. Is Spike really an upgrade over fat Sgt. Slaughter? Hurricane starts with Dupree and let's hit that French dance! Some armdrags have Rene in trouble and Hurricane does a little dance of his own. It's off to Spike and we hit that BORING chant. A backdrop over the top to the floor calms them down but only gets two with JR being impressed by the kickout. Spike gets in a bulldog and the hot tag brings in Hurricane to no reaction. Everything breaks down and Spike hits a top rope double stomp for two. Grenier breaks up the chokeslam though and it's the double spinebuster to end Spike.

Rating: D-. Can you blame the fans for not caring? The French guys aren't exactly thrilling in the first place and it's pretty hard to care if you see Spike Dudley coming out for a match like this. It wasn't even any good as they had all of four minutes out there, which was hardly worth the time. You know, aside from filling out the show of course.

Terri can't find Kane.

Raw World Title: HHH vs. Rob Van Dam

HHH is defending and decks Van Dam before the bell. Some more right hands have Rob in trouble early on as HHH seems to be feeling the slow pace tonight. A monkey flip and some kicks to the head have JR way too

excited. Really man we're not even five minutes into this. Calm down already. Rob gets two off a dropkick and it's time to head outside. There's a baseball slide followed by a middle rope moonsault to put both guys down. Cue Flair as we take a break.

Back with Rob stomping away and kicking him in the head for good measure. A chop block lets HHH start in on the knee though with Flair wrapping it around the post for good measure. We hit the standard package of knee work, including HHH bringing back the Indian deathlock. You know, for reasons. Rob grabs the rope so we'll try the Figure Four instead as HHH flashes all the way to 1984.

The hold is turned over and there's just no reaction from the fans. Rob fights up with more kicks and a springboard crossbody gets two. A spinning kick hits HHH's hands for two and there's the split legged moonsault but Flair breaks it up again. The Five Star connects but this time Flair comes in with a belt shot for....not the ending as Bischoff comes out AGAIN and restarts it as a No DQ match.

A quick Van Daminator on the floor has HHH down and Bischoff makes it hardcore for fun. Rob's standing moonsault on the floor gets two until Orton comes in for the save (with the referee looking for him after every count). Van Dam chases HHH to the stage and gets two off Rolling Thunder. Flair comes back though and it's a belt shot into a DDT on the stage to retain the title.

Rating: D. You know, for someone who prides himself on being a student of the game and all that jazz, HHH really doesn't know much more than one way to get through a match. This was your usual twenty minutes of interference and HHH doing boring leg work that doesn't get anyone's attention until the obvious finish. At least they didn't go with what I would have thought was the obvious Kane interference ending.

Post match Kane comes out, teases going after Van Dam, and chokeslams Bischoff off the stage to end the show.

Overall Rating: D-. This was a rough one as Austin really does do some positive things for the show. The biggest issue here is the middle section with the lame mixed tag and the really, really bad Rico match.

That stuff isn't funny and isn't going to get anyone over so we're stuck with seeing it over and over again. It's not the worst show in the world as it was mainly a wrestling edition instead of a long talking segment but the bad stuff was absolutely awful.

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NXT – November 29, 2017: They Always Do Well In Texas

NXT

Date: November 29, 2017

Location: Aztec Theater, San Antonio, Texas

Commentators: Mauro Ranallo, Percy Watson

We're back on the regular schedule this week as it's time to get ready for Takeover: Philly. Therefore, we need to deal with the lack of Drew McIntyre, who has wrecked his elbow and be out for several months.

Tonight will be at least partially focused on the women though with Kairi Sane facing Peyton Royce. Let's get to it.

We're in San Antonio this week with some matches from a recent house

show.

Street Profits vs. Riddick Moss/Tino Sabbatelli

Dawkins waistlocks Moss down without much effort and gets in a slam for good measure. Ford comes in for the belly to back moonsault but Sabbatelli gets in a cheap shot to take over. That goes nowhere though as the Profits clean house without much effort. Back from a break with Ford being knocked off the barricade to really take over for the first time.

Moss stops to mock Ford's dancing before hitting the chinlock. Ford flips out of it though and avoids a charge in the corner, setting up the hot tag to Dawkins as house is cleaned. An elbow gives Tino two with Moss grabbing Ford's feet, forcing the referee to break things up. Back up and the spinebuster into the frog splash ends Sabbatelli at 12:49.

Rating: C. I'm starting to dig the Profits but they still need a better set of opponents. They're nailing the charisma though and that's what's going to get them a lot further than anything else. Sabbatelli has a great look but his in-ring work just isn't the best in the world. Moss...well he's there too.

Last week the UK guys set up a tag match for this week.

Trent Seven and Tyler Bate are ready for said tag match and are ready to teach a fake team a lesson.

Mark Andrews is teaming with Pete Dunne tonight so he can get a future UK Title shot.

Kairi Sane vs. Peyton Royce

Peyton hiptosses her down to start but gets rolled up for a quick two. A dropkick gets the same, only to have Peyton spin kick Sane in the face for the same. Back from a break with Sane holding a chinlock until Sane fights up and hits a spear to cut her off. A running Blockbuster sets up the sliding corner elbow but it's too early for the Insane Elbow. Sane stomps her down again, cuts down Billy Kay and drops the Insane Elbow for the pin at 9:46.

Rating: D+. Sane continues to not exactly thrill me in the ring though I've seen far worse. I get the hype and she has a great look but I'm still waiting on the great match. Royce and Kay are still good foils for the faces but they have to actually win something at some point to really make things more believable.

We look back at Sonya DeVille vs. Ruby Riot from last week. Next week it's a no holds barred rematch.

We look back at Andrade Cien Almas winning the NXT Title from Drew McIntyre. Drew's injury is also confirmed.

Tyler Bate/Trent Seven vs. Mark Andrews/Pete Dunne

Dunne front facelocks Bate to start before a hard shot to the face allows the tag off to Andrews. Seven comes in as well but gets dropkicked down for a fast two. It's back to Dunne to crank on the fingers and we take a break. Back with Andrews working on Seven's arm until the much bigger Seven blocks a monkey flip.

That's fine with Dunne, who comes back in with a Backstabber to take Seven down all over again. A quick Seven Stars Lariat cuts Dunne off though and the hot tag brings in Bate to clean house. Tyler hits a middle rope elbow to the jaw but the Tyler Driver 97 is broken up. Andrews' standing corkscrew moonsault gets two and the fans think this is awesome.

Andrews loads up a top rope hurricanrana but Dunne slaps him in the face for a tag. Not that it matters as the hurricanrana sends Bate into a sitout powerbomb for a strong near fall. A step up enziguri drops Seven but Andrews can't hit the shooting star on Bate. Instead it's the airplane spin until Dunne tags himself in. It doesn't do much good though as Bate drops Dunne with a shot to the face, setting up the Tyler Driver for the pin at 15:53.

Rating: B. The usual good stuff here, though not as great as they've been before. This should set up another Bate vs. Dunne match and I'm not sure how many people would really be complaining. Bate and Seven are a really solid team and I wouldn't mind seeing them in the Tag Team Title hunt, assuming their schedules would allow it.

Dunne lays Andrews out to end the show.

Overall Rating: C+. It's always good to have these shows taped just in case you need something like this. They were able to deal with the holiday schedule and still deliver a perfectly watchable show with a good main event. That's a lot better than a Best Of show or something like that, which often feel like a waste of time.

Results

Street Profits b. Tino Sabbatelli/Riddick Moss – Frog splash to Sabbatelli

Kairi Sane b. Peyton Royce – Insane Elbow

Tyler Bate/Trent Seven b. Mark Andrews/Pete Dunne – Tyler Driver 97 to Dunne

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Smackdown – November 28,

2017: Welcome To My House

Smackdown

Date: November 28, 2017

Location: Rupp Arena, Lexington, Kentucky

Commentators: Tom Phillips, Corey Graves, Byron Saxton

We're still in the fallout period from Survivor Series and that means it's still Shane McMahon vs. Kevin Owens/Sami Zayn. However, the big question continues to be Daniel Bryan, who seems to be leaning a bit more towards the villains, which could make for quite the power struggle down the line. Let's get to it.

Of note: I was in the arena for this show, meaning it's the second time I've seen it.

We open with a recap of Owens and Zayn vs. Shane, with Bryan holding Shane up from firing them. Instead, he put the two of them in a lumberjack match against New Day, which Sami won off a quick rollup. As a result, Bryan made Owens vs. Randy Orton for tonight. For some reason Shane left the arena halfway through the show, leaving Bryan in charge for the night.

Here's Shane to get things going. After sucking up to the Lexington fans (works for me), Shane recaps everything we just saw in the recap. Therefore, he'd like an explanation straight from the horse's mouth. As Bryan makes his entrance, I try to figure out why he didn't just say the goat's mouth.

The fans go bananas for Bryan, who talks about having been fired a few times. Therefore, he believes in second chances, including some for Owens and Zayn. Shane actually agrees with him, but recaps all the issues that Owens and Zayn who have caused him over the last few months. Bryan thinks they were doing it in the name of competition but points out that if they're fired, they'll just wind up on Raw. Shane: "Great. Then they'll be my sister's problem."

That's not cool with Bryan, who thinks they should make the best of it

here on Smackdown. Shane left him in charge last week so Shane has to trust Bryan when he's left in charge. As for tonight though, Shane is going to adjust the Orton vs. Owens match. Therefore, we'll have Sami Zayn barred from ringside and we'll make it No DQ.

Post break, Owens and Zayn run into Bryan and ask for some mercy. That turns into a demand, which doesn't sit well with the boss.

New Day vs. Shelton Benjamin/Chad Gable

The Usos are on commentary and New Day brings out pancakes for everyone. Eh Wrestling Revolver already did it. Xavier and Chad start things off as the fans are firmly behind New Day. Kofi comes in for a running kick to the ribs and something like a bottom rope Vader Bomb for two. It's off to Shelton as we take a quick break.

Back with Woods hitting a jawbreaker but not being able to get away from Benjamin. A belly to back suplex/top rope knee to the head combo (that's a new one) gets two on Woods. Chad can't quite hit a belly to belly superplex though and it's a missile dropkick to put him down (like he was shot). The hot tag brings in Kofi as things speed up in a hurry. Kofi flips out of a monkey flip and there's the Boom Drop. Gable gets low bridged to the floor so Woods can hit a good looking flip dive. Back in and a backbreaker/top rope stomp to the face gives Woods the pin at 8:40.

Rating: B-. They had some good looking double team moves here (that knee to the head looked great) but it just makes me wish it was New Day vs. American Alpha instead. Like really, has there been much of a worse split in recent memory? Either way, it was an entertaining match, even if the Usos are REALLY needing some fresh competition. Maybe some Brothers of the Bludgeoning variety?

We look back at Ruby Riot/Sarah Logan/Liv Morgan debuting last week.

Charlotte, Naomi and Natalya are ready to face the newcomers in a six woman tag later. Charlotte and Naomi are together but Natalya thinks she'll be the boss. The only thing I could think of during this whole thing: NO ONE TALKS LIKE THIS. It was the most forced, scripted conversation I've heard in WWE in a long time and it really shows how

they're horrible actresses. Do you really not trust them to have a simple conversation?

Bludgeon Brothers vs. Hype Bros

The Brothers deck Rawley off the apron and a spinning Boss Man Slam plants Ryder. The double spinebuster ends Zack at 45 seconds.

Post match Ryder says they were top contenders for the Tag Team Titles a year ago. Now things have changed though and...Rawley decks him from behind to end the team.

Post break, Mojo says Ryder was right: the landscape has changed.

We look back at Baron Corbin decking Bobby Roode during the lumberjack match.

Roode wants a shot at Corbin's US Title but Corbin laughs him off with a no.

Singh Brothers vs. AJ Styles

Before the match, Jinder Mahal attacks AJ, sending him ribs first into the post. After a break (and Mahal doing his standard promo), the match is on with AJ getting double teamed. The Brothers get in some shoulders to the ribs in the corner but AJ kicks them away without much effort. AJ knocks the two off them off the top, kicks Mahal in the face, and blocks a super hurricanrana attempt. He's not done yet though as it's a SUPER STYLES CLASH with one Singh landing on the other for the easy pin at 3:56.

Rating: D. This wasn't much to see but it was exactly what it needed to be, especially with an awesome ending like that. Really, what else was AJ supposed to do against a couple of goons like this? Styles vs. Mahal isn't an interesting story but at least Mahal has goons to send out there instead of having us watch the same match over and over.

Post match Mahal lays out the Singh's, including a TERRIBLE looking Khallas to the second one. The guy's head and back never came close to the mat as he basically bounced off his elbow (it looked even worse in

slow motion). As I've said many times: Mahal just isn't very good and that finisher makes things even worse.

Riot, Morgan and Logan are officially dubbed the Riot Squad. They're not here to be Total Divas but rather to turn the division on its head. Logan says she's a country girl from a family of hunters. Last week they set a trap and tonight they're bagging some trophies. The country accent was absolutely dreadful and the fans around me were groaning after she was done.

Charlotte/Natalya/Naomi vs. Riott Squad

Yes Riott and no I don't know why. During Charlotte's entrance we see clips from Starrcade, WHICH SHOULD HAVE BEEN FREAKING BROADCAST ON THE NETWORK! Logan takes Natalya into the corner to start and scores with a clothesline. It's off to Charlotte but that's enough for Natalya, who walks out on the match less than a minute in. Back from a break with Charlotte fighting off the trio but getting caught by the numbers game on the floor. Morgan gets two off a floatover suplex and it's off to Ruby for a chinlock. That leaves the other two Squad members to take Naomi down on the floor.

They send her hard into the steps and then bridge them over the barricade, catapulting Naomi face first into the steel. The best the referee can do is glare at them, making me wonder HOW IN THE WORLD THIS ISN'T A DQ. Seriously do they need to break out a pair of nunchuks and beat the stuffing out of Naomi before the match is called off? So it's now three on one with Charlotte actually managing to fight them off for a bit. A spear hits Morgan in those impressive abs but Logan hits a knee from the apron, setting up the Riot Kick to the face for the pin at 9:12.

Rating: D+. The beatdown was impressive enough though none of them seemed capable of hanging with Charlotte or Naomi on their own. That already puts them a few steps back of Absolution (I can feel my brain melting as I write these names over and over) but at least they're looking a bit more polished than people like Mandy Rose. Not a great match or anything but the divide and conquer strategy worked just fine.

Randy Orton has nothing to say. What is up with that growing hair?

It's Fashion Files time, featuring a Saw theme this week. Breezango and Ascension wake up chained in a shower when a video pops up on a tablet. A Jigsaw style voice says that to escape this room, they must destroy what they love most. They have a minute before a poisonous gas fills the room and a countdown begins.

There's a backpack in the middle of the room containing Tully the Horse's head. Konnor finally rips it apart to find the key, allowing Breezango to escape in time. Fandango comes running back...to get his hat, leaving Ascension to die I guess as the gas fills the room. Wouldn't Breezango leaving the door open help them a bit? To be continued of course.

Kevin Owens vs. Randy Orton

No DQ with Sami Zayn banned from ringside. The threat of an RKO sends Owens bailing outside in the first few seconds but Orton is right on his trails. Randy starts loading up the announcers' table but stops to send Owens into the barricade instead. A kendo stick to the arm has Owens swearing and a second shot makes him swear all over again. The slow beating continues with Owens being belly to back suplexed onto the barricade.

The fans want tables but settle for Owens posting Orton instead. A fall away slam into the barricade takes us to a break with Orton in big trouble. Back with Owens still swinging the cane and getting two off the backsplash. More stick shots continue to show that weapons based fighting is becoming a lost art in WWE. A DDT gives Owens two but Orton is right back up and catching him with a top rope superplex. It's a great crash but only good for two.

They head outside again with Owens getting dropped onto the barricade again. The brawl heads up to the stage...meaning Sami Zayn can come out with a chair to take Orton out. See, it's not at ringside so the one illegal thing is now legal. That's stretching pretty hard people. Back in and Owens gets caught in the hanging DDT, only to escape the RKO. A superkick into a frog splash puts Orton away at 16:47.

Rating: C+. Rather than being a match where it felt like they were out for blood, it felt more like how many times can we hit each other with a

kendo stick and throw each other into the barricade. The Sami interference didn't do anything for me, though I was betting on them heading to the back and having him interfere there. It's still good but I could have gone for something different to mix things up a bit.

Overall Rating: B-. Smackdown is in a weird place at the moment as they have some big stuff coming up, though I have absolutely no idea what in the world they're planning for Owens and Zayn at Clash of Champions. I mean, are we heading for Orton/someone likely named Shane McMahon facing the two of them? Or are they going to do the common thing and have them win the Tag Team Titles? In theory Bryan is going to turn and join them, even if it makes no sense to get people to boo him.

There are actually some interesting stories going on around here for a change but I have a bad feeling it's going to end with Shane wrestling again, getting most of the attention, and giving someone a rub that he doesn't have to give. Tonight's show was entertaining at times though and has me wanting to know what comes next. However, it also has me wondering how long they can pretend that Shane is the good guy in this whole thing.

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Main Event – November 24, 2017: A Thankful Change

Main Event

Date: November 23, 2017

Location: Toyota Center, Houston, Texas

Commentators: Vic Joseph, Nigel McGuinness

Now aren't you all thankful for this? We're still in Houston because that's where we have to be for every show for the better part of a week. This was a bit delayed due to the holidays and I was really missing it. Where else am I going to get Curt Hawkins losing another match and a cruiserweight match? Let's get to it.

Opening sequence.

Brian Kendrick vs. Gran Metalik

Kendrick grabs a headlock to start but gets taken outside with a springboard armdrag. Of course that means a suicide dive, followed by a springboard splash for two. Another dive misses though and Kendrick sends him ribs first into the apron to take over. We hit the chinlock for a few seconds before Metalik rolls him up for two more. A rope walk elbow drop gets the same and the Captain's Hook is reversed into the Metalik Driver for the pin at 5:42.

Rating: C-. Completely paint by numbers cruiserweight match here, meaning it wasn't all that bad. That being said, I do get a chuckle out of the almost certainty that the faces will always win these matches. Kendrick is miles ahead of Metalik most of the time but you put him on Main Event and he loses clean. It's kind of amazing really.

Stills of Sunday's main event.

From Raw.

Here's a happy, dancing Stephanie to open things up. Graves: "At least she's humble too." She recaps the siege and says Kurt Angle's job as GM

is secure. With that, she brings out the man who lead the team to their win last night: HHH! Before HHH can say anything though, here's a livid Kurt Angle to interrupt. He's not talking as the General Manager but the man who can beat HHH up. Stephanie gets all serious and reminds HHH that he's talking to the COO.

The staredown continues and here's Jason Jordan to interrupt as well. Booker: "Oh come on." Jordan gets in HHH's face but Angle holds him back. Jason wants to face HHH tonight but Stephanie warns Jordan that he'd get killed in a match like this. Stephanie: "HHH isn't afraid of anyone in that locker room." This of course brings out Braun Strowman to get right in HHH's face as well. HHH stares him down but backs off and leaves. Stephanie makes Jordan vs. Strowman for later. She didn't cut Braun's balls off here and at least they kept this relatively short, even if Stephanie didn't need to be out there.

From later in the show.

Jason Jordan vs. Braun Strowman

Jordan tries to go with the wrestling stuff to start but gets caught without too much effort. He manages to lift Strowman off his feet but Strowman takes him down and tosses him outside. Jordan's knee is banged up again...and here's Kane to go after Strowman for the DQ at 1:44.

Kane destroys him with a chair and crushed Strowman's throat with it. Strowman can't breathe but walks off under his own power.

From Raw again.

Alicia Fox vs. Bayley vs. Sasha Banks vs. Mickie James

One fall to a finish and the winner gets a title shot at some point. Joined in progress with Fox running Bayley over but getting caught in the Bank Statement. Bayley makes the save...and PAIGE IS BACK. She says she's not here to interrupt (Then what was she doing???) but she's not alone. Cue Sonya DeVille and Mandy Rose from NXT to interrupt and jump Bayley, drawing the no contest at around six minutes. There was barely two minutes of action though so no rating, but this was a heck of a debut and

a MUCH needed face lift for the division.

The villains clean house with ease as Fox bails.

Post break Paige introduces us to her new friends. Alexa Bliss comes up, says a nervous hello, and gets destroyed.

And from Smackdown.

Naomi is getting her makeup done when NXT's Ruby Riot comes up. She's with Liv Morgan and Sarah Logan, all of whom beat the heck out of Naomi. Becky Lynch comes in for the save and gets beaten down as well.

From later on Smackdown.

Women's Title: Charlotte vs. Natalya

Charlotte is defending after having won last week. Natalya jumps at her to start but gets elbowed in the jaw. That earns her a face first toss into the middle buckle and we take a break. Back with Natalya getting two off a Batista Bomb and grabbing the Sharpshooter. Charlotte makes the rope for the break but Natalya is right back on her with right hands. A whip into the corner lets Charlotte try the moonsault, only to land on the knees. The spear connects but here are Logan, Riot and Morgan to jump Natalya for the DQ at 6:43.

Rating: C+. They were rolling until the interference here with Natalya showing more fire than she has in a long time. Charlotte looked like she was in a fight and that's not something you see from her too often. I can go for the trio interfering, though I would have liked to see Charlotte get the win first.

Charlotte gets beaten down as well as the trio poses.

Apollo Crews vs. Curt Hawkins

Hawkins bails to the ropes to start, only to come back in and eat a dropkick. Another dropkick actually sends Crews outside and it's off to a chinlock back inside. Even Nigel is saying that's not going to be enough to make this work. Instead Hawkins stomps away in the corner, followed by

a Downward Spiral for two. Not that it matters as the enziguri and a Toss Powerbomb extend Hawkins' losing streak at 3:45.

Rating: D. This is one of those standard things you just know you're getting on this show, which really isn't the most thrilling thing in the world. I'm not sure if they're going anywhere with Hawkins' losing streak but it wouldn't surprise me to see him win a big match at some point on a complete fluke. I mean, it wouldn't do anyone any good but why let that stop you?

From Smackdown again.

Here's Styles for a chat, but first we see a post-match video from Paul Heyman, saying Styles is the best in-ring performer he's ever seen. AJ wishes he could celebrate with all the fans but it didn't go as well as he thought it would. He'd love to face Lesnar again though because in the sequel, Rocky wins.

That brings him to Jinder Mahal, who says he's taking the title back tonight. AJ takes off the jacket and the belt, saying come get it. Mahal pops up on screen to say it's his time instead of AJ's. If Mahal had faces Brock, he would be hailed as the Beastmaster. AJ says bring it on because Mahal should be well rested after not doing anything on Sunday. Mahal will take his rematch at Clash of Champions. Cue the Singh Brothers from behind to jump AJ, who cleans house without any trouble.

And from Raw one more time.

Intercontinental Title: Roman Reigns vs. The Miz

Miz is defending and seems willing to take an early countout. That's not cool with Reigns, who chases him to the floor and hits an uppercut to the jaw. A Batista Bomb gets two on the champ and we take an early break. Back with Reigns hitting his running clothesline, followed by a big boot to the jaw. Miz is smart enough to bail again and catches Reigns diving off the steps.

A DDT on the floor is nearly good enough for a countout but Reigns dives back in. We hit the chinlock for a good while until Miz hits a corner

dropkick. Another is countered with a big boot, only to have Miz knock him down a few more times. It's off to the YES Kicks until Reigns fights up without much effort. The Superman Punch is countered into the Skull Crushing Finale but Reigns slips out.

Miz sweeps the leg for two though and Reigns is favoring his knee. The Superman Punch knocks Miz out of the air for a VERY close two though as the fans are impressed with the kickout. The spear is loaded up but cue the Bar for a distraction, allowing the Skull Crushing Finale to connect...for two. Ambrose and Rollins run out to even things up, allowing Reigns to hit a spear for the pin and the title at 16:26.

Rating: B-. They were doing some good stuff out there and I like Reigns winning the title. Earlier on I mentioned people like Balor and Joe having nothing to do because they were bigger than the Intercontinental Title. They're not bigger than Reigns though and that gives them a bigger target to go after. Good move here, even if it's two to three years after Reigns should have won the thing in the first place.

Overall Rating: C-. Well that was certainly a packed show. I can go for this idea of putting both Raw and Smackdown clips into the same hour as it's not like there's a Raw monopoly on clips. There's important stuff happening on Smackdown and there's no reason to leave them out on a nothing recap show. I like this as the new direction and while the show wasn't thrilling, it makes more sense now.

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Monday Night Raw – November 27, 2017: The Monster Among The Mayor

Monday Night Raw

Date: November 27, 2017

Location: Thompson-Boling Arena, Knoxville, Tennessee

Commentators: Michael Cole, Corey Graves, Booker T.

We're finally out of Houston and on the road to the Royal Rumble. The big story coming out of last week is Roman Reigns winning the Intercontinental Title for the first time and issuing an open challenge after the show went off the air. Other than that we have the continuing issues with Kurt Angle, HHH and Stephanie McMahon as we flash back about seventeen years. Let's get to it.

The opening recap looks at Kane vs. Braun Strowman, including Kane injuring Strowman's throat last week.

Here's Reigns to open things up. Last week was a big week for him as he and the Shield beat up New Day. Then he had an opportunity and we see a clip of him winning the Intercontinental Title. After the show was over, Shield came back out and put Miz through a table. This is his yard and this is the title so if you want it, come get it. Cue the Miztourage to say they know someone who wants the title. This brings out Elias of all people to say he wants the title. Reigns thinks it sounds like Elias wants to walk with the big dog, but after tonight he might have a neck brace like Curtis Axel.

Seth Rollins vs. Cesaro

Dean Ambrose is on his honeymoon so Rollins is on his own. It's not like he has a buddy who happens to be Intercontinental Champion around or

anything. Cesaro works on a wristlock to start but gets stomped down into the corner without much effort. Seth gets sent outside though and we take a break.

Back with Cesaro working on the ribs by dropping some knees for two. Seth's high crossbody is countered into a tilt-a-whirl backbreaker and we hit a waistlock. Rollins tries an abdominal stretch of his own but gets hiptossed down without much effort. The Blockbuster works a bit better and Cesaro falls outside for a suicide dive.

Back from a second break with Rollins getting two off a Falcon Arrow. A poke to the eye sets up a small package for two on Seth and it's off to the Sharpshooter. Rollins makes the rope though and gets two of his own off the low superkick. The wind-up knee is enough to end Cesaro at 18:23.

Rating: B. Nice long match here with Rollins getting a win to hopefully set up a title match next week. That being said, I have no idea how they're supposed to keep doing these one on one matches. There really should be a better way to set up a title match than having the singles wrestlers fight over and over again, but that might mean building up more teams.

Post match Seth says the Shield isn't going their separate ways because it's time to invoke the rematch for the Tag Team Titles.

We look at the end of last week's 205 Live with the Zo Train losing but beating down the good guys anyway.

Kurt Angle is with the four good cruiserweights and says it's time to determine who gets the shot. Tonight there's going to be a four way and next week there's going to be another one. The winners of those matches will face off for the next title shot.

Titus O'Neil vs. Samoa Joe

Titus charge at him in the corner but gets headbutted away without much effort. An early Koquina Clutch is broken up and it turns into a chop off. A kick to the shoulder gives Titus two but a right hand takes him down. The Clutch makes Titus tap at 2:30.

Apollo Crews tries to go after Joe and gets choked out too. I have no idea why this is what Samoa Joe is stuck doing.

We recap Paige and company invading last week.

Paige/Mandy Rose/Sonya DeVille vs. Bayley/Sasha Banks/Mickie James

Alexa Bliss is on commentary.....and there's no Mickie or Bayley. Paige and company come out and laugh off the idea of Sasha having no partners. We cut to the back where Mickie is holding her shin and Bayley is holding her neck. Paige laughs this off and says she's tired of hearing about her interfering last week. Last year, she was THE woman in WWE and helped erase the word Diva from WWE (we could have a tournament for everyone who takes credit for anything like this).

Now she and her friends, named Absolution (sounds like a bad perfume) are here to take things back. Rose and DeVille talk about how everyone has tried to be the next big thing but they remember how Paige started all of this. Paige offers Sasha a spot on the team but she forearmms Paige off the apron. The beatdown is on in a hurry with everyone hitting a finisher. No match of course.

Bray Wyatt is here. Post break he's in the ring for a chat. Bray talks about never having a childhood. He never got to do all the usual things that children do. Your entire world exists inside the confines of a cardboard box. They tell you what to do and who to love. It's pathetic really, just like everyone here. Their suffering brings him joy and he can see them for who they truly are. Bray says we're all dead and starts cackling.

Bray Wyatt vs. Matt Hardy

Joined in progress with Bray running Matt over without much effort. The backplash gets two but Matt drops him without too much effort. The middle rope elbow doesn't work so Matt settles for the Side Effect for two. Matt's moonsault misses and Bray spider walks up, followed by Sister Abigail to give Bray the pin at 3:30.

Rating: D+. Nothing to see here, though that's usually the case with

Matt's matches anymore. They're not very interesting and the big story with him tends to be when is Jeff getting back. I'd love it if this losing streak started moving him towards the Broken Matt character, as I can't imagine WWE not getting their hands on it eventually.

Post match Matt sits in the corner and starts screaming while doing the DELETE motion. Cole: "Are we witnessing the beginning of a Matt Hardy...breakdown?"

We look at Strowman getting hurt last week.

Jason Jordan wants to face Strowman again this week but since Braun is hurt, he'll face Kane instead.

Rich Swann vs. Akira Tozawa vs. Ariya Daivari vs. Noam Dar

One fall to a finish and winner goes on to a one on one #1 contenders match in two weeks. It's a brawl to start with Tozawa fighting off a double teaming but Swann flips over him. They trade some rollups for two each until the villains take him outside. Swann hits a big flip dive onto all of them with his knee hitting Tozawa square in the face. He seems ok though as Swann heads back inside for Rolling Thunder, only to be caught by Daivari's spinebuster.

Tozawa comes back in and is double whipped into the corner. A double suplex drops Swann on the floor and we take a break. Back with Swann still on the floor as Tozawa hits the standing backsplash on Daivari. The top rope version is broken up but Swann comes back in for the Tower of Doom. Dar breaks up the Phoenix splash but Tozawa takes him out with a dive.

Daivari's frog splash gets two on Swann, only to have Tozawa catch him with a Shining Wizard. The top rope backsplash crushes Daivari with Dar sending Tozawa into the post. Dar's running kick to the head drops Tozawa so Swann pulls Tozawa outside. A regular kick to the head sets up the Phoenix splash to give Swann the pin and the spot in the #1 contenders match at 12:37.

Rating: C+. This was longer than it needed to be but the right guy won.

Nothing here felt like anything you couldn't see on a regular episode of 205 Live, which is a big part of the problem. Hopefully this sets up Swann vs. Cedric Alexander for the title shot with Cedric eventually getting the win, as he's long overdue for a run as champion.

Here's Elias for his Intercontinental Title shot but first, a song about how sad the Miztourage is to not have their leader around. Dallas and Axel join in on harmonica and do give quite a performance. Elias offers them some praise but the fans cut him off with a WE WANT ROMAN chant. That's cut off by a NO WE DON'T chant and we're FINALLY ready to go.

Intercontinental Title: Roman Reigns vs. Elias

Elias is challenging. They trade shoulders to start with Elias getting the better of it and slapping on a reverse chinlock. Elias gets two off a clothesline and we hit a regular chinlock. Back up and the Miztourage offers a distraction so Elias can get in a hard knee for a near fall.

We come back from a break with Elias getting kicked in the face, only to have Reigns stop and take out the Miztourage instead of following up. The distraction lets Elias take Reigns down and drop a top rope elbow for a rather near fall. A sitout powerbomb gets the same but Reigns is right back with a Superman Punch for two of his own. Back up and the spear retains the title at 14:48.

Rating: B-. While the ending wasn't exactly in doubt here, it was still a good, hard hitting match. They're certainly protecting Elias at the moment and I'm not sure what to make of that. It would be nice if they had him actually win something but with the Intercontinental Title now basically the show's World Title, he's kind of stuck. But at least it was a good match.

Post match Samoa Joe sneaks in and chokes Reigns out. No Rollins for the save either, mainly because this was a Reigns singles match and not a Shield match. That determines who comes out for a save you see.

Asuka vs. Dana Brooke

Brooke says she'll be all over Asuka at the bell. A cross armbreaker

makes Dana tap at five seconds.

Post match Absolution comes out and surrounds the ring, only to let Asuka leave in peace.

Jason Jordan vs. Kane

Before the match, Jordan talks about how he's an athlete and knew his knee was banged up last week. Kane actually gets powered into the corner a few times to start but the suplex is broken up. A hard toss sends Jordan outside where he comes up holding the knee again. That's enough for a countout at 1:42.

Post match Kane stays on the knee until Finn Balor comes out for the save. They stare each other down and we take a break.

Finn Balor vs. Kane

Kane wastes no time in whipping Balor into the corner and we're into an early chinlock. Balor dropkicks him outside and hits a dive as the announcers talk about what a big deal a win over Kane would be. Kane hits him in the ribs with a chair for the DQ at 2:44.

Kane beats on him with the chair and wraps it around Balor's throat until Braun Strowman comes out for the save. A chair to the back has no effect on Strowman and the beatdown is on. Strowman destroys him with the steps and a chair, including a powerslam onto the steps. Kane gets his throat crushed on the chair and staggers into the crowd (probably looking for registered voters) to end the show.

Overall Rating: C+. The good, long matches worked but I have no idea what that ending was supposed to be. So Jordan is trying to be all gutsy and get over his knee injury, Balor is dealing with Kane (and getting destroyed by him over and over) and Kane vs. Strowman is over who the real monster is. Ignoring the fact that Kane hasn't been viewed as much of a monster in at least ten years and WHY IS THIS THE TOP STORY OF THE SHOW??? Like, is this supposed to set up Kane vs. Strowman, after Strowman has beaten Kane down multiple times now? That's their big draw?

Other than that, the show actually wasn't half bad with Asuka's win being

a high point. Sometimes there's no need to have the match be anything other than a glorified joke and that's what we had there. Asuka is just better than Brooke and there was no need to watch it go for three minutes to prove such a thing. As mentioned, the wrestling was good but the booking of the last thirty minutes or so...not so much. Have Reigns vs. Elias and the Samoa Joe attack close the show and it's far, far better. Still good though.

Results

Seth Rollins b. Cesaro – Wind-up knee

Samoa Joe b. Titus O'Neil – Koquina Clutch

Bray Wyatt b. Matt Hardy – Sister Abigail

Rich Swann b. Ariya Daivari, Akira Tozawa and Noam Dar – Phoenix splash to Dar

Roman Reigns b. Elias – Spear

Asuka b. Dana Brooke – Cross armbreaker

Kane b. Jason Jordan via countout

Finn Balor b. Kane via DQ when Kane used a chair

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Ring of Honor TV – November 22, 2017: It Couldn't Have Come At A Better Time

Ring of Honor

Date: November 22, 2017

Location: 2300 Arena, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Commentators: Ian Riccaboni, Colt Cabana

We're less than a month away from Final Battle and, for the first time in forever, Ring of Honor feels like they're on a roll. The last few weeks have been incredibly entertaining with some great promos to set up some of the bigger matches at the pay per view. It's hard to say what you're going to get around here but hopefully the last two weeks are a good indication. Let's get to it.

Opening sequence.

Jay White vs. Matt Taven

In theory this is one of White's last matches with ROH before heading back to New Japan. Taven punches him at the bell and we start in a hurry. White is right back with a forearm into a Muta Lock (kind of early) to send Taven scurrying over to the ropes. They head outside with Taven getting caught in a heck of a suicide dive as we take a break.

Back with White uppercutting away and hitting a brainbuster from the floor to the apron. That looked like a heck of a bump but of course Taven is right back in and kicking out of a Saito suplex. Taven's spinning kick to the face sets up a missed Lionsault and Jay grabs a DDT for no cover. The Kiwi Crusher is loaded up but White has to stop due to a spitting Vinny Marseglia. A spinning Rock Bottom gives Jay two instead but Marseglia offers another distraction, setting up a Super Climax to give

Taven the pin at 8:50.

Rating: C. I still don't care for the Kingdom but they're a lot easier to deal with when they're not talking. Taven is the best of the three in the ring though one of the more annoying talkers around. Just let them be a trio instead of constantly whining or sounding like nitwits and they'll be fine. That's probably it for White, which is a shame as he's become one of the more entertaining guys on the roster. His feud with Punishment Martinez was good and I hope he comes back here again at some point.

White gets beaten down post match.

Flip Gordon recruits Coast to Coast to help him fight the Bullet Club next week. They need a fourth man.

Shane Taylor vs. Cheeseburger

Caprice Coleman is on commentary. The winner goes on to the TV Title match at Final Battle. Taylor talks a lot of trash and shoves Cheeseburger down as we wait on the inevitable. Cheeseburger's sleeper doesn't work but some palm strikes stagger the big man. Taylor runs him over without much effort and a right hand puts Cheeseburger away at 2:27. Can we please get rid of Cheeseburger already? The joke isn't funny anymore and it's more embarrassing than anything else.

Post match the Dawgs come out with some coins to buy off Taylor but he pours them over Will Ferrara's head. PLEASE tell me we're not in for Cheeseburger/Taylor as a team.

We recap Mark Briscoe injuring his elbow and his brother costing him the TV Title match last week.

Silas Young is ready to beat Jonathan Gresham and become #1 contender to the TV Title.

Scorpio Sky joins Gordon's team.

Adam Page vs. Dalton Castle

Cody is on commentary and freaks out as Dalton dives outside onto Page at

the bell. Page gets sent hard into the barricade and it's all Castle to start. Back in and Castle loads up another dive but does his strut again, sending us to a break. We come back with Page sending him into the barricade and moonsaulting down to the floor onto Castle. A catapult sends Dalton throat first into the top rope as this is a fight instead of a match.

Cabana calls Page Adam Cole by mistake as they head back inside for some SD Jones references. Back in again with Castle suplexing him down a few times and getting all fired up, especially at Cody. We come back with a second break with Page flipping out of a German suplex and scoring with a superkick.

The Bang-a-Rang connects but Cody dives out of his chair to pull the referee outside. Castle gives chase and runs right into a shooting star off the apron. The Rite of Passage is countered though and Page is set into Cody, setting up a seated armbar with a choke to make Page tap at 12:37.

Rating: C+. The more I see of Page the more I like him as he's turned into quite the scrappy guy. That's rather impressive when you consider how worthless he was just a few years ago. He's fine for the guy you send out to soften up bigger stars, even if he rarely wins a match like this one. Good enough stuff here and it helps advance Cody vs. Dalton ahead of their match in New York.

Cody and Page beat Castle down post match.

We recap Bully Ray's injury and possible retirement at the hands of Jay Briscoe. Things have intensified since then but it looks like Ray may be done. Tommy Dreamer came in to speak on Ray's behalf and Jay's brother Mark seems to be against him too.

Here's Bully to say he's very proud of what he accomplished here in the ECW Arena but he's every bit as proud of ROH. He has a few comments to read and pulls out a piece of paper...complete with the old Bubba Ray glasses. But eh, who needs a script. It's time to walk away, but first he wants to say how proud he is of this company. ROH COO Joe Koff gets in the ring to say the company loves him.

Cue Jay Briscoe to ask if Ray is really going out like this. Jay knocks Bully's hat off and Koff actually shoves him away, only to have Jay deck Bully. Tommy Dreamer comes in as Velvet Sky (Ray's real life girlfriend) comes out to check on him. Mark Briscoe is here as well...and he kicks Dreamer low to turn full heel. A 3D to Bully ends the show. I'm still digging the heck out of this story and while I would have gone with Bully vs. Jay, this works very well too.

Overall Rating: B-. They're getting hot at the right time and that's one of the most important things there is to do. The big Bully/Dreamer vs. Briscoes story is doing good things for me and the World Title feud is solid as well, despite Castle not being the most serious character in the world. I want to see Final Battle, and that's a lot more than I would have expected to be saying.

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