

Monday Night Raw – May 23, 2016: Crying All The Way To The Bank

Monday Night Raw

Date: May 23, 2016

Location: Royal Farms Arena, Baltimore, Maryland

Commentators: Michael Cole, Byron Saxton, John Bradshaw Layfield

We're past Extreme Rules and now on to Money in the Bank season, meaning we might start tonight with some qualifying matches. However, the bigger story coming out of last night is the return of Seth Rollins, who attacked WWE World Champion Roman Reigns after Reigns retained over AJ Styles. Let's get to it.

We open with a recap of the main event and Rollins making his return.

Opening sequence.

Here's Seth to get things going, complete with a new graphic that says "Redesign, Rebuild, Reclaim." He certainly looks like a face to start though I wouldn't put money on that one. Rollins gets a nice WELCOME BACK chant before smiling at the crowd and saying it's been 200 days since he's been in this ring. In case you've been living under a rock (or in case you're really not paying attention), he's back. He's here to get back the title that he never lost and last night he fired the first shot with the Pedigree on Reigns.

The fans keep freaking out so Rollins asks if they missed him. Fans: "YES! YES! YES!" Rollins brings up some of the dastardly things he's done over the years and about how the fans didn't buy him by calling him a coward who hid behind the Authority. Then his knee went out from all the weight of carrying this company. Over the last few months he's gotten so many fan letters but he put every one of them in a garbage can and set them on fire.

None of these fans were here with him when he was rehabbing his knee twice a day. Now he's back on his own to get the title back but here's Reigns to interrupt. Rollins of course bails and says it's happening on his time. This brings out Shane to invite Rollins back inside for an adult conversation. This conversation consists of Shane making Roman vs. Seth for the title at Money in the Bank.

Sheamus talks about how much he can't stand Sami Zayn and this New Era. Tonight he's going to give Sami a beating for all the people who are sick of this foreigner coming in with his stupid hat. Nothing wrong with a simple, old school pre-match promo.

Money in the Bank Qualifying Match: Sheamus vs. Sami Zayn

Sheamus takes him down into a wristlock to start, followed by a legdrop of all things. Sami sends it outside with a hurricanrana, only to have Sheamus put a knee in his ribs to send us to a break. Back with Sheamus getting two off the Irish Curse but Sami BLASTS him with a clothesline and gets two off the Michinoku Driver. The Brogue Kick misses and Sami clotheslines him to the floor, only to have the flip dive blocked by a forearm. Sheamus gets back in and eats a quick Helluva Kick for the pin at 10:00.

Rating: C. Well that's a pleasant surprise, even though there was little doubt that Sami was going to win here. Sami winning is a good option as he's the epitome of someone who you believe could pull off the big surprise, even though he's likely only there to take big bumps and sell like no one else can.

Post match Sheamus is furious.

After a break, Apollo Crews is talking about how this is the biggest match of his life when Sheamus jumps him from behind and lays him out.

Here's New Day for a six man tag and they've got a birthday cake. Tonight is the 1,200th episode of Monday Night Raw and that means it's time to celebrate. However, since cakes in wrestling rings always end up in someone's face, Big E. picks up the cake and takes it outside to get things out of the way. As he threatens Byron Saxton, cue the Social

Outcasts to jump New Day from behind and take us to a break.

New Day vs. Social Outcasts

Joined in progress with Kofi hurricanranaing Slater out of the corner and stomping him down in the corner. Slater is sent to the floor for a Bo Train but Heath collapses, leaving the other two to take a flip dive from Woods. The Midnight Hour puts Slater away at 2:00.

Slater takes the cake post match.

Money in the Bank Qualifying Match: Cesaro vs. The Miz

Non-title. Before the match, Miz and Maryse celebrate their win and promise to win the briefcase again, setting up Miz's biopic. Cesaro starts fast with the uppercuts in the corner for two before diving over the top to take Miz out again. He even tells Maryse to talk to the hand, taking us back to about 1997.

Back in and Cesaro gets two more off a delayed suplex to send Miz outside as we take a break. We come back with Miz hitting the Reality Check but charging into the uppercut. The Swing doesn't work because of the shoulder but Miz can't hit the Skull Crushing Finale. Instead it's another uppercut and the Neutralizer for the pin on Miz (of course) at 11:24.

Rating: C+. Yo Miz! Thanks for stealing the show last night. Here's a clean loss to the guy that made you tap out last night. I'm getting to the point where I can't even complain about these losses anymore. They're just a fact of life in WWE and nothing is going to change that because WWE doesn't know any better.

We recap the opening segment.

Rollins talks about how Money in the Bank is his thing when Stephanie comes in. Rollins is all nice to her but she says things have changed around here.

Money in the Bank Qualifying Match: Chris Jericho vs. Apollo Crews

Crews seems just fine after the beatdown earlier tonight while Jericho's back is covered in bandages from the thumbtacks. Jericho throws a t-shirt in Crews' face to start and hammers away, only to have Crews just hit him in the bandages because Crews has an IQ above butter. Jericho's dropkick and chinlock don't do much as Apollo elbows him in the jaw and avoids the dropkick out of the corner to send Jericho outside.

There's a moonsault from the apron (mostly missed) to drop Jericho again but Jericho counters the toss powerbomb into the Walls. A rope is grabbed and Crews tries to nip up, only to have Jericho Lionsault onto him for two. Another Walls attempt is countered into a small package, only to have the Codebreaker puts Apollo away at 7:46.

Rating: C+. I'm so glad they brought Crews up for this spot. It's not like they have a small army of people who can take this loss and not lose a thing as a result. The match was fine, even though Crews didn't sell a thing from the beatdown earlier. He can't even hold his back or something? Jericho going to the ladder match is fine but Crews is already looking like another failed call up.

Sheamus laughs at the result.

Life Lesson with Bob Backlund from Smackdown.

Baron Corbin beat Dolph Ziggler last night because he can. This brings in Ziggler, to say Corbin can't beat him in a straight match. Corbin agrees but doesn't want to see Ziggler again after. Ziggler promises to steal the show tonight.

Here's Big Cass, who points to the entrance for the returning Enzo Amore. Enzo is VERY fired up to be back and talks about how he's back because if he had a dime for every time he got knocked down and didn't get back up, he would have ZERO DIMES. Cass is ready to kick Bubba Ray Dudley in the head and send him into a pool like a basketball.

Big Cass vs. Bubba Ray Dudley

Feeling out process to start until D-Von goes after Enzo, allowing Bubba to get in a belly to back suplex. He spends too much time shouting

though, allowing Cass to take over with a clothesline. A Stinger Splash has Bubba in trouble and we keep up the Sting treatment with Cass slamming him off the top. Cass' big boot and the empire Elbow put Bubba away at 3:11.

Rating: D. Now this is the kind of thing they need to be doing. Enzo is fine as the guy that gets in trouble so Cass can come in and clean house later on. Enzo can be in a match here or there and that's fine, but the last few weeks have shown that Cass is the real star of the team and the guy who could get one heck of a push.

Here are Charlotte, Ric Flair and Dana Brooke to talk about their win last night. Ric...oh my goodness he is BOMBED. Anyway, Ric talks about how Charlotte has earned her way to the top and been amazing at everything she's done. As for Dana, she doesn't exist without Charlotte, which Dana seems to agree with. Charlotte talks about how her dad was never there for her on Christmas and birthdays because Flair was off being the man. Now Charlotte gets it though because now she's the woman.

That power makes her be able to say it to him: get out of her ring. Charlotte goes on a rant about how she doesn't need her dad anymore and how she's going to be better than the sixteen time World Champion has ever been. She's tired of having everyone look at her and ask how Ric is doing so now he is dead to her. Charlotte doesn't want to talk and tells Ric to get out because he can watch her on TV like she did with him for thirty years. Ric leaves in tears while Charlotte and Dana pose. Charlotte still needs practice talking but this worked exactly as it was supposed to.

Money in the Bank Qualifying Match: Dean Ambrose vs. Dolph Ziggler

Ziggler headlocks him to the mat to start but Dean slams him with ease and throws Dolph out to the floor. The dive doesn't get to launch as Ziggler steps to the side as we take a break. Back with Ziggler getting butterfly superplexed for two but missing a dive. Dean's top rope elbow is countered into a rollup for two, followed by the Fameasser for the same.

Both guys try cross bodies at the same time and we get a quick breather.

Dean gets superkicked to little effect as he bounces off the ropes with the rebound lariat for two. Ambrose goes for the elbow again but gets dropkicked out of the air this time. The Zig Zag is countered though and Dirty Deeds sends Dean to the ladder match at 12:09.

Rating: B-. Dean winning a bunch of matches in a row is the way to help him get over the Lesnar loss, as well as keep him from looking like such a big loser in general. Ziggler losing is fine and I'm glad it was clean, though I would have been fine with Corbin interfering to cost him the match.

Ric is leaving and even Arn Anderson can't make him feel better. Renee Young asks if he has anything to say but Ric gives a very sad forced smile and leaves. That was one of the best scenes I've seen in wrestling in a long time. Ric genuinely looked devastated and had nothing to say. It was quiet, it was emotional and it felt real.

The Shining Stars want us to visit Puerto Rico.

Here's AJ Styles with something to say before his match. AJ talks about how he would have been WWE Champion if not for Anderson and Gallows. This brings the big balds to the ring, where they question what he just said. AJ didn't bring these guys to the WWE to take out everyone in his way but the way they see it, if this was in Japan, Styles would have been buying them a round of drinks after what happened last night.

AJ thinks it's time for them to go their separate ways but Anderson and Gallows suggest that AJ never would have made it out of Japan (or a bunch of bar fights for that matter) without them. Styles says they're still brothers and friends but not on the same team. Gallows says no way because they're not even friends anymore. That seems to be fine with AJ as the two of them leave.

Money in the Bank Qualifying Match: AJ Styles vs. Kevin Owens

They slug it out to start until Owens grabs a headlock ("HEADLOCK MASTER!"), only to eat a good dropkick for two. Owens gets in a dropkick of his own but AJ bails to the apron. AJ is pulled face first into the apron with Owens heading back inside but rolling under the ropes instead

of diving over the top like he was teasing. As usual he's the best troll in wrestling.

Back from a break with AJ fighting out of a sleeper and hammering away on the floor. They slug it out inside with AJ getting the better of it, only to be pulled off the ropes and sent into the corner with a German suplex. The Cannonball is followed by Owens telling Cole to shut up but AJ gets in a jumping enziguri. That's fine with Owens who comes back with his brainbuster onto the knee for two but misses the moonsault.

AJ sends him outside and knees him in the jaw, only to eat the Pop Up Powerbomb onto the steps. Somehow AJ beats the count back in (that's a bit much) and gets in a quick Pele. He really shouldn't be up that fast after a finisher onto the steps but finishers haven't meant anything in WWE in forever. The Phenomenal Forearm is broken up though and the Pop Up Powerbomb gives Owens the pin at 16:20.

Rating: B. That was quite the surprise as I was thinking they might go to a double countout to send both guys in instead. Owens certainly deserves the spot and I would LOVE to see what he could do as a Mr. Money in the Bank. Good match here, but would you have expected anything else from these two?

Overall Rating: B-. This was a wrestling focused episode that actually moved some stuff forward. It's always a nice sign and a good idea to have a fresh set of stories that give fans things they've been wanting, save for ANYONE else as the top face of course. I was really liking Charlotte turning on Ric as it's long overdue and also a well done segment. The show being all about wrestling helped a lot though, as did the extreme lack of McMahons. It was about moving things forward and the show went by quickly as a result. Good stuff here and I'm glad they went this way for a change.

Results

Sami Zayn b. Sheamus – Helluva Kick

New Day b. Social Outcasts – Midnight Hour to Slater

Cesaro b. The Miz – Neutralizer

Chris Jericho b. Apollo Crews – Codebreaker

Big Cass b. Bubba Ray Dudley – Empire Elbow

Dean Ambrose b. Dolph Ziggler – Dirty Deeds

Kevin Owens b. AJ Styles – Pop Up Powerbomb

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Wrestling Wars Podcast Episode 44

<http://mightynorcal.podbean.com/e/wwp-44-me-and-kb-review-extreme-rules-make-fun-of-tna-always-and-discuss-all-of-the-relevant-wrestling-news/>

The show is back with an Extreme Rules recap and a barrage of fresh TNA jokes.

Adam Rose Released

<http://www.wwe.com/article/adam-rose-released>

We'll go with "well duh" for this one. It does note that Rose requested his own release and you can't really blame him for that.

Extreme Rules 2016: Extreme Kickouts And Cleaning Supplies

Extreme Rules 2016

Date: May 22, 2016

Location: Prudential Center, Newark, New Jersey

Commentators: Byron Saxton, John Bradshaw Layfield, Michael Cole

It's a night of rematches but in this case we have a few bonus stipulations to carry things forward. The main event is another match between WWE World Champion Roman Reigns and AJ Styles, in this case under Extreme Rules. The question here is who interferes and helps either guy pull off the win. Let's get to it.

On the pre-show, here are the Dudley Boyz with something to say. Bubba starts an ECW chant before telling the fans to stop buying everything they're told to do. Once the Dudley Boyz left ECW, it completely fell apart. As for today, ever since they got here, Bubba has been dying to say something. "D-VON! LET'S GET OUT OF NEW JERSEY!"

Bubba rants about how much he hates the New Era until Big Cass interrupts. After listing off a bunch of food (these jokes lose some of their connection without Enzo), Cass says the New Era is doing what the ECW guys did in Bingo halls but in front of millions of people. A quick brawl breaks out with Cass clearing the ring and calling them S-A-W-F-T.

It was smart to have them doing something here but if Enzo is going to be out much longer, they need to either give Cass a new partner (even a temporary one) or have him do a singles feud. Cass is legitimately hot right now and it would be very risky to waste that while waiting on Enzo, who is probably better suited as a mouthpiece, to come back.

Pre-Show: Dolph Ziggler vs. Baron Corbin

Rubber match because rubber matches are awesome and No DQ. The bell rings nine minutes before the regular show is supposed to start so they're in a hurry here. Ziggler dropkicks him down but Corbin takes it to the floor and sends Ziggler face first into the post. Back in and Corbin pounds away as Mauro lists off a bunch of biographical facts about Corbin (double degree in college and a Slipknot fan), making me miss the days of Mike Tenay doing the same thing in WCW. I know it's nothing all that interesting but it lets you know a few things about the guy.

Corbin's chinlock goes nowhere as Dolph gets in a jawbreaker and clothesline to take over. The Stinger Splash into a neckbreaker gets no cover as the countdown to the pay per view reminds us that this is in fact heavily scripted and certainly won't go over because that's how wrestling works. Corbin's powerbomb is countered into a sunset flip for two, followed by a Deep Six for the same on Dolph. Ziggler grabs a tornado DDT and the Fameasser for two and both guys are down. The superkick misses and Corbin hits him low, which FINALLY plays into the rules. End of Days gives Baron the pin at 7:58.

Rating: D+. It's not so much the action itself but more along the lines of how weak the gimmick stuff was here. They had a total of one instance of using the rules (the posting early on is marginal at best) and that's not something that should happen in a No DQ match. It doesn't help that this didn't need such a gimmick but the calendar insisted on it and we

certainly can't question that.

The other issue here, and this one is certainly not their fault, is the time. That clock on the screen kept letting you know that it would be over soon and really took me out of the match more than once. This should have started about ten to fifteen minutes earlier so they could have had the extra time to let this build up. It never ceases to amaze me that WWE, who OWNS THE NETWORK AND HAS AS MUCH TIME AS THEY WANT, can't time this stuff better. It really is inexcusable and yet it never stops happening.

The opening video talks about how rules control us but tonight is the chance to write our own rules.

Karl Anderson/Luke Gallows vs. Usos

Texas Tornado rules and this is their fifth match in less than a month, not counting six man tags. It's a brawl in the aisle to start with the Usos getting the better of it, despite certainly not being the most popular guys in the building tonight. Jey dives over the top to take out Gallows, followed by a high cross body for two on Anderson. JBL calls this a dream match, which might have been true on the first match or maybe even the second. I lost interest somewhere around the third but I'm not smart enough to keep up with WWE booking.

Something like the Boot of Doom off the apron blasts Jimmy and the Club takes over. The Usos fight out of what looked like a Doomsday Device and it's Jey dropkicking Gallows into a rollup for two. Anderson comes back in and knees Jey so hard that he holds his foot before getting two. Jimmy breaks up the Boot of Doom but the Superfly Splash gets the same treatment.

A Whisper in the Wind misses and it's the Gallows Pole to Jimmy, followed by a spinebuster for two on Jey. Anderson sends Jey outside but charges into a superkick, setting up the running Umaga Attack against the barricade. Gallows is back up with a clothesline (JBL: "LARIOT0!") and grabs the bell (insert your own Festus joke), only to eat a superkick from Jimmy. The Superfly Splash only hits the bell though and the Magic Killer pins Jimmy at 8:32.

Rating: B-. The match was fun but again, I lost all my interest in seeing these two teams fight weeks ago. It also helped that they were going somewhere with the rules being changed, basically starting the standard tag finishing formula at the beginning of the match. This was fine but they both really need to move on.

The Usos are helped out, which is mentioned as having a factor on the main event.

We get a quick recap of the main event with Rusev injuring Kalisto on Raw to make this even more one sided on paper.

US Title: Rusev vs. Kalisto

Kalisto is defending and tries to start fast with the corkscrew cross body, only to have it knocked out of the air with an ax handle. The fans are split on Rusev (now there's something you don't often see) as he pounds Kalisto down. We hit the bearhug and a CM Punk chant starts up. Kalisto fights out of a torture rack and counters into a sleeper with Rusev looking more shocked than worried. The hold goes nowhere so the champ grabs a tornado DDT (second of the night) and now the corkscrew connects.

There's the hurricanrana driver for two, followed by a hurricanrana through the ropes to send Rusev face first into the steps. Back in and Rusev escapes the Salida Del Sol so Kalisto scores with a moonsault to take him down again. Kalisto goes up but Rusev slams him off the top and right onto the apron to stop Kalisto cold. The doctor comes out to check on him so Rusev grabs the Accolade, bending Kalisto back so far that Rusev is on his back, easily making Kalisto tap at 9:30.

Rating: C. That stuff with the doctor had me worried that they might actually keep the title on Rusev here. There was no reason to not change the title here, especially with Cena coming back in a week on Memorial Day. I really wish they had done something more with Kalisto but the curse of the midcard title got to him again, which really is a shame as it's taken down so many people now.

Trailer for Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles 2, featuring Sheamus.

We recap the Tag Team Titles match with the old school Vaudevillains winning a tournament to earn this title shot against New Day. This included New Day building a time machine, which was NOT an empty refrigerator box.

Tag Team Titles: New Day vs. Vaudevillains

New Day is defending but first they have something to say. After insisting that it was NOT a refrigerator box, Woods implies that he could use some photos or videos on his private feed. Big E. tries to cut him off but Woods insists that he get to shoot his shot. Fans: "SHOOT HIS SHOT!" Big E. has some gardening tools with them and since they're in the Garden State, it's time to put some hoes in the ground.

Kofi is the odd man out here which you don't see that often. The champs get jumped to start and Woods is sent into the post to give the Vaudevillains early control. Gotch comes in for something like a dragon sleeper but Woods gets out and blasts him with a jumping enziguri.

The hot(ish) tag brings in Big E. for some house cleaning in the form of some belly to belly suplexes. It's quickly back to Woods though with Big E. being sent into the steps. The Whirling Dervish only gets two on Woods and Big E. gets back in to spear English through the ropes. Kofi interferes with a kick to Gotch's head and Woods adds a Shining Wizard for the pin on Simon at 6:13.

Rating: C-. In theory this sets up Gallows/Anderson as the serious challengers but this really didn't do anything for me. For one thing, it's really not making sense to have the face champions use the numbers advantage. It's against logic in wrestling and needs to stop happening. It's not like Big E. and Kofi can't pull this off on their own. On top of that, this was just a six minute match after a pretty strong build with the Vaudevillains being treated like the young guys they really are. I wasn't feeling this one but it seems like a one off match.

AJ says he'll win tonight and walks into the Club dressing room.

We recap the Intercontinental Title match with Miz defending against Sami Zayn, Cesaro and Kevin Owens. They've done a great job of setting up the

four way feud with everyone going after each other and having a reason to want to fight their opponents. Basically Sami vs. Kevin and Cesaro vs. Miz were combined into one feud to this is the big blowoff.

Intercontinental Title: The Miz vs. Kevin Owens vs. Cesaro vs. Sami Zayn

Miz is defending and this is one fall to a finish. Sami hits a Helluva Kick on Owens at the bell and Kevin falls outside. Cesaro uppercuts Miz and we've got a good guy showdown early on. Sami starts in on the still bad shoulder before kicking Cesaro in the face for two. That's enough for Cesaro as he grabs a tilt-a-whirl backbreaker for two of his own and Sami is in trouble. Back up and Sami low bridges Cesaro out to the floor as Miz comes back in, only to be clotheslined outside.

Byron tries to call the match but JBL says if Saxton was on life support, he'd unplug the cord and charge his iPhone. Ok, can we PLEASE cut out the JBL doesn't like Byron stuff? They've been going with it for like ever now and since it's certainly not leading to a match or likely anything, drop it already as it's been old but just keeps going for no reason other than picking on Byron. Sami flip dives onto Miz and Cesaro to put all three down. Back in and we almost get a Tower of Doom until Owens runs in for the save.

Kevin cleans house and gets two off the backsplash to Sami. The frog splash is broken up by Miz though and now we get the Tower of Doom with Owens getting the worst of it as Cesaro powerbombs everyone down. Sami knees his way out of Cesaro's suplex and the Blue Thunder Bomb gets two. Miz grabs an exploder suplex on Sami but Cesaro suplexes both of them at once because he's just that awesome.

All four are down in a corner now and that means it's time for the running uppercuts all around. Kevin stops Cesaro though and it's Cannonballs for everyone. Sami breaks that up though, only to eat Swiss Death. The Skull Crushing Finale gets two on Cesaro and everyone is down. Miz yells at Cesaro for kicking out and makes the mistake of slapping him in the face, setting up the springboard corkscrew uppercut to the champ.

That means it's time for the Cesaro Swing for over twenty seconds, followed by the Sharpshooter. The rope break doesn't exist in a four way

so Maryse has to offer a distraction while Miz taps. You would think the referee, two feet away from Miz, would have heard that but instead Owens has to make a save. Miz grabs the ropes to block another Swing and Owens dives in with a frog splash to the elevated champion.

The Neutralizer gets two on Owens with Sami diving in at the very last moment for the save. Cesaro's powerbomb to Sami is countered into a very fast sunset flip for two. Cesaro BLASTS him with an uppercut but walks into an exploder suplex into the corner, only to have Owens come in with the Pop Up Powerbomb for two on Cesaro with Miz making the save.

Owens yells at Maryse and gets a Skull Crushing Finale on the floor, only to have Miz dive in for two more on Cesaro. These near falls are insane. Fans: "FIGHT FOREVER!" Miz is backdropped out to the floor but Cesaro turns around and eats the Helluva Kick for two with Owens making a save this time. While the two of them fight, Miz slides in and steals the pin on Cesaro to retain at 18:20.

Rating: A. This was some of the best timing I've ever seen in a multi-man match with the near falls getting me more than once. It's not often that I get fooled by some near falls but this match did it multiple times in less than twenty minutes. I had a great time watching this and the storytelling at the end with Sami getting obsessed with Owens and costing him the title as a result.

Pre-show chat.

We recap Dean Ambrose vs. Chris Jericho in an Asylum match (cage with weapons). They had a match at Payback with Dean winning clean so Jericho hit him in the head with Dean's potted plant (Mitch). Dean then ripped up Jericho's \$15,000 jacket and the result is this match.

Dean Ambrose vs. Chris Jericho

There are weapons around the top of the cage, you win by pin or submission and Jericho is in boots and jeans. Jericho quickly takes him down to start but Dean makes a quick save and sends Jericho into the cage. It's time for the first weapon so Dean grabs...a mop, which he uses to blast Jericho in the ear. Cole: "He's looking to mop up Jericho here."

Even Byron rips on him for a line that bad.

Jericho scores with a dropkick to take over but takes too long going up, allowing Dean to belly to back superplex him down. Both guys go up and it's Dean coming back with nunchucks, only to have Jericho grab a barbed wire 2x4. That goes nowhere so they both climb up with Jericho getting in a few kendo stick shots to put Dean back in the ring. The crowd isn't exactly thrilled by this.

Now some nunchuck shots have Dean in trouble and Jericho makes it even worse (I think?) by grabbing a leather strap. A whip to the head doesn't have much effect so Dean flips him off the top to put both guys down again. Dean straps him a few times but gets sent into the cage. Jericho climbs up but Dean is on the top rope to crotch him back down. Dean pulls off a fire extinguisher so Jericho throws a straitjacket over his head and gets two off an enziguri.

Thankfully Chris gets smart and ties Dean in the straitjacket....which he doesn't tie. Dean pops up with forearms which don't wake the crowd up so a clothesline gets two instead. A butterfly backbreaker gets two for Jericho and the fans want Ryder. Dean drops him again and climbs to the top of the cage for the standing elbow drop and almost no reaction. Like you would think it was a clothesline for a meaningless one count a minute into the match.

Since this hasn't gone on long enough, Dean goes up to get a mop bucket. That gets no reaction either but the bag of thumbtacks inside gets a bit better reception. They tease going into the tacks multiple times each until they give up for the time being, killing the crowd again.

The Lionsault hits knees but Jericho counters Dirty Deeds into the Walls. That goes nowhere (of course) so Dean breaks a kendo stick over Jericho's back. Chris saves himself with a fire extinguisher blast, setting up the Codebreaker for two. Some barbed wire 2x4 shots to Dean's ribs have almost no effect as he counters another Codebreaker by dropping Jericho onto the tacks. Now THAT woke the crowd up. Dirty Deeds ends Jericho at a ridiculous 26:23.

Rating: D+. I think you can guess my biggest issue with this match. Dean

vs. Jericho third from the top in a semi-comedy cage match on a gimmick pay per view shouldn't be 45 seconds shorter than the main event of Wrestlemania. The crowd just did not care here and they lost me as soon as the mop came into play. How much hatred and anger can you have in a match where the big violence for the first twenty five minutes is a mop to the head? Oh and they didn't even use the plant, which was the big idea of the match. I really wasn't feeling this one and it just went on WAY too long, even though it was a decent brawl at times.

We recap the Women's Title, which is somehow centered around Ric Flair. Natalya made the champ tap but Flair distracted the referee so Charlotte could escape. Therefore the result is a submission match with Flair barred from ringside.

Women's Title: Charlotte vs. Natalya

Charlotte is defending and this is a submission match. Natalya takes her down by the ankle to start and asks where Ric is now. A surfboard has the champ in even more trouble but she rolls out to the floor and fires off some chops. That's fine with Natalya who sends Charlotte shoulder first into the post to give her a new target. Back in and Charlotte kicks her in the face but gets rolled up into a cross armbreaker. I can always go for some basic psychology like that.

Charlotte gets up and powerbombs Natalya to break the hold before grabbing something like a reverse Figure Four (with Natalya on her stomach and Charlotte on her back). Natalya crawls to the ropes and out of the ring for the break as the rope break rule still isn't clear over the years.

Charlotte scores with the moonsault and puts on a half crab but Natalya (with her leg just fine) pops up and throws her down with a German suplex. The Sharpshooter goes on so Charlotte climbs the ropes....which doesn't work as she crashes back to the mat. Cue a fake Ric Flair which is revealed to be....Dana Brooke. The distraction lets Charlotte get in a cheap shot and put on the Figure Eight for the submission at 9:34.

Rating: D+. Well that was nothing and so much for the women stealing the show at every pay per view. I didn't see any selling in this (Natalya

being on her feet after the leg work and Charlotte's arm being fine for the Figure Eight) and the ending was stupid. Somewhat predictable as you knew something was going to happen (though Dana was a surprise) but stupid at the same time. I don't know if I just died in that marathon cage match or in the fact that Natalya was clearly just a filler opponent but I really wasn't feeling this one.

Flair, Dana and Charlotte celebrate post match. Cole thinks this was a set up because Cole is forced to sound like a stupid puppet.

We recap the World Title match, which is a Payback rematch after AJ won by countout and DQ but the match was restarted twice, allowing Reigns to pin him. Since then AJ has been forced to go extreme against his will but eventually he seemed to like the idea. There's still the question of whether or not he's been behind the Club attacks but that hasn't been treated as such an important idea this time around.

WWE World Title: Roman Reigns vs. AJ Styles

AJ is challenging and this is under Extreme Rules, meaning street fight. Styles tells him to bring it to start so Reigns elbows him in the face. AJ ducks some shots and fires off kicks, which are quickly shoved away so Roman can fire off corner clotheslines. A big jumping knee to the face knocks AJ silly and they head outside.

Reigns takes too long setting up the announcers' table though and gets knocked into the crowd. They fight over to the pre-show panel with AJ throwing him into various objects, including the table and a barricade wall. The Phenomenal Forearm off the table just staggers Reigns and they fight back to the timekeeper's area. AJ sends him into the post and peels back the floor pads, which can never go well.

The Styles Clash on the concrete is of course countered so AJ tries it on the announcers' table. Reigns counters that as well and catches a charging AJ in a big old backdrop through the other announcers' table. Fans: "YOU STILL SUCK!" Back in and Reigns hits a Razor's Edge into a sitout powerbomb (that should be someone's finisher) for two and the champ is shocked.

With little else working, Reigns loads up the Superman Punch but AJ hits him in the knee and Reigns buckles to the mat. AJ knees him in the face from the apron but Reigns catches him in a powerbomb (so much for the leg) through the other announcers' table (with AJ bouncing on the table before it breaks). The spear only hits the barricade though and Reigns is out.

They very slowly get back up and it's AJ trying the Phenomenal Forearm with Reigns Superman Punching him in the face for the counter. The spear connects off the steps but neither guy can get up. Cue the Club as AJ is thrown back inside. Now this brings up the question: who am I supposed to cheer for here? Cole acts like this is a big heel act but Reigns is hardly a good guy.

The Boot of Doom only gives AJ two (so much for that move meaning anything) but the Usos run out (so much for that angle earlier in the night) for the superkick party. Jimmy's Superfly Splash gives Reigns an obvious two. Another spear is countered and AJ scores with the Clash for two. The Superman Punch is countered again with an enziguri and the Styles Clash on the chair gets two more. Oh come on now. AJ is stunned so he unloads on the Usos and Reigns with the chair. Another Phenomenal Forearm is countered and a single spear retains the title at 22:13.

Rating: B+. This was really good, crippling the Styles Clash aside. It certainly wasn't one sided but I have a real hard time buying Reigns kicking out of all the offense before the run-ins, the Boot of Doom, two Styles Clashes and a bunch of chair shots. At some point it gets stupid and we hit that with about five minutes to go. Either way though, this was another really good brawl as they beat each other up for a long time before the finishing sequence that people weren't interested in seeing. I don't think anyone expected AJ to win here and that's fine, but good grief enough with killing the Styles Clash.

Post match Seth Rollins makes his return and lays out Reigns with a Pedigree. I have no idea if that makes him a heel or a face but I don't think WWE does either.

Overall Rating: B. The strong matches more than carry this show as you

had the amazing fourway, the strong main event and a good opener to balance out the WAY too long (though certainly not horrible) cage match. The show was very up and down though and instead of leading up to a big ending, it was much more "here's something good now here's something bad." Thankfully it looks like we're setting up some fresh stuff with Money in the Bank in a month, but that show tends to just throw everyone together in one big mess and forget all the feuds. Still though, strong show and outstanding if you cut out one match.

Results

Karl Anderson/Luke Gallows b. Usos – Magic Killer to Jimmy

Rusev b. Kalisto – Accolade

New Day b. Vaudevillains – Shining Wizard to Gotch

Miz b. Cesaro, Kevin Owens and Sami Zayn – Miz pinned Cesaro after a Helluva Kick from Zayn

Dean Ambrose b. Chris Jericho – Dirty Deeds

Charlotte b. Natalya – Figure Eight

Roman Reigns b. AJ Styles – Spear

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Ask KB Is Fixed

Apparently comments weren't working on there for some reason. It should be fine now.

[Ask KB](#)

Extreme Rules 2016 Preview

It really feels like we just got done with Payback and now it's already time for the next show. In this case that's not a good thing as the stories were only so strong in the first place and now it's clear that the stories don't have enough steam to keep going beyond this show. I'm genuinely not that thrilled to watch this show but maybe I'll be surprised. Let's get to it.

Starting on the pre-show, we have Dolph Ziggler vs. Baron Corbin in a No DQ match. We're getting this one because someone felt that the best way to get Corbin over was to have him lose a big match before beating Ziggler in a rematch. Now it's the always useful rubber match with a gimmick attached, even though I don't know how many people even wanted the second match in the first place.

Now in theory you have Corbin go over here but that's what everyone would have said going into their first match. Ziggler is a guy who can take loss after loss and be just fine so there shouldn't be any other option here aside from Corbin hitting a chair shot or two and End of Days for the pin, thankfully ending this mess of a feud in the process. More than once I've forgotten that they're even feuding and there's really no

excuse for that.

Next up we'll go with Kalisto defending the US Title against Rusev. This is another match where the ending should be obvious, especially if you look at things for more than all of eighteen seconds. Kalisto was beaten down on Raw and Rusev is an absolute monster, so why in the world would you not switch the title here? I'm sure John Cena returning on Memorial Day is just a coincidence as well.

There's a new gimmick match on the show as well, assuming you consider a weapons based cage match to be a new gimmick. This time we have Dean Ambrose vs. Chris Jericho in an Asylum match, meaning we have a cage with weapons on top. In this case the feud is over talk shows and a potted plant named Mitch, which is probably why I'm not very interested in this one. Ambrose should go over, unless it's decided that these two need to have a third match instead of being in Money in the Bank next month. Yeah Dean wins, but I wouldn't be surprised if Jericho got a surprise win for the sake of being illogical.

New Day is defending the Tag Team Titles against the Vaudevillains and I can't shake the feeling that we're getting new champions here. New Day has held the belts since Summerslam (a stat we're reminded of every few minutes, which is rarely a good omen for a title reign) and it should be near time for someone new to get the titles.

However, I can't exactly imagine the Vaudevillains actually taking them from New Day. It isn't going to hurt New Day if they lose them, especially if they get them back in a big moment. That being said, I think New Day retains but the Vaudevillains have been treated as someone beneath the champs, which makes them much more dangerous challengers. New Day should retain though and then drop them to Anderson/Gallows, who we'll cover next.

What have I done to deserve this? Anderson and Gallows debuted about a month ago and we're closing in on ten TV matches (counting six mans) where they've fought the Usos. If you can come up with a match that has been pounded into the ground any worse than this one, I'd beg of you to not tell me about it.

This time it's under Texas Tornado rules because it makes sense to just have them go to the big brawling segment that ends all of their matches. I'll take Anderson and Gallows for the win here as they've been beaten enough times now that it's ok to let them win, just in case people started thinking something of the Usos while making sure no one thought anything of Anderson and Gallows. I'm thoroughly sick of this match but I'm sure we'll see it again because that's how WWE does things.

Now we have a match that is actually being treated as one of the biggest on the card as Charlotte defends the Women's Title against Natalya in a submission match with Ric Flair barred from ringside. The thing here though is that we have a classic Ric Flair formula: how can Charlotte possibly survive this one?

In this case, it's probably going to be due to some other form of shenanigans and then winning with the Figure Eight. Natalya just isn't going to win the title because she isn't that interesting and (in theory at least), it should be setting up a showdown with Sasha for the big title change down the line. The stipulation here comes off as a smoke screen though, which isn't the most interesting. The build has been good though and Ric not being around should help things a bit.

Next to last we have probably the second biggest match on the card and the one that I'm looking forward to the most as Miz defends the Intercontinental Title against Sami Zayn, Cesaro and Kevin Owens. They've put together one heck of a feud here as all four could conceivably walk out with the title and there's an actual reason to care about each of them fighting the other.

As for the winner.....I think it's going to be Miz. I know the logical move would be to move the title onto any of the other three but Miz hanging onto it can set up a one on one match for the title, perhaps for Sami, before they move on to the next big Zayn vs. Owens match. It also helps that Miz is quite the champion and could give someone a good rub in a title loss. Anyone could win here but I'd actually like to see Miz retain.

Finally we have the main event and please let this be the final match in

the feud. Roman Reigns is defending the WWE World Title against AJ Styles in an Extreme Rules rematch after retaining under some shenanigans last time. The idea here is basically welcoming a bunch of violence and interference, which doesn't really make me want to see the match again. I mean, it was awesome the first time but the Usos/Anderson/Gallows interfering has destroyed any interest I have in this match.

The question here is who interferes as a surprise to cost either guy the title. Of course there's always the Finn Balor option and it would make sense but I'm still not sure they'll pull the trigger here. Of course we'll have Reigns retaining the title but my goodness I'm not really looking forward to this one. I can't imagine Styles stays in the title hunt after this as he'll likely do Money in the Bank and then move on to another feud. Either way I'm not as excited for this one than I was for the previous one and most of that is due to this story being hammered into the ground without anything being added to it.

Overall Extrem Rules really doesn't feel that extreme. We have a nine match card (counting the pre-show) and there's an Extreme Rules match, a No DQ match, a cage match and a Texas Tornado match. Unless you could submissions and a four way as extreme, this feels like something just a step or two above a regular pay per view card.

Normally the violence and gimmicks can carry this show on its back without too much effort but this last week has killed any interest I had. It's just not a show that feels like it needs to exist and is only happening because the PPV schedule had Extreme Rules listed. There's definitely some stuff I'm interested in seeing but nothing that really blows me away. I'm almost sure things will be fine but the stories need to move on after this one.

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Middle Kingdom Wrestling – May 11, 2016: What I Asked For

Middle Kingdom Wrestling

Date: May 11, 2016

Location: CWE Gym, Dongguan, China

Commentators: Eddie Strong, Cam Ferguson

This promotion is in a kind of weird place as they haven't had much storyline stuff this season but the standalone shows have been more fun and definitely better presented than a lot of the stuff from last season. I still like what I'm seeing and the shows are still short enough to make these easy sits. Let's get to it.

Standard opening sequence.

Len Bai says something to someone named Tony Trivaldo but I could barely make any of it out. I'm not sure if I was supposed to understand this but if I was, they REALLY need to work on their audio.

Trivaldo, a French wrestling champion, is here to go after Bai for hurting Dalton Bragg's arm.

In something you don't see every day, we cut back and forth between the two as they respond to each other. Bai isn't scared and Trivaldo promises to make Bai regret this. Then Bai bites into something that looked like a piece of chicken.

Len Bai vs. Tony Trivaldo

Trivaldo is definitely the face here and does a decent enough job of playing to the crowd early on. Some armdrags take Bai down to start but he blocks the third as Strong talks about how this has been brewing for some time but thankfully Ferguson points out how weak of a line that is. A dropkick puts Bai on the floor but he comes back with a snapmare and basement dropkick for two as the announcers keep bickering.

Off to a reverse cross armbreaker but Trivaldo powers him up into a sitout powerbomb before nipping up and completely failing to get the crowd to clap with him. Well at least he's trying. Bai counters a backdrop into a DDT and fires off strikes to cut off a comeback (During which Trivaldo tried the clapping thing again and got NOTHING. This time he even looked at the crowd as if to say "come on work with me here." Again, the fact that he's trying is what matters.). A running basement dropkick in the corner before we hit the Figure Four Neck Lock on Trivaldo.

Back up and Tony uppercuts him before trying to get a chant going, only to have a few fans tell him he sucks. Bai grabs a guillotine choke so Tony throws him with a northern lights suplex. Back up and a German suplex sends Bai flying and he pulls off the turnbuckle pad for a cool visual. Apparently Eddie kicks the turnbuckle pad away, thereby screwing up the audio in the process. Well he can't do everything around here. Bai sends him head first into the exposed buckle setting up a spinning fisherman's brainbuster (minus most of the busting) to give Bai the pin.

Rating: C. I was liking the match and there's something cool about seeing people who you'll never likely see otherwise getting a chance to show off in something like this. It also helps to have two people who clearly have some ring experience as it can be kind of tiresome watching people who aren't entirely sure what they're doing. The turnbuckle thing was fine for an ending, though I really hope they don't get rid of Ferguson like they were suggesting in the annotations on Youtube, as he's pretty regularly the most entertaining thing about the show.

We recap the events that set up the six man that has been shown in the opening sequence on every episode of this season. Ash is still mad at Da Li Sam for costing him his tournament match last season by sending him

into the post. Then Black Mamba cost Ash a match against Jason....and then it gets a bit confusing. There's something about a mystery partner and Andrew Tag, a champion from another promotion. One of Ash's partners seems to think he's a superhero. I think Sam and Mamba are teaming with the other champion and Ash's partner (along with the superhero) is still a mystery.

Overall Rating: C+. Yeah I know there was only one match on the show but the key thing here was the addition of the storylines. The match had a story and there was a story setting up the match next time (as confusing as it was). I know they're not the most interesting stories in the world but it's better than "here's a tournament match". I still don't know the characters well enough but even the simplest stories are a step up.

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Ring of Honor TV – May 18, 2016: Six In A Row

Ring of Honor

Date: May 18, 2016

Host: Kevin Kelly

It's the week after Global Wars, meaning we should be getting some fresh storyline stuff instead of all the New Japan stuff that has dominated more than a month of shows now. Ring of Honor is fine on its own and can go without having all the stuff from the outsiders over and over again. Let's get to it.

And never mind as this is going to be a special episode entirely devoted to Jay Lethal. Well at least he's a Ring of Honor wrestler.

Opening sequence.

Kevin Kelly talks about how Lethal has been a champion for over two years straight, which started at Supercard of Honor VIII (hey I was there) when he turned heel and joined Truth Martini to become TV Champion. We see the end of his match against Tommaso Ciampa to win the title.

After a quick highlight reel, we go to the 13th Anniversary Show (as in eleven months after Lethal won the title) with Lethal defending against Alberto El Patron.

TV Title: Jay Lethal vs. Alberto El Patron

Lethal is defending of course. Alberto superkicks Donovan Dijak to start and takes Lethal out to the floor for early control. A top rope clothesline drops Jay and we're already in a chinlock. Back up and Lethal crotches him in the corner to take over for the first time. The referee actually calls it accidental, which makes me want to see what intentional would be.

Truth Martini chokes Alberto a bit but Jay gets caught in the cross armbreaker over the top rope. We take a break and come back with El Patron countering a cross armbreaker from the champion, only to be clotheslined out to the floor. The announcers talk about the KRD (Knights of the Rising Dawn, a masked group at the time) leaving, even though we didn't see them in the first place. To be fair this was aired on pay per view so there was no break live.

Jay hits three straight suicide dives to send Alberto over the barricade and the champ takes a breather on the inside. Patron sends him into the

corner though and the top rope double stomp gets two. Back up and they slug it out until the Lethal Combination gets two. The top rope elbow (Hail to the King) is blocked but Alberto has to put Matrini in the cross armbreaker.

Jay tries another elbow but Patron counters into the armbreaker, only to have Truth offer a distraction so Jay can hit him in the head with the Book of Truth for two. Alberto grabs the Codebreaker on the arm, only to eat a bicycle kick. Jay's arm gives out when he tries the Lethal Injection so Truth blasts Alberto with the book, setting up the Lethal Injection for the pin at 12:33 (original match time).

Rating: B-. Certainly not bad here and a win over a former WWE World Champion is certainly a good rub for Lethal. The book cheating is still annoying but at least the right guy won and Lethal continues to look awesome. This would be about it for Alberto in Ring of Honor as he was just brought in for the title shot against Jay.

This brings us up to a discussion of Lethal vs. Jay Briscoe for the undisputed title. Here's their title vs. title match from Best in the World 2015. This is the review from Best of 2015 when more of the match was broadcast.

ROH World Title/TV Title: Jay Briscoe vs. Jay Lethal

They shake hands to start and we're ready to go. The House of Truth tries some early interference and get thrown out to make this one on one. Well two on one as Truth Martini is still at ringside. Lethal drops to the floor twice in a row to start but the fans declare it awesome anyway. Well to be fair that was indeed some AWESOME walking around on the floor. A lockup doesn't go anywhere so they trade wristlocks with both guys challenging, only to have Briscoe take over with a front facelock.

Both guys get back up and it's time for the slugout with Briscoe being sent out to the floor. Lethal follows him out and drives Briscoe into the barricade to keep his control as we take a break. Back with Briscoe kicking Lethal in the head, only to be sent to the floor for a suicide dive. Lethal loads up another but Briscoe decks him with a hard clothesline and a big suicide dive of his own. Martini finally does

something by grabbing Briscoe's leg, allowing Lethal to stomp away some more.

We hit the chinlock for a bit before Briscoe fights back up and grabs a neckbreaker. Back from another break with the Lethal Combination getting a quick two. The Macho elbow is broken up for a bit, only to have Lethal shove Briscoe off to stop a superplex. Now the elbow gets two but a Koji Clutch is quickly broken up.

They head to the apron with Lethal hitting him low to save himself from a Jay Driller through the table. Well I'd hope he broke it up as it would have meant a bad case of death otherwise. Martini's distraction earns himself an ejection and NOW the Jay Driller puts Lethal through the table as we take a third break.

Back with both guys inside and Briscoe running into a superkick, only to counter the Lethal Injection with a discus lariat. The fans are losing their minds over this stuff, though I'm still getting over the rolling out of the ring earlier. Lethal grabs the Injection out of nowhere for a very close two and Corino can barely keep going. With nothing else working, Lethal grabs a Jay Driller, followed by another Lethal Injection to finally become undisputed champion at 27:13.

Rating: B. The clipped version was good and I'm assuming the full version is even better. Lethal winning clean here, especially after going through the table like that, was a great way to make him look like the top guy in the promotion. Briscoe is pretty easily the most decorated name in the company's history so having him lose a major match like this, especially going down fighting, isn't going to cost him that much. This was good stuff all around and felt like a major showdown so well done all around.

We talk about Lethal defending both titles at the same time until Martini caused him to lose the TV Title to Roderick Strong back in November. We see the end of the title change.

Lethal was still World Champion though and defended the title against AJ Styles at Final Battle 2015. The match is clipped on the broadcast but here's the full version.

Ring of Honor World Title: AJ Styles vs. Jay Lethal

Lethal is defending and has Truth Martini/Taeler Hendrix with him. Styles, who has a bad back coming in, is part of the Bullet Club but comes out alone. We get some big match intros and we're ready to go. Feeling out process to start as they seem to have a lot of time to work with. AJ gets the better of a technical sequence and Lethal bails out to the floor. Back in and AJ grabs a headlock as the announcers debate whether Elgin vs. Lethal will be for the title or not.

We get the drop down into the dropkick from Styles but Lethal hiptosses him down for a basement dropkick of his own. It's time for some big chops until Lethal gets caught in the Calf Cutter, sending him straight to the ropes. AJ has to avoid a book shot from Martini and gets dropped onto the apron, drawing a TRUTH MARTINI chant.

Lethal gets smart by sending him back first into the barricade and the pace slows down. We hit a camel clutch as the fans swear at someone over something. A suplex into the corner (also becoming too popular lately) rocks Styles' back for two more and Lethal grabs the world's least convincing bearhug. Shockingly enough, Jay Lethal holding a bearhug doesn't last long as AJ comes back with forearms and clotheslines, followed by a suplex into the corner of his own.

The springboard forearm is caught in the Lethal Combination for two and the champ takes over again. They fight over a suplex until AJ takes him over for a neckbreaker. I've always liked that move. Styles can't get the Clash so Lethal throws him into the air and pulls him down into a neckbreaker for two of his own.

Lethal gets tired of this wrestling stuff and throws AJ over the barricade and into the crowd. Ever the genius, Lethal tries a suicide dive with AJ still behind the barricade. AJ, also not that bright, tries the forearm off the barricade but really just collides with Lethal instead. Naturally the fans think it's awesome because you could put an ROH label on Lord Littlebrook vs. Little Beaver and they would declare it wrestling.

Back in and Jay grabs a Koji Clutch, only to get countered into the Calf

Cutter, sending Jay into the ropes again. A big Lethal Injection out of the corner gets two but AJ snaps off a Pele, followed by the Bloody Sunday. Styles loads up something else but gets thrown over the top and through a table, absolutely destroying it in the crash. AJ dives in at nineteen and the Lethal Injection gets two (of course). Instead, Lethal uses Jerry Lynn's cradle piledriver (due to Jerry saying AJ would win) to set up the second Lethal Injection to retain at 22:09.

Rating: B+. This wasn't a masterpiece or even a classic but it was a pay per view quality main event. Lethal pinning Styles clean was a good way to make Lethal look great as AJ has been considered one of the best in the world for a long time now. I'm not sure how long Jay holds the title but if they want to pull the trigger on something, giving it back to Elgin in Tokyo would be rather smart.

And now, WE GET MORE HONOR RISING. Yes seriously, we're getting another match from this show because four straight weeks wasn't enough.

Ring of Honor World Title: Tomoaki Honma vs. Jay Lethal

We're joined in progress with Honma headbutting Lethal in the back to break up the Lethal Injection. Jay is knocked to the floor for a top rope headbutt to put both guys down in a heap. Honma pulls him back inside but eats a superkick, only to turn Jay inside out with a clothesline for two.

An enziguri drops Honma but again he pops up and hits a middle rope headbutt. Honma misses his top rope headbutt though and Jay gets a breather. The referee gets bumped though, allowing Los Ingobernales to interfere. A Book of Truth to the head has no effect on Honma (he has a hard head you see) so Naito kicks him low, setting up the Lethal Injection for the pin to retain at 15:32 (original match time).

Rating: C-. Honma has a hard head and that's all I know about him from this match. He seems to be a cult favorite so it makes sense to have him get the shot on a show like this but the ending seemed to be more about setting up Honma's next feud than anything else. Still though, the match was good enough, even if there was a lot of it clipped out.

Kelly says goodbye but says next week it's a special look at Bullet Club.

For those of you keeping track, that would be the sixth straight week with no new content.

Overall Rating: C. This is a tough one to rate so we'll go right in the middle. Let's take a quick look at the good and bad things here. First of all, this was about Ring of Honor (save for the required look at Honor Rising, which I'm sure we'll hear even more about next week). It also helped that the wrestling was good, which always makes the show go by faster.

Now for the obvious bad: we haven't had a new show with just the Ring of Honor crew since March 16. Think about that for a minute. We've now gone over two months since we either got a full Ring of Honor card or anything original. They've even taped TV since then but no, wait, let's look at Jay Lethal and the Bullet Club before we actually get to that. I don't know if it's a syndication issue or whatever but it's beyond ridiculous at this point and needs to be fixed immediately, as in not after at least one more "special" episode.

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New E-Book: NXT: The Full Sail Years Volume II

I think it's safe to say that you've heard a thing or two about NXT. Over the last few years the promotion, originally designed as little more than a dumping ground for the young talent brought into the company, has become the hottest promotion in the world. The weekly TV show has become a highlight and must see for most wrestling fans as new talent from all over the world shows up, almost making it an independent all-star promotion under the WWE banner. This isn't even starting to look at the live specials on the WWE Network.

In this book, I'll be taking a look at over one hundred and thirty NXT shows, including every live special they've aired to date. This ranges from the first live special in February 2014 with Arrival and goes all the way through Takeover: Dallas with every episode of the TV show included in between. I'll be including play by play and analysis as we take a look at what helped make NXT the hottest thing in the world of professional wrestling. Also, all of the live specials have been redone with new reviews.

The book is the longest I've ever put together at over 580 pages on a Kindle and sells for \$3.99 or the equivalent in other currencies. In case you don't have a Kindle, there are plenty of **FREE** apps you can get from Amazon for pretty much any electronic device, all of which are available at this [link](#).

You can pick up the book from Amazon [here](#).

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Or if you're in another country with its own Amazon page, just search "NXT Full Sail II" and it should be the first thing to come up.

Also you can still get any of my previous books on the WWE Championship, the Intercontinental Championship, Monday Night Raw from 1997, 1998 and 2001, Monday Nitro from 1995-1998, In Your House, Summerslam, Starrcade,

ECW Pay Per Views, Royal Rumble, Saturday Night's Main Event, the WWF and WCW pay per views from 1998, Wrestlemania and Clash of the Champions at my author's page [here](#).

I hope you like it and shoot me any questions you might have.

KB

Smackdown – May 19, 2016: Please Let It End On Sunday

Smackdown

Date: May 19, 2016

Location: Bon Secours Wellness Center, Greenville, South Carolina

Commentators: Mauro Ranallo, Jerry Lawler, Byron Saxton

It's the final show before Extreme Rules and this past Monday wasn't exactly the strongest episode of Raw in recent memory. The stories are starting to run out of steam and Sunday can't get here soon enough. Odds are tonight is going to be about the Intercontinental and WWE World Title stories, which could go a few different ways each. Let's get to it.

The opening recap focuses on Monday's oddball tag match and makes sure to show Shane and Stephanie setting it up in case you're stupid enough to think these matches are just happening.

Opening sequence.

Kevin Owens vs. Cesaro

Miz, Maryse and Sami Zayn are on commentary. Miz gets right to the point and says tonight's MizTV is canceled. It never ceases to amaze me that they feel the need to change plans from Monday to Tuesday. They slug it out to start as Miz and Sami bicker about Miz constantly getting beaten

up. Since this is WWE, the camera keeps cutting to the announcers' table so we can see them arguing, completely defeating the point of them being on commentary.

Cesaro dropkicks him out to the floor, followed by some chops. Back inside and Cesaro stops for a quick Rumba. I mean of course that's just a guess as I can't see what he's doing because we're looking at the announcers' table again but it's my best guess. Owens bails from the threat of a European uppercut so Cesaro follows him out for the running version up against the barricade. Maryse offers a distraction and Owens knocks Cesaro into the table and then whips him into the steps for a bonus.

Owens mocks Miz's flapping arms and drops a backslash for two (Owens: "HOW IS MY CLOSEUP?"). Maryse yells at Sami in French, forgetting that he's from Montreal. Another backslash hits raised knees because you can't hit the same spot twice (makes sense in theory, though Cesaro should have known that the first one was coming given how Owens uses it in every match) but Owens sends him into the corner for the Cannonball.

Back from a break with another shot of the commentary team showing Miz and Maryse kissing. Cesaro fires in an uppercut to break up the frog splash and grabbing a gutwrench superplex to put both guys down. A high cross body gets two for Cesaro as the wrestlers on commentary actually start paying attention and breaking down the match. The Swing doesn't work though and Owens bails to the floor, only to have him blast Sami in the face.

Cesaro flips off the apron to take out Owens before punching Miz in the face. Back in and Cesaro's eats a superkick for two but Sami comes in, only to have Cesaro punch him in the face, either over the Helluva Kick last week or to prevent a DQ. The distraction lets Owens get in a rollup with a handful of trunks for the pin at 14:48.

Rating: B-. I'm really digging the idea they're going with here and it's actually turned into a four way feud instead of two guys feuding and the other two just being there on the side. I'm actually not sure who walks out with the title on Sunday and it would seem that there are multiple

ways to go after the match is over. That's a hard thing to pull off but they've managed to do it with four talented guys doing what they're supposed to do.

Post match Sami gives Cesaro the Helluva Kick but takes the Skull Crushing Finale.

Paige vs. Dana Brooke

Becky Lynch is on commentary and says her eye injury is the worst thing she's ever had because the double vision means she has to see Dana twice. Paige knees her in the face to start as we hear about Becky fighting Paige's mom over in the UK. Dana trips Paige up though and we hit a leg scissors back inside. Becky thinks she should be named Becky Balboa because she keeps getting up like Rocky. Some kicks and knees stagger Dana but she grabs a Samoan Driver for the upset pin at 3:16.

Rating: D+. Dana looked better here but that might be due to how short the match was, which always helps things out a little bit. Brooke has a great look and a lot of potential but she just needs more time in the ring, preferably down in developmental. She's just been called up too early to be on her own, which to be fair wasn't the plan until a few days ago. That being said, what the heck has happened to Paige? She's gone from the top of the division to absolutely nothing in no time. I really don't get it.

Lana, with that accent dying faster than Paige's push, says Kalisto is hiding behind his mask and that Rusev is the greatest champion of all time. Rusev says the chant will be MACHKA MACHKA MACHKA.

Dolph Ziggler vs. Sheamus

It feels like we haven't seen Sheamus in a long time. Ziggler is shoved around to start before coming back with knees and right hands in the corner. A hard ax handle to the face drops Ziggler though and we take a break. Back with another ax handle blasting Dolph in the face before his superkick is countered with an elbow to the knee.

We hit the chinlock for a bit before Ziggler fights up and gets in a

Fameasser for a near fall. The neckbreaker is broken up though and Sheamus gets two off the Irish Curse. Back up and the Zig Zag is countered but Sheamus misses a charge, setting up a superkick to give Dolph the fluke pin at 10:48.

Rating: C-. Sheamus has just died since the League split up. I had forgotten that he was around for a bit as he was only in the battle royal recently and then hadn't been seen since. Ziggler vs. Corbin isn't much better though as I have no idea why they're feuding, especially since Corbin should have won in the first place but we need to give Ziggler a fluke win instead.

Corbin comes out to say he'll hurt Ziggler on Sunday.

The Asylum cage is lowered and here's Chris Jericho for a chat. Jericho demands quiet by saying QUIET over and over before pointing out the cage hanging above us. Well to be fair no one noticed the cage hanging above the ring on Raw until Ambrose pointed it out so that was kind of necessary. Jericho lists off all of the matches that he's been in over the years and admits that he's never been in an Asylum match because there's never been one. However that means Ambrose hasn't been in one either, meaning Jericho has the advantage because he's smarter and crazier.

Jericho asks that the cage be lowered as he talks about how he put Dean in the hospital with a twenty pound plant. Looking up, Jericho adds up the days he can put Dean in the hospital by using all of these weapons, which he sees as at least forty days. That's not counting all the mental anguish that goes with it, but above all else, Dean is receiving the Gift of Jericho. As the crowd drinks it in, a production worker comes in and of course it's Dean, who beats Jericho down with a kendo stick to send him running off. Guys in costumes are always an effective idea so this was fine.

And now, a life lesson with Bob Backlund. Bob talks about how Darren should be able to memorize these things and demands that he recite the Presidents of the United States in order. Young: "Coach no one can do that." Backlund: "Washington, Adams, Jefferson...." Young swears a bit and

Backlund LOSES IT, saying that no one needs that kind of language and demands 200 jumping jacks because Young needs to be great in the ring. These are really funny bits and I'm sure that Young in front of a blue background and Backlund in front of a red one is coincidental.

Big Cass/New Day vs. Dudley Boyz/Vaudevillains

The announcers are flat out saying that Cass has been doing better since Enzo has been gone. During the entrances, we see the Vaudevillains destroying the time machine, which messes up the announcers' audio for some reason. D-Von and Big E. get things going with the latter getting two off a belly to belly. Byron's audio is still barely audible as D-Von runs Kofi over and brings in Bubba, who misses a splash attempt. It's time for the Unicorn Stampede before a big staredown takes us to a break.

Back with Woods hammering on Bubba in the corner until Ray clotheslines him down. Byron's audio is back because we're just that lucky. The Vaudevillains starts taking over now with Gotch snapmaring Woods so English can drop a knee for two. The Dudleyz don't seem thrilled with their lack of ring time here as Bubba shouts at Gotch for tagging in English instead of D-Von.

Bubba comes in instead and punches away while shouting about Booty's. Woods finally gets away and makes the hot tag off to Cass for the house cleaning. Everything breaks down and Big E. suplexes Gotch before throwing Kofi over the top onto English. A pretty horrible looking East River Crossing (mostly botched as Bubba is a bit too big) sets up the Empire Elbow to give Cass the pin at 10:38.

Rating: C. I'd be really surprised if they don't give Cass a spot on Sunday's card in an added match. They certainly seem to be pushing him at this point and it's really cool to see someone this young and brand new on the roster getting such a shot. I don't know if he has everything to make it work but at least he's getting a good start.

John Cena is back on May 30.

Long video on Natalya vs. Charlotte on Sunday with Charlotte talking about how she'll be twice as good as her dad because she uses the Figure

Eight instead of the Figure Four.

Luke Gallows vs. Roman Reigns

Non-title. Usos vs. Anderson/Gallows in a Texas Tornado match is official for Sunday. Sweet goodness just stop already. Anderson/Styles/Usos, the latter again without the Siva Tau, are at ringside here. They trade elbows to start but only Reigns goes down. A second elbow knocks him outside so Reigns comes back inside where his Samoan drop gets two. We take a break and come back with Reigns firing off kicks to the ribs until Gallows takes his head off with a clothesline for a near fall of his own.

We hit the chinlock for a bit before a corner splash crushes Reigns again. That's enough action so we hit the chinlock again. Roman gets up for a jumping clothesline but AJ's distraction lets Gallows get in a rollup for two. There's the Superman punch but AJ grabs Reigns' foot to break up the spear. Everything breaks down on the floor with Reigns kicking AJ in the face, only to walk into the Gallows' Pole (chokebomb) for a very close two. Anderson comes in and that's a DQ at 11:50, despite him not touching anything.

Rating: C+. Not a bad power brawl but you knew the ending was going to be screwy. I have no idea why they couldn't just wait until Anderson actually did something before getting to the DQ but anything that lets these six brawl more is the right idea in WWE's eyes. That being said, it would be nice if Anderson and Gallows could actually, you know, WIN SOMETHING eventually.

Post match Anderson gives Reigns the Boot of Doom and the fight keeps going. AJ is the only man standing but he takes too long loading up the announcers' table. Reigns gets in a few shots but everyone else gets back in it to end the show.

Overall Rating: C. Thank goodness it's over. This wasn't even a bad show or even a below average show. It was just incredibly boring for one simple reason: this is all padding instead of ANYTHING worthwhile (save for a decent Ambrose/Jericho segment). We've seen the opening match in various forms time after time, Dana doesn't have a match on Sunday, Ziggler vs. Corbin has been done multiple times, Big Cass vs. New Day

isn't a match as far as I know and the main event stuff has been done to death.

I don't remember the last time a company just ran out of steam like this the week before a pay per view but it's been a rough two shows. Hopefully they don't try to stretch these stories out through June as I don't even want to imagine what we might have to sit through in that case. The quality was fine tonight but there's just nothing interesting going on here.

Results

Kevin Owens b. Cesaro – Rollup with a handful of trunks

Dana Brooke b. Paige – Samoan Driver

Dolph Ziggler b. Sheamus – Superkick

Big Cass/New Day b. Dudley Boyz/Vaudevillains – Empire Elbow to Bubba Ray

Roman Reigns b. Luke Gallows via DQ when Karl Anderson interfered

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