

Cruiserweight Classic – July 20, 2016: More Classic

Cruiserweight Classic

Date: July 20, 2016

Location: Full Sail University, Winter Park, Florida

Commentators: Mauro Ranallo, Daniel Bryan

It's week two and therefore time for more first round matches. Last week's show was entertaining stuff as they're going with a very different vibe this time around. It's rather cool to see a lot of the unknowns getting shots, even if a lot of them have almost no chance of winning the thing. Let's get to it.

Opening sequence.

Mauro welcomes us to the show and congratulates Bryan on his new role in WWE, though no specific spot is mentioned.

Corey Graves introduces a recap of last week's show and introduces tonight's matches.

First Round: Tajiri vs. Damien Slater

Japan vs. Australia. Tajiri starts fast and sends Slater into the ropes as they're still feeling each other out in the early going. Slater kicks him in the ribs and Bryan is right there to say kicking with Tajiri is a bad idea. Instead they fight over some wristlocks with Tajiri hammering him down with some elbows.

More kicks sets up an armbar on Slater but he makes the ropes and sends Tajiri outside for a slingshot corkscrew dive. Back in and Tajiri grabs a wristlock to slow down Slater's offense. That's so simple but actually smart at the same time. I mean it didn't work but it was smart. A running knee to the head gets two for Slater. Tajiri gets in even more kicks and grabs a quick Tarantula, followed by the handspring elbow. The Buzzsaw Kick puts Slater away at 5:49.

Rating: C. Tajiri was one of my favorites in ECW and it's a good sign that he's basically the same wrestler that he was back in the day (albeit a bit slower). Sometimes it's easier to just kick someone in the head over and over. Slater wasn't the flashiest guy out there but he looked very confident in the basic stuff he was doing.

TJ Perkins is the wrestler who makes everything look good.

Da Mack wants to be the Michael Jackson of professional wrestling. Take that for what it's worth.

First Round: Da Mack vs. TJ Perkins

Germany vs. Philippines and both guys seem cocky. Mack's dancing draws an Alex Wright reference. Perkins takes him down with a dropkick and a headscissors with some dancing that Bryan (nor myself) can identify. Mack catches him with a palm strike but Perkins dances into a Boston crab with Perkins lifting him up by the arms. The threat of a Muta Lock (bridging Indian Deathlock with a chinlock) sends Mack over to the ropes and he's able to pull TJ to the floor.

Naturally that means a big flip dive, followed by some dancing stomps back inside. Now the Muta Lock has Mack in trouble but he's right in front of the ropes. Mack is back up and runs the corner for a spinning kick to the face, only to have the landing delay the cover. Perkins is right back up with a slingshot dropkick but he misses a 450. Not that it matters as some kicks to the head set up a kneebar to make Mack tap at 6:30.

Rating: B-. They packed a lot into a short amount of time and it was a much different style than the first match. This was all about the high flying with some submission stuff thrown in for some flavor. Mack looked like almost any high flying indy name but Perkins looked like a much more versatile and polished wrestlers. Not great but entertaining enough.

Mustafa Ali says he's the most well rounded wrestler in the tournament.

Lince Dorado, a masked man, talks about wrestling around the world and being ready to face anyone.

First Round: Mustafa Ali vs. Lince Dorado

Pakistan vs. Puerto Rico. Ali doesn't want to shake hands but eventually does so to get us going. Dorado headscissors him out to the floor but gets pulled outside as well, setting up a running knee from the apron. A knee to the back gets two on Dorado but he kicks Ali in the face. Dorado isn't done as he headscissors Ali to the floor, setting up the longest Asai Moonsault I've ever seen. Back in and a springboard reverse hurricanrana (it sounds better than it looks) gets two on Ali, who comes right back with a springboard Spanish Fly for the same. Ali misses a 450 though and a shooting star gives Dorado the pin at 5:53.

Rating: B+. Take two guys and let them fly all over the place for a few minutes. It worked back in WCW and it's still going to work today. This was easily the most entertaining thing so far with two guys who both got to show off a lot. I've seen Dorado before but Ali looked a lot better than I was expecting. Really fun match here and the kind I've been waiting for.

Akira Tozawa is excited to be here.

Kenneth Johnson thinks it's his time.

First Round: Akira Tozawa vs. Kenneth Johnson

Japan vs. USA. Again they fight over a wristlock to start until Johnson actually takes him to the mat and works on the leg. A headlock into a headscissors gives us a standoff. Tozawa, the heavy favorite coming in, finally starts getting serious and wins a chop off before just punching Johnson in the jaw.

Johnson takes a hard roaring elbow but comes right back with a dropkick for no cover. There's a double clothesline to put both guys down until Tozawa goes nuts with some forearms to the jaw. Johnson stops him cold with knees to the face and a jackknife cover for two. Kenneth misses a middle rope spinning legdrop though and Tozawa snaps off a hard German suplex for two, followed by a bridging German for the pin at 10:00.

Rating: B. Tozawa cranked it up in the end and looked like one of the

favorites to win the whole thing. Johnson was the definition of a guy in tights but he held his own here against someone with a lot more experience and skill. There was even a good story here with Tozawa underestimating him and Johnson trying to make the most of it until he was overcome by all the skill and experience. The match was shockingly good and far better than the squash I was expecting.

Overall Rating: B+. The last two matches were definitely upgrades over the first two with two flashy, high flying cruiserweight styles matches which is more what I was looking for here. I do however like the multiple styles because they keep the thing from getting stale with the same stuff over and over. Mixing it up is always an appreciated touch and it made the show much more entertaining this week.

Results

Tajiri b. Damien Slater – Buzzsaw Kick

TJ Perkins b. Da Mack – Kneebar

Lince Dorado b. Mustafa Ali – Shooting Star Press

Akira Tozawa b. Kenneth Johnson – German suplex

Results

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NXT – July 20, 2016: Those Final Shows

NXT

Date: July 20, 2016

Location: Full Sail University, Winter Park, Florida

Commentators: Tom Phillips, Corey Graves

We're heading towards Brooklyn and it's going to be a few weeks before we can really feel the differences from the Draft. There are three matches scheduled for tonight with the headliner of American Alpha vs. the Authors of Pain in the Authors' first match on the show. Let's get to it.

The opening video talks about all three big matches tonight: American Alpha vs. Authors of Pain, Bayley vs. Nia Jax and Rhyno vs. Samoa Joe.

Opening sequence.

Rhyno vs. Samoa Joe

Non-title. I love the fact that Rhyno is the exact same guy he was back in ECW. There's something refreshing about having someone where you know exactly what you're going to get and nothing more. Rhyno runs him over with a shoulder to start but Joe comes back with his corner charge and the enziguri. A hard whip across the ring puts Rhyno down again and it's off to the nerve hold. The backsplash misses and Rhyno gets in his belly to belly. Joe blocks a Gore with some palm strikes and the Koquina Clutch puts Rhyno away at 6:23.

Rating: C+. Two big and thick guys beating on each other for a few minutes with Joe winning off his submission move. Like I said, you know exactly what to expect from someone like Rhyno and that's exactly what you can get. The thing is he knows how to wrestle that style and make it work perfectly well.

Asuka would love to face either Bayley or Nia Jax.

We look at the NXT names being taken in the Draft.

American Alpha vs. Authors of Pain

The Authors jump them on the ramp and it's not clear if we're going to have a match. Back from a break with Alpha charging to the ring with a referee right behind them. The brawl is on and Alpha clears the ring as we're still waiting on names for the Authors. Jordan starts with the bearded one (we'll call him #1 though they're pretty much interchangeable) and hits the running shoulder in the corner and a double northern lights suplex gets one.

It's quickly off to #2 who catches a launched Gable in a bearhug so #1 can splash him from behind. #1 slaps on a bearhug but Chad quickly escapes and makes the hot tag off to Jordan for the house cleaning. A belly to back suplex gets one on #2 but Gable tags in again and runs over #2 before throwing him across the ring on a release suplex. The ankle lock has #1 in trouble and Jordan dives over the top to take out #2. Gable goes outside as well but gets swung into the LED board. Jordan is sent into the steps, leaving Gable to take the Russian legsweep/clothesline combo for the pin at 6:34.

Rating: B-. This was a good way to get rid of Alpha and let them go up to the main roster. Sure they went out on a loss but NXT was smart enough to not have it be clean. The Authors are another simple idea for a team but that doesn't mean it's an idea that can't work. I liked the idea of Alpha being able to suplex these guys though as it prevents the match from being a squash, which makes it a lot more interesting.

Revival takes credit for the Authors' win because they softened Alpha up. Johnny Gargano and Tommaso Ciampa come in to say they've beaten Revival

once and that the clock is ticking.

Austin Aries vs. Patrick Clark

Clark was on Tough Enough and I believe this is his TV debut. Aries gets caught in an early armbar but he forearmlocks Clark in the face and gives him a flip belly to back suplex. The Last Chancery is good for the submission at 1:53.

No Way Jose comes out and beats on Aries post match.

Bayley vs. Nia Jax

Nia throws her into the corner to start and grabs an armbar of all things. Bayley swings away but walks into Snake Eyes. Some elbows and shoulders to the ribs before Nia just throws her outside as we take a break. Back with Bayley's crossbody working as well as you would expect and Nia throwing her outside for nine.

Now it's Nia being sent outside where she misses a charge into the steps for a near countout of her own. Well if it's good enough for Bayley it's good enough for Nia. Back in and Bayley slips out of an electric chair and into a victory roll for two before Nia just plows over her. A Jackhammer of all things gets two more but Nia stops short before trying the legdrop. Instead Nia goes to the middle rope, only to get pulled down into a super Bayley To Belly for the pin at 13:36.

Rating: B-. These two work well together and this was another good one with Bayley knowing how to play the underdog. That being said, I don't think anyone really bought Nia as having much of a chance here. It's a formula that's always going to work but as is almost always the case, the more you do a match the less interesting it becomes.

Overall Rating: C+. You can really feel the Draft starting to take its toll here as two of these matches have been effected by the people being called up. You have to think that the next few weeks, at least until Takeover, are going to be the final shows for a lot of these people and it's going to be a hard transition to fix things. Still good here though and that's what matters for now.

Results

Samoa Joe b. Rhyno – Koquina Clutch

Authors of Pain b. American Alpha – Russian legsweep/clothesline combination

Austin Aries b. Patrick Clark – Last Chancery

Bayley b. Nia Jax – Super Bayley To Belly

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Wrestling Wars Podcast Episode 45

<http://mightynorcal.podbean.com/e/wwp-45-the-return-kb-catches-me-up-on-a-famous-tna-storyline-and-we-go-over-the-wwe-draft-and-what-it-means-moving-forward/>

We're back with the Draft, Roman Reigns (kind of) and Final Deletion because we need to talk about it.

Full WWE Draft Results

Including the picks from the Network.

Monday Night Raw

1. Seth Rollins
2. Charlotte
3. Finn Balor
4. Roman Reigns
5. Brock Lesnar
6. New Day
7. Sami Zayn
8. Sasha Banks
9. Chris Jericho
10. Rusev w/Lana
11. Kevin Owens
12. Enzo Amore/Big Cass
13. The Club
14. Big Show
15. Nia Jax
16. Neville
17. Cesaro

18. Sheamus
19. Golden Truth
20. Titus O'Neil
21. Paige
22. Darren Young
23. Sin Cara
24. Jack Swagger
25. Dudley Boyz
26. Summer Rae
27. Mark Henry
28. Braun Strowman
29. Bo Dallas
30. Shining Stars
31. Alicia Fox
32. Dana Brooke
33. Curtis Axel

Smackdown

1. Dean Ambrose
2. AJ Styles
3. John Cena
4. Randy Orton
5. Bray Wyatt

6. Becky Lynch
7. The Miz w/Maryse
8. Baron Corbin
9. American Alpha
10. Dolph Ziggler
11. Natalya
12. Alberto Del Rio
13. Usos
14. Kane
15. Kalisto
16. Naomi
17. Ascension
18. Zack Ryder
19. Apollo Crews
20. Alexa Bliss
21. Breezango
22. Eva Marie
23. Vaudevillains
24. Erick Rowan
25. Mojo Rawley
26. Carmella

Smackdown – July 19, 2016: Draft Notice

Smackdown

Date: July 19, 2016

Location: DCU Center, Worcester, Massachusetts

Commentators: Mauro Ranallo, Michael Cole, Byron Saxton, Jerry Lawler

Now this is a big one. Tonight we're not only going live but also splitting the shows into two rosters again for the first time in a few years. There's only been one other draft like this in company history and it wasn't the greatest show in the world. The interesting things here tonight are the potential returns of former stars as well as the guaranteed NXT callups. Oh and a rematch from last night's World Title match as a bonus. Let's get to it.

We open with the Commissioners and the GM's on the stage and a quick explanation of the rules:

1. Raw gets three picks to every Smackdown two.
2. Tag Teams are selected as a unit unless a GM wants either.
3. Raw has the first pick.
4. Six NXT picks will be made.

Stephanie cuts Foley off and picks Seth Rollins number one. So much for the title meaning a lot.

Daniel Bryan picks Dean Ambrose to put the Shield boys on different shows.

I won't bother saying the specifics so I'll just say which show.

Raw: Charlotte

Smackdown: AJ Styles

Raw: Finn Balor

Before we get to another pick, it's time for a match.

John Cena vs. Luke Gallows

The rest of the Club, Enzo and Cass are at ringside. We go to a quick commercial but this time they're showing the match during the commercial on a split screen. Gallows powers him down and is apparently too heavy to take the AA. Cena gets in a dropkick and we come back from the break. A spinning side slam gets two for Luke but he walks into the ProtoBomb and the Shuffle. Gallows breaks up the AA with a superkick (GET THAT MAN A T-SHIRT!) but the other four get in the ring and the match...is allowed to continue with Anderson and Styles being sent to the floor. An AA gives Cena the pin at 5:27.

Rating: C-. This didn't have time to go anywhere and I'm hoping the airing the match during the break doesn't become a regular thing. If there's one concept WWE never got, it's the idea of giving the fans a breather. You can't present every single moment as must see and expect the fans to stick with you through the insane amount of content WWE pumps out.

Time for more picks.

Raw: Roman Reigns

Smackdown: John Cena

Raw: Brock Lesnar

Smackdown: Randy Orton

Raw: New Day

Darren Young/Zack Ryder vs. Rusev/The Miz

Challengers vs. champions. Backlund atomic drops Miz to start and Ryder adds a slingshot elbow for two. Miz pulls Zack off the ropes for a crash

before it's off to Rusev for some shots to the back. Miz gives up the hot tag to Young for his still generic offense. A quick Gut Check gets two but Rusev suplexes Darren, only to throw Ryder into a Rough Ryder on his partner. Zack dropkicks Rusev off the apron and the crossface chickenwing makes Miz tap at 4:05.

Rating: C-. No time here and I have a feeling that's going to be the case for almost all matches tonight. That's how things should go though as the wrestling isn't the point here. Young making Miz tap sets up the title match just fine, though I don't see much of a reason to get hyped for Ryder vs. Rusev. Maybe it was the losing to Sheamus in two minutes flat.

Xavier Woods vs. Bray Wyatt

Everyone is at ringside. Bray stands in the corner with his back to Bray before bending backwards. He even kneels in the middle of the ring to offer a free shot but Woods is afraid. Woods seems to be hypnotized so Bray beats him down and chokes a bit. The release Rock Bottom plants Woods again but he makes a quick comeback, only to walk into Sister Abigail for the pin at 4:47.

Rating: D+. This was all about the story instead of the match and that's the right idea. Bray squashing Woods is the right idea too and it's cool to see someone freaking out at the sight and thought of Bray. That almost has to play into the finish on Sunday but it also makes the titles more interesting. If Woods is teasing a split, they'll have to drop the belts soon and that's not happening Sunday.

Kevin Owens vs. Kane

And never mind as Sami Zayn runs out to attack Owens. Kevin sends Sami in for a chokeslam from Kane but he chokeslams both of them for fun. No match.

Back to the picks!

Raw: Sami Zayn

Smackdown: Bray Wyatt (not the Wyatt Family)

Raw: Sasha Banks

Smackdown: Becky Lynch

Raw: Chris Jericho

Sasha Banks vs. Charlotte/Dana Brooke

Dana starts for the team but Sasha knocks Charlotte outside and hits the double knees off the apron. Back in and Dana misses a charge to set up the Bank Statement, only to have Charlotte break it up and hit Natural Selection for the pin at 2:21.

More picks:

Raw: Rusev w/Lana

Smackdown: The Miz w/Maryse

Raw: Kevin Owens

Smackdown: Baron Corbin

Raw: Enzo Amore/Big Cass

Chris Jericho vs. Cesaro

Cesaro uppercuts him to the floor and hits a running version up against the barricade. Back in and we hit the pinfall reversal sequence until Jericho slams him off the top. The Lionsault is countered into a Russian legsweep off the middle rope and it's time for a Swing. The spinning springboard uppercut is countered into the Codebreaker for the pin on Cesaro at 4:53.

Rating: C+. In case you didn't get enough of these two during the build to Money in the Bank. I'm really not wild on the idea of Jericho winning here as they don't seem interested in actually doing anything with him despite giving him a bunch of wins. Cesaro continues to be that guy who keeps losing and WWE keeps expecting him to be over, which to be fair he kind of is.

Back from a break with Becky Lynch attacking Natalya before a match. Ok then.

Draft time.

Raw: The Club

Smackdown: American Alpha

Raw: Big Show

Smackdown: Dolph Ziggler

Raw: Nia Jax

Rollins says he'll win tonight.

Time for the final five televised picks before 30 more will be made on the WWE Network.

Raw: Neville

Smackdown: Natalya

Raw: Cesaro

Smackdown: Alberto Del Rio

Raw: Sheamus

WWE World Title: Dean Ambrose vs. Seth Rollins

Ambrose is defending and Rollins jumps him during the big match intros. We take a break before the bell rings with Dean being posted. Back with Ambrose saying ring the bell, allowing Rollins to hammer away in a hurry. A backbreaker sets up the chinlock before Rollins sends him outside for a chop off. Dean gets whipped into the barricade but he backdrops Rollins into the timekeeper's area. Back in and Seth hits a low superkick for two as we take a break.

We come back again with what sounds like a CM Punk chant accompanying Rollins hitting a running forearm in the corner. Dean fights back with

elbows to the face and a swinging neckbreaker for two. A quick Buckle Bomb sets up a missed frog splash but Rollins grabs a quick superplex. He loads up the Falcon's Arrow but Dean reverses into Dirty Deeds at 12:21.

Rating: C+. The match was fine but it's pure filler with Battleground and the triple threat looming. Rollins getting pinned clean is interesting as now Dean looks a lot more like an equal instead of someone who keeps getting beaten in the big matches over and over. It's a good main event, though it feels kind of worthless after last night. Like, what did any of that accomplish?

Shane and Bryan come out to celebrate and a PPV rundown ends the show.

Overall Rating: B-. These are the hardest shows to review as there's nothing to compare it to. They kept it moving fast enough and the wrestling was just there for the most part but they kept the draft picking moving and that's a very good thing. This felt like something professionally run and that's never really been the case in previous drafts. Good show here but this would have been better off after Battleground.

Results

John Cena b. Luke Gallows – Attitude Adjustment

Darren Young/Zack Ryder b. Rusev/The Miz – Crossface chickenwing to Miz

Bray Wyatt b. Xavier Woods – Sister Abigail

Charlotte/Dana Brooke b. Sasha Banks – Natural Selection

Chris Jericho b. Cesaro – Codebreaker

Dean Ambrose b. Seth Rollins – Dirty Deeds

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All 30 Televised Draft Picks

I'll be updating this throughout the night with all the picks so keep refreshing. I also won't update the tags until after the show in case you don't want to be spoiled. There will be an additional thirty picks on the Network later tonight.

Monday Night Raw

1. Seth Rollins
2. Charlotte
3. Finn Balor
4. Roman Reigns
5. Brock Lesnar
6. New Day
7. Sami Zayn
8. Sasha Banks

9. Chris Jericho
10. Rusev w/Lana
11. Kevin Owens
12. Enzo Amore/Big Cass
13. The Club
14. Big Show
15. Nia Jax
16. Neville
17. Cesaro
18. Sheamus

Smackdown

1. Dean Ambrose
2. AJ Styles
3. John Cena
4. Randy Orton
5. Bray Wyatt
6. Becky Lynch
7. The Miz w/Maryse
8. Baron Corbin
9. American Alpha
10. Dolph Ziggler
11. Natalya

Monday Night Raw – March 25, 2002 (2016 Redo): When It Was All About Stephanie

Monday Night Raw

Date: March 25, 2002

Location: Bryce Jordan Center, State College, Pennsylvania

Attendance: 15,550

Commentators: Jim Ross, Jerry Lawler

This seemed due for a second look since they're doing it all again this year. We're just after Wrestlemania XVIII and things are kind of in a lull. With so many wrestlers and no big evil for the WWF to fight (since the WCW/ECW Invasion just had to be started and wrapped up by Thanksgiving), it was decided to split the rosters in two. This was a really cool idea at the time but it should be interesting to see how it worked when the initial Brand Extension isn't the most fondly remembered concept. Let's get to it.

Linda McMahon is in WWF Studios to welcome us to the show, telling us that only twenty picks will be made tonight for the sake of time. The changes won't officially take place until next week so everyone will be on Smackdown this week. As for tonight though, HHH, Chris Jericho and Stephanie McMahon can't be drafted because they're in a triple threat for the World Title (Yes Stephanie was getting a World Title shot and was a major focus fourteen years ago as well.). Steve Austin can't be drafted either due to a contractual stipulation (read as a real life contract dispute) and is therefore a free agent and can sign wherever he wants.

Opening sequence.

There are PODIUMS ON THE STAGE! YES I SAID PODIUMS!!!

Tazz vs. Mr. Perfect

Perfect wouldn't be around much longer due to a certain airplane ride (long and bad story). After promising to be a perfect pick, Perfect dropkicks him at the bell as we're told that the WWF and Women's Champion can compete on both shows. An early PerfectPlex gets two as Tazz is next to the ropes. Perfect charges into a boot and the Tazmission finishes quick. I wouldn't expect to see a lot of strong wrestling tonight.

Tazz says the perfect pick has become just another victim.

Ric Flair (Raw owner) and Arn Anderson are in their war room to go over their draft options.

Vince's war room is just an office. He has the first pick and a photo of Kurt Angle is visible on his desk.

Here's Vince for the first pick, which I'm sure will involve a speech. The first pick for Smackdown will be....the Rock. Well who else was it going to be? Rock leaves the locker room (walking past Undertaker and Hogan who are among the masses in a nice touch) as we see a quick graphic showing his career highlights.

Vince tells Rock that he's not allowed to put his hands on him or threatening to put his boots in various places or saying IT DOESN'T MATTER ever again. The fans cut him off with a ROCKY chant so Vince says he made both Hogan and the Rock. The boss goes to leave but Rock isn't quite done yet. To be fair he hasn't said anything yet so he hasn't actually started.

Rock wants to go out on Raw with a bang because he won the WWF World Title here, formed the Rock and Sock Connection here and did various things to Vince. We hit some catchphrases before Rock has them do the Penn State chant (WE ARE....PENN STATE) and then alters it to insult Vince even more. This was just a Rock's greatest hits stretched over about ten minutes.

Ric comes out and picks Undertaker #1 overall despite hating him.

Kurt Angle comes in to yell at Vince for not picking him first. Vince talks about throwing Flair a swerve out there (By picking the Rock?) when Undertaker comes in to yell. The boss promises to make this right.

Edge/Diamond Dallas Page vs. Christian/Booker T.

Two feuds in one here but Edge is about to start a really good feud with Angle. Booker kicks Edge in the face to start and Christian gets two off a powerslam. A quick clothesline drops Christian though as the announcers talk about Austin having a clause in his contract to make sure he's a free agent. In case of a Brand Split you see. Booker eats the Diamond Cutter but Christian gives him an Unprettier. A quick scissors kick puts Page away in a nothing match.

Angle reads off his resume until Vince makes him the #2 pick.

Ric picks the NWO (Hall/Nash/X-Pac) because that's something you can do. I can't wait for that Rock vs. Nash match. The NWO is uh...not in the locker room.

Vince yells at Angle for getting the NWO (who Vince brought in to poison the company) and promises to sign Austin. Angle suggests Chris Benoit (currently out with an injury but coming back soon.) with the next pick so Vince makes him #3. Benoit would return in July and just show up on Raw with no mention of being drafted to Smackdown. If nothing else it's a good idea to have some of these picks backstage as there's no reason to have them both come out here every time.

We see both brands' big boards and JR thinks Flair's strategy is, uh, strange.

The NWO threatens Ric so he picks Kane to keep an eye on them. Aside from X-Pac, Hall is now the second shortest member of the roster.

Trish Stratus vs. Ivory

Ivory returned last week to start a feud with Trish. They start fast with Ivory hammering away and ducking a middle rope cross body. Trish fights

out of a chinlock and grabs the Stratusphere, followed by the Stratusfaction for another nothing match.

Vince picks Hulk Hogan, whose graphic incorrectly lists him as a seven time WCW Champion.

After a break, Ric picks Intercontinental Champion Rob Van Dam.

Vince is ticked because he wanted the title so Angle suggests giving him an Intercontinental Title shot tonight so he can bring the title to Smackdown. Vince: "That's why you're the number two draft pick! Maybe he should have been #1."

Rock and Hogan have a bro moment where they praise the people. Ignoring the whole attempted murder thing from a few weeks ago, Rock agrees to team up against the NWO in a handicap match.

Vince picks Billy and Chuck as a unit.

The Rock/Hulk Hogan vs. NWO

The NWO powerbombed Rock through a table on Smackdown until Hogan made the save to set this up. Hogan and X-Pac get things going with a big shove sending the smaller one out to the floor. Hall gets pushed down with ease so it's off to Nash who can actually shove Hulk down.

Hogan cleans house with ease but he takes too long loading up a backdrop and gets kicked in the face. It's off to X-Pac for more kicks but Hogan knocks him away and makes the tag off to Rock. Things finally speed up and X-Pac is easily knocked to the floor. The Rock Bottom and legdrop get two on Nash with X-Pac making the save. It's a three on two beatdown until Kane comes out for the DQ.

Rating: F. Were you expecting anything else? It says a lot when the match lasts five minutes and is this boring with a screwy ending. I mean, X-Pac can't take a fall to the combined forces of Hulk Hogan and the Rock? I could go for an entertaining match at some point tonight but I'm not feeling confident at this point.

The NWO runs off.

Vince accuses Ric of sending Kane out there so Flair takes Booker T.
Vince: "Edge!" Ric: "Big Show!" Vince: "Rikishi!"

Jeff Hardy vs. Billy

Lita, Matt, Chuck and Rico are all at ringside. Billy fires off some right hands in the corner to start but misses a charge. The announcers talk about being drafted to different shows as Jeff hits a tornado DDT. The Swanton misses though as Lita completely botches a hurricanrana to Rico (her legs weren't around his head and he had to flip himself). Jeff grabs a rollup for a fluke pin in another nothing match.

Ric picks Bubba Ray Dudley so he can have "the most dominant tag team in WWF history." Vince: "Well Ric it looks like you're trying to get the most dominant tag team in WWF history." Did Stephanie write this segment? Vince picks D-Von to balance things out.

The Dudleys, realizing their careers are pretty much over for the time being, hug it out.

European Title: William Regal vs. Rikishi

Regal is defending. And never mind as Brock Lesnar runs out and flattens Rikishi with an F5.

Jazz wants to see where the Divas end up.

Vince comes out to pick Brock but Ric says it's his pick and he'll select Brock instead. Vince: "Mark Henry!" Ric: "William Regal!" Vince: "Maven!" (Hardcore Champion). Ric: "Lita!" Vince gets on him for choosing a woman and thinks Ric just wants to sleep with her. Well duh.

Here are the picks:

Smackdown

1. The Rock
2. Kurt Angle
3. Chris Benoit

4. Hulk Hogan
5. Billy and Chuck
6. Edge
7. Rikishi
8. D-Von Dudley
9. Mark Henry
10. Maven

Raw

1. Undertaker
2. NWO
3. Kane
4. Rob Van Dam
5. Booker T.
6. Big Show
7. Bubba Ray Dudley
8. Brock Lesnar
9. William Regal
10. Lita

Riveting no?

Intercontinental Title: Kurt Angle vs. Rob Van Dam

Angle is challenging and grabs a German suplex for two as the bell rings. Van Dam gets stomped down as the fans chant USA. I'd assume for Angle, even though Michigan is just as American as Pennsylvania. Van Dam kicks

him in the head and gets two off Rolling Thunder. Angle pulls the referee in the way of a top rope kick for the DQ.

Kurt puts on the ankle lock until Edge makes the save.

Stephanie is ready to win the title.

WWF World Title: HHH vs. Chris Jericho vs. Stephanie McMahon

HHH is defending and the challengers have a business relationship. I have no idea why they never had a romantic relationship as that could have been amazing. If HHH pins Stephanie, she's gone FOREVER. HHH backdrops the real wrestler to start but has to look at Stephanie so Jericho can chop away. Stephanie lays down so Jericho can cover her for two but he has to save her from the Pedigree.

HHH catapults Jericho into Stephanie so we can have the falling low blow spot. Thankfully HHH kicks her to the floor so we can have an actual match for a bit. Of course Stephanie won't STAY AWAY FROM THE MATCH as she just has to come back in to screech about how Jericho needs to work on the leg. Stephanie gets run over by mistake so she slaps Jericho and demands that he get HHH. Jericho clotheslines her by mistake but gets sent to the floor, allowing HHH to tease another Pedigree. Naturally that can't happen because the fans love waiting on her getting her comeuppance instead of actually getting it.

Jericho grabs the belts (this was when there was no Undisputed Title belt yet) for a double knockout, meaning Stephanie can cover both of them. The Walls have HHH in trouble but Stephanie breaks them up by jumping on Jericho's back. A Pedigree gets rid of Jericho but THERE SHE IS AGAIN. HHH has finally had enough and hits a spinebuster (because we can't hurt her perfect face) to retain.

Rating: D-. They couldn't even do a good match (which these two are certainly capable of having) because that wasn't the point here. Yeah a Wrestlemania main event rematch for the title eight days later wasn't the focus. Instead, as I'm sure you can tell, this was ALL about Stephanie and there was no hiding it. Of course her being gone "forever" lasted less than four months as she was brought back as the completely face GM

of Smackdown because she's just so darn loveable that we can forgive this along with the whole Alliance thing last year.

Here's the thing: what exactly did Stephanie add to this? Why couldn't this have just been HHH vs. Jericho with Stephanie leaving if Jericho lost? It's actually a good match, Jericho is fine with losing a fall to the champ and the guys don't have to keep stopping so often so she can catch up. Horrible match of course and completely not HHH and Jericho's fault, but since it can't be Stephanie's fault either (as nothing ever can be), we'll blame...uh...oh yeah the referee. HE RUINED IT!

Stephanie of course freaks out and tries to hang on to anything she can before security takes her away. HHH sings the Goodbye Song to end the show. This was a special bonus in case you didn't get that you were watching Monday Night Stephanie.

Overall Rating: F. Oh sweet goodness what a mess. First of all, the match of the night was.....uhhh....you know what it was actually Mr. Perfect against Tazz in a match lasting 1:53. That's not to say it was good but it didn't have a major botch, a stupid ending or the powers of Stephanie holding it back.

Other than that though, this was a complete disaster with Smackdown being stacked, Raw basically begging Austin to come back and save the thing and the "wrestling" being little more than background noise. This was somehow worse than I remembered it, which is covering quite a bit of ground as I remember this show being horrible the last time I watched it.

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Monday Night Raw – July 18, 2016: The Lame Duck Go Home Game Changing Show (Updated)

Monday Night Raw

Date: July 18, 2016

Location: Dunkin' Donuts Center, Providence, Rhode Island

Commentators: Michael Cole, Byron Saxton, John Bradshaw Layfield

This is a unique show as it's kind of a big night but also kind of a lame duck show while also being the go home show for a pay per view. The Draft is tomorrow night but there's also a World Title match as champion Dean Ambrose defends against Seth Rollins. The show is also going to open with the announcement of the new General Managers for both shows. Let's get to it.

Opening sequence.

Here are Shane and Stephanie to open things up. They have their standard bickering that makes award show presenters seem like Bogart and Bergman before arguing over testicles vs. lady balls. Stephanie's big announcement: there's going to be a new Cruiserweight division on Raw. Shane mentions his General Manager and the YES chants begin. That's cut off just as quickly though as Stephanie Raw's General Manager: Mick Foley. I wouldn't have bet on that one but I'd be shocked if he's still around by TLC.

After Stephanie awkwardly dances to his music. Foley compares the feeling here to the Attitude Era because IT'S THE GREATEST THING EVER and feels like the MONDAY NIGHT WARS ALL OVER AGAIN BABY! Stephanie calling him made the little embers turned into a fire. He's ready to bring Raw to new heights and all that jazz.

Shane brings out his own General Manager with the worst kept secret in wrestling this year: Daniel Bryan. Daniel won't shake Stephanie's hand before he talks about how much he missed the people. Naturally Stephanie cuts him off to suggest he pander to the fans. See she doesn't get it because they've never cheered for her. Stephanie: "They did once!"

Bryan talks about how he heard Shane's ideas for a show where wrestlers are put first and he wanted to come back. When he beat HHH at Wrestlemania XXX (Stephanie: "Technicality.") and won the WWE World Title, he and the fans did that together. Stephanie gets in her B+ jokes and Shane says Stephanie can only stay relevant by marrying a WWE superstar. One last YES chant takes us out.

Chris Jericho/Kevin Owens vs. Sami Zayn/Cesaro

Cesaro gutwrenches Jericho to start before it's off to Sami so things can speed up a bit. An Owens distraction lets Jericho get in a shot though and we take a break. Back with Jericho still in control over Sami and sending him out to the floor. Sami gets in a few shots of his own though and the hot tag brings in Cesaro.

That means it's time for the uppercut train and the springboard spinning uppercut for two on Jericho. Owens and Sami come in off the double tags but Jericho breaks up the Helluva Kick. Cesaro's high cross body gets two on Chris and the Swing makes it even worse. Everything breaks down and Sami tornado DDTs Owens before small packaging Jericho for the pin at 12:02.

Rating: C. In case you didn't get enough of these guys during the Money in the Bank build. I love Sami getting a pin here though it should be interesting to see what happens with all four of these guys tomorrow night. Jericho and Cesaro not having matches on Sunday doesn't say much for either of them but that's their norm all around.

Golden Truth, Titus O'Neil and Jack Swagger try to get on Daniel Bryan's good side until Stephanie interrupts. They insult each other (with jabs about Daniel and Brie planting peaches) for a bit until Daniel says she ruined Raw.

Alberto Del Rio vs. Darren Young

Miz is on commentary. Del Rio sends him into the corner to start and works on the arm as Miz gets in his second plug for Bob Backlund's book. Young comes back with a backdrop and atomic drop as we flash back to the 70s. A Miz distraction earns himself a forearm to the face, allowing Darren to roll up Del Rio (with a Backlund style bridge) for the pin at 2:33.

It's time for a twelve man tag but Cena comes out first and says it's an interesting time in WWE with Battleground being the icing on the cake. The Club is going to try to beat up Cena on Sunday but he has the Certified G's. Enzo says the term "don't take this the wrong way" has a 0% success rate so don't take this the wrong way but the Club is like a bunch of herbs.

Without ugliness in the world there can be no beauty so thanks for your sacrifice Gallows. AJ has a haircut like a soccer mom and Anderson is as generic as Times New Roman. Cena thinks Enzo is just a catchphrase machine but Cass says that's what he does. That's what makes them the best trio in the world like Nirvana, Destiny's Child or the Wu Tang Clan.

Enzo: "How you doin?" Cena: "I don't know how I'm doing!" He thinks they need to get serious but the Club cuts off the S-A-W-F-T line. AJ accuses them of meeting a few weeks ago over a bowl of candy at catering and thinks they can beat up everyone on the team tonight. Cue New Day to talk about going to the Wyatts' compound but AJ makes fun of Woods for being scared.

That goes nowhere so New Day explains How You Doin to Cena. Naturally this turns into a Pokemon Go reference with Woods listing off the ones he's captured but Cena cuts him off, only to be cut off with a NEW DAY ROCKS chant. This brings out the Wyatts as it turns out we actually have a match to get to.

John Cena/Enzo Amore/Big Cass/New Day vs. The Club/Wyatt Family

This is joined in progress after a break with Gallows coming in to shoulder Cena down. That brings in Big E. for a power showdown, only to

have a little gyrating first. Now we get Strowman coming in to run Big E. over but Enzo tags himself in. Woods plays some trombone and Enzo bounces off Strowman so it's time for Cass to try his luck. A shove to Cena triggers a huge brawl until it's back to Strowman and Cass with the big boot staggering Braun. Kofi tries to dive in but gets slammed down by Braun as we take a break.

While we're on commercial, it deserves to be pointed out how good of a job they've done with Cass. Him staring down Strowman felt more like a big deal than anytime Lesnar did it and I actually bought Cass as a threat to hurt him. That's very impressive and a great sign for him to come.

Back with Bray charging into Kofi's pendulum kick and a diving tag to bring in Cena. The finishing sequence is initiated but Bray brings the spider walk out of mothballs to shut him down. Rowan grabs a chinlock and the heels start taking turns on Cena. Gallows misses a splash and we take another break.

We come back again with Bray missing his backsplash to Cena, allowing the hot tag to Cass. Everything breaks down again and New Day cleans house on the Wyatts. Woods hits a big flip dive to take them all out but Gallows breaks up Bada Book Shakalacka. New Day and the Wyatts fight up the ramp, leaving Enzo to clothesline Cena by mistake. The Styles Clash ends Amore at 18:58.

Rating: B+. This is even more impressive when you consider how many people had to be incorporated here. The ending really pushes the idea that Cena/Enzo/Cass don't know each other well enough to fight off a well oiled machine like the Club which is a really logical point to make. New Day vs. Wyatts could be a lot of fun and this was a nice preview. Really good stuff here with the pre-match promo being just as great.

Earlier today, Seth Rollins was in the empty arena (well save for the cameramen) to talk about how they came through so many stands to fight. He was the brilliant mind and kept Ambrose around to take the beatings and Reigns around to dish them out. After Sunday, Reigns will never be the same again. Ambrose on the other hand is a coward who is running out

of places to hide. This Sunday, Rollins will prove he was always the man.

We recap the opening segment.

Shane comes up to Foley in the back and suggests that Stephanie just hired him because he'll connect with the fans while being manipulated. Foley appreciates the caring but thinks Stephanie has fire and drive. This would be another beloved face trying to put Stephanie over.

Baron Corbin vs. Sin Cara

This is Cara's first match after the Lucha Dragons officially split. Corbin sends him into the corner to start but gets kicked away. A springboard elbow to the jaw staggers him but End of Days gives Baron the pin at 1:15.

Kalisto comes out for the post match save but gets beaten down as well.

Charlotte/Dana Brooke vs. Becky Lynch/Sasha Banks

Dana gets taken into the corner to start and it's time for Becky's early armbar. The spinning legdrop gets two on Dana but here's Natalya to attack Lynch for the DQ at 2:22.

Sasha gets beaten down post match.

Rusev/Sheamus vs. Dolph Ziggler/Zack Ryder

Sheamus headlocks Ryder down to start and cuts off his comeback by hitting him in the face a few times. Rusev sends him into the barricade and it's back to Sheamus for the slow beating. Sheamus won't tag for some reason though and we hit the chinlock. Ryder dropkicks him down and makes the hot tag off to Ziggler as everything breaks down. Rusev kicks Ziggler in the back and it's the Accolade for the submission at 3:45.

Rating: D+. Just a quick way to show off the idea that Rusev is awesome because we didn't know that yet. Ryder needed a win here after that mess last week against Sheamus. Ryder is going to get destroyed on Sunday and I'm not sure where things go after that. Sheamus n the other hand continues to float, just like Ziggler. And no WWE, that's not a hint

about a bonus match for Sunday.

Video on Randy Orton.

Video on Cena hosting the ESPYs.

Daniel suggests a peace treaty with Mick Foley because they're so much alike. Foley has no issue with Bryan but the battle is on.

Raw World Title: Dean Ambrose vs. Seth Rollins

Rollins is challenging and all the bosses are at ringside. Dean headlocks him to start and Seth bails out to the floor. The champ sends him into the barricade and we take a break. Back with Seth in control and putting on a chinlock. A hard right hand gives Seth some near falls before both try cross bodies at the same time. Dean fights up first and hammers on Seth a bit, including a forearm to put him on the floor.

There's a big suicide dive but Rollins powerbombs him into the barricade. Back in and a frog splash gets two as we take another break. Back with Seth still in control and hitting his springboard knee to the head. Another frog splash misses though and Dean has an opening. It sounds like the fans are cheering for Rollins here.

Dirty Deeds gets two with Rollins putting his foot on the ropes. Seth rolls outside but comes right back in and counters the top rope clothesline into the Pedigree for two. With nothing else working, Seth loads up a superplex but Dean ties up the legs and it's a double pin at 24:18.

Rating: B+. More really good stuff from these two but the ending comes off as a cheap way to have Sunday's title match be for the vacant title. You knew they weren't sticking with Ambrose on top for long because he's not the "star" kind of guy and that's the excuse they're sticking with. I mean, Rollins may be a ratings disaster but he's a STAR ratings disaster. Really good match here though and a big feeling title match.

Stephanie (of course) declares Rollins the new champion and Shane doesn't say anything to close the show. You know you'll see more of this on Sunday.

Overall Rating: A-. Like I said at the beginning, this was a very odd show without anything actually mattering until the ending but even that was odd. I'm sure there's going to be an update tomorrow night but this comes off as a way to either set up a new World Title or to just give the belt back to Reigns like nothing ever happened. There are two great wrestling matches on here though and they were more than enough to make this show awesome, questionable ending aside.

So apparently after the show went off the air, a bonus clip aired on the Network where Ambrose was declared champion because it was a screwy finish. You know, because THREE HOURS AND EIGHT MINUTES isn't enough content.

Results

Sami Zayn/Cesaro b. Kevin Owens/Chris Jericho – Small package to Jericho

Darren Young b. Alberto Del Rio – Rollup

Wyatt Family/The Club b. Enzo Amore/Big Cass/John Cena/New Day – Styles Clash to Amore

Baron Corbin b. Sin Cara – End of Days

Sasha Banks/Becky Lynch b. Charlotte/Dana Brooke via DQ when Natalya interfered

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NXT House Show – July 15, 2016

The wife and I took in the NXT house show in Highland Heights, Kentucky (ten minutes from downtown Cincinnati) on Friday night. I had wanted to go to one of these things for a long time and was almost more excited to see this than I was for Takeover: Dallas.

The arena held roughly 10,000 people but it was cut in half and the upper deck was tarped off, leaving only a few thousand seats. The place was just over half full as the floor seats were full but only the back section (as in facing the screen) was anywhere near full. We were on the first row of our section (maybe three feet above the floor) with our tickets running about \$33 each so it's not like they were overly expensive.

Before the show we saw some WWE Top Ten videos and the fans were allowed to pick a classic NXT match with options of:

Seth Rollins vs. Jinder Mahal

Sami Zayn vs. Neville

Sasha Banks vs. Bayley

The latter won by a landslide though it was only a highlight package, which really did make sense as you don't want to get the crowd that fired up before the actual show starts.

No Way Jose vs. Hugo Knox

Knox is a very muscular British wrestler, meaning the fans were chanting various British swear words at him. Jose is a lot of fun live and a perfect choice to open the show. He did all of his baseball slide, including running around the ring and touching all of the buckles into a

dropkick. A legdrop of all things put Knox away at 8:12 for a really fun opener that did everything it was supposed to. Knox was nothing great but he would be fine as a Chris Masters type midcarder.

Angelo Dawkins vs. Andrade Cien Almas

Dawkins is from Cincinnati, earning himself his only reaction ever. This was the exact same problem that Almas had in the Dillinger matches: putting him in a match where there was no way he was going to be the most over guy and it really dragged things down. Almas really isn't the most exciting guy in the world though he played a subtle heel here, as was his only option. Dawkins won with a Sky High at 5:26 and they hugged after. This was nothing but the fans reacted to Dawkins for being the hometown guy.

Bayley vs. Billie Kay

This was a change in the card (which was shown on an old school wrestling poster which seems to be a normal thing for NXT house shows and were selling very well) as it was originally going to be Bayley/Asuka vs. Kay/Alexa Bliss. Billie did her closest thing to sexy in NXT stuff to start but Bayley laughed at her and stole some of her gear. Billie begged her not to so Bayley relented, only to point out to the crowd that Billie actually lost to Dana Brooke.

This started off as a comedy match with Bayley promising to hug her and then ambushing the referee with the hug instead. The match was your standard Bayley stuff with her having fun against the less talented Billie to start, getting beaten down and having her ribs worked over for a bit and then hitting the Bayley to Belly for the pin at 10:22. The fans LOVED Bayley and she received the pop of the night, save for maybe one name later. She's a total superstar down there though and I'm really scared that they're going to ruin her on the big shows.

Finn Balor vs. Bobby Roode

Roode's music is really awesome and one of the better songs they've done in a good while. Before the match, Roode called all of us fat out of shape losers and said he was going to be the new star of NXT. Even with

all this stuff and insulting fans ala Ric Flair, the fans just would not hate him. Balor on the other hand was as revered as you would expect and we got a strong SEE YOU TUESDAY chant to start things off.

This was actually a pretty short match with Balor never being in any real danger. The Sling Blade and Coup de Grace finished Roode in about seven minutes and Balor took a bow before leaving. It's really clear that he's going and it's cool to see him getting a nice sendoff on the house show circuit after a great TV match.

Intermission.

Before we got back to the matches, the female host (who shared hosting duties with Tom Phillips for a very good pairing all night long) had a fan answer a question for a prize. The idea here was pretty simple: we saw a clip of something in WWE history and were given choices of what happened next. The clip was Vince walking down the hallway and getting into his car on Vince McMahon Appreciation Night and the next scene was him being blown up. One problem here: THE KID WAS EIGHT YEARS OLD!

As soon as the clip started you could hear the crowd gasping and almost panicking because an eight year old, as in someone who wasn't alive when this aired, was playing a game involving attempted murder. Oh and to make matters even better, the fourth option was "The Undertaker takes Vince McMahon to" a very dark and scary place as the host put it, thankfully censoring the actual option.

So yes, since the WWE has NO OTHER CLIPS OF ANYTHING, an eight year old played a game involving seeing Vince McMahon blown up with the other option being Undertaker taking Vince to a place that had to be censored. This was so out of place and really felt like no one actually thought about it, which isn't something you expect from NXT, or anyone with a brain for that matter.

Hideo Itami vs. Beautiful Blonde Blake

This is Blake's new gimmick but there's really nothing different about him. If he hadn't been introduced under the new name, no one would have really noticed a difference. Blake also had a generic Titantron video

with his name spinning around over a blue background, which is the same thing Dawkins and Knox had. They're not much but it's better than nothing. Itami got a pretty standard WELCOME BACK chant and is basically the same as when he left.

The match was comedy to start with Blake heading outside because he didn't like all the kicks and strikes. That didn't last long though as he called himself Black Belt Blake and tried to throw some kicks with a fairly obvious result. The fans got on Blake for his tasseled boots, saying that Bayley wanted her boots back. We also got a MURPHY'S BETTER/CENA SUCKS chant for a bit of a chuckle. Itami came back with his bunch of kicks and won with the shotgun kick at 10:07. This was longer than necessary and Itami still doesn't show much fire.

Women's Title: Asuka vs. Alexa Bliss

Alexa had her hair pulled back here for a new look. This was actually one of the best matches of the night as Bliss has gotten way better in recent months and actually had a good match here. Asuka showed some personality here by dancing a lot when Bliss tried to get too fancy. The Asuka Lock retained the title at 12:14. This might have been the second best match of the night.

NXT Title: Samoa Joe vs. Shinsuke Nakamura

I'll give you two guesses who got the bigger pop than Bayley. Before the match Joe said he hated being here in Highland Heights and didn't like NXT having to lie about being in Cincinnati because that town sucks too. This wasn't going to be a title shot though because Nakamura beating Balor wasn't enough to earn himself a title shot. As he was talking, the Revival ran in for the beatdown but American Alpha came out for the save. Nakamura wanted to make it a six man against Joe and.....Nakamura to Jordan: "What their names?"

Revival/Samoa Joe vs. Shinsuke Nakamura/American Alpha

This was exactly what you would expect with the good guys doing a big, fast paced cleaning of the ring to start with suplexes and strikes to set up a big pose for one of the loudest reactions of the night. Gable played

Ricky Morton for a bit before Jordan did the same, setting up the hot tag to Nakamura. Everything broke down and Nakamura pinned Dash with Kinshasa at 14:00. This was a lot of fun but the crowd was starting to get a bit burned out. The winners all did Nakamura's pose by the ropes to end the show.

Overall this was a very fun night with NXT knowing exactly how to give the fans a fun night. The faces won every match and you got to see every big name (Austin Aries being the biggest name missing and he's hardly a main eventer) on the roster. With cheap tickets and not a bad seat in the house, this was definitely worth going to and really well organized for a much more fun feeling than a lot of WWE house shows. Check them out if they're ever near you, in case you actually need that advice.

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Ring of Honor TV – July 13, 2016: They're Back!

Ring of Honor

Date: July 13, 2016

Location: Cabarrus Arena, Concord, North Carolina

Commentators: Kevin Kelly, Nigel McGuinness

It's about time. We're finally back to some fresh episode with only the Ring of Honor crew as it's time to deal with some fallout from Best in the World. It's not clear what the next pay per view will be (or when it will be for that matter) but odds are we'll be seeing Adam Cole as the next challenger to Jay Lethal's ROH World Title. Let's get to it.

We open with stills from Lethal vs. Briscoe II where Lethal retained the title clean.

Jason Kincaid vs. Donovan Dijak

Kincaid put in a strong performance in the Top Prospect Tournament. Dijak has Prince Nana because that new Embassy thing is STILL going on. Donovan powers him into the corner off a lockup and actually rams him into the corner while still in the lockup. I've never actually seen that. Dijak knocks him outside but can't get a suplex on the floor. Instead Kincaid slips out and lands on the bottom rope, only to springboard backwards into a facebuster. That looked sweet and takes us to a break.

Back with Kincaid minus his shirt and getting thrown out of a suplex for a big crash. Another faceplant lets Kincaid come back again, setting up a seated Blockbuster to put Donovan on the floor. That means a suicide dive into a sunset bomb, followed by a springboard tornado DDT for two on Dijak back inside. That was a very flashy looking sequence and Kincaid gets even better by standing on the post for a super Diamond Dust (flipping Stunner). An armbars on the chokeslam arm has Dijak in trouble but he catches Kincaid coming off the top in Feast Your Eyes for the pin at 9:41.

Rating: C+. Big star making performance for Kincaid here, though it wasn't the best idea in the world to have him use all of his big stuff in one night. That being said, when you're not guaranteed a change to get out there very often, you need to get your stuff in. I wasn't wild on the way he did things but he didn't have many other options so it's understandable. Dijak basically had one or two moves in the whole match but it's not like he's been doing anything other than the quick Lethal mini feud.

ACH is ready to become #1 contender to the TV Title tonight.

Tag Team Titles: Addiction vs. Beer City Bruiser/Silas Young

This was billed as the main event last week. Silas and Bruiser are challenging after winning Tag Wars on the road to Best in the World. Before the match, Daniels says he's glad to be ready to face some REAL men. Kazarian and Young start things off by trading wristlocks before they both catch kicks to the ribs. They slowly put each others foot down before Kazarian takes over with some right hands. Daniels comes in and offers a knee for a faceplant but Young comes back with a kick to the chest.

The rather large Bruiser comes in to drive Daniels into the corner as this heel vs. heel thing is taking some getting used to. Daniels gets crushed in the corner with a running Umaga Attack, running knee and Cannonball but since Beer City Bruiser is...well the Beer City Bruiser, Daniels easily takes over on him and scores with a split legged moonsault as we take a break.

Back (after Mark Briscoe saying he's going to beat the better athlete in ACH tonight) with Bruiser crossbodying Kazarian to make the hot tag off to Silas as everything breaks down. Silas knees Kazarian in the face for two as the Addiction flips Silas into the air for a sitout powerbomb/neckbreaker combo and another near fall. Now it's Bruiser getting knocked into the corner but Silas breaks up a double superplex. The big frog splash misses though and it's the BME and Flux Capacitor (springboard spinning legdrop) to put Bruiser away and retain the titles at 12:19.

Rating: D. I'm not a big Addiction fan in the first place but this really didn't work. Why they went with heels vs. heels isn't clear but it caused some issues as the fans weren't sure who to cheer and that's not a good position to put them in. Bruiser and Young are fine as midcard bullies but they're not really a team that is going to be a threat to the titles.

Kyle O'Reilly is fired up about his chance at the ROH World Title in two weeks.

It's time for a live Fish Tank (Bobby Fish's talk show) where Fish talks about how he's the King of ROH. So he's married to Maria and therefore

Mike Bennett? Anyway his guests tonight are the potential #1 contenders to his TV Titles: Mark Briscoe and ACH. Briscoe goes first and wants to know what ACH stands for.

Perhaps it's American Child Hero because ACH looks like a fourteen year old who has been eating grilled cheese all morning. Maybe it means Acrobatic Catlike Horseman? Fish isn't sure but thinks Mark is on to something. ACH doesn't like being called names like that because he wants his legacy. That means it's time to beat up a chicken like Briscoe so the name means Annihilating Chickens Punks. Fish says let's do the match right now.

Mark Briscoe vs. ACH

Winner gets a title shot against Fish, who sits in on commentary. Briscoe sends him to the mat to start and grabs a headlock to keep the high flier on the mat. ACH's wristlock doesn't last long so he goes with a rollup for two instead. It's time to start flipping around until ACH dropkicks him out to the floor, meaning we get some basketball posing. Mark switches places with him and drops ACH, only to miss a Cactus Jack (complete with BANG BANGs) apron elbow.

ACH runs way too far around the ring and jumps to the apron for a headscissors around the post. Back in and ACH tries a springboard in but Mark dropkicks him backwards as we take a break. We come back to ACH hitting a discus lariat in the corner before they fight over a suplex for a long time. Mark finally gets him over but bangs his own head in the process to put both guys down again.

It's time for Briscoe to take over as he sends ACH into all four turnbuckles in a row and then back to the first for a bonus. Mark can't get a fisherman's suplex but settles for a Death Valley Driver. He takes too long going up top though and gets kicked in the head, only to block the Midnight Star. A brainbuster sets up the Froggy Bow to put ACH away at 11:30.

Rating: D+. I really wasn't feeling this one as there wasn't much of a flow. Then again that's a common problem in almost every ACH match I've seen so far and that's not really surprising giving how his high flying

style goes. Mark winning was the right call as I could see him winning the title whereas ACH would come off as just another guy.

Briscoe and Fish stare each other down to end the show.

Overall Rating: D+. The show was far from great but it was so nice to see some fresh stories for a change. It wasn't the best wrestling in the world but at least these people aren't the same imports that we've been watching for months now. It should be interesting to see them add in some more stuff going forward as things are kind of starting over again. Not a great shot but it was a major change that I had been waiting for since the beginning of the year.

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