

So Uh... .THAT Just Happened

And I didn't see this one coming. Shane McMahon just returned to open Raw. It seems that only his hair has aged though.

Brock Lesnar Attacks Dean Ambrose Before Raw

And there's a video. In theory this is now a Wrestlemania match, meaning Bray vs. Brock could be off the books.

<http://wrestlingrumors.net/brock-lesnar-attacks-dean-ambrose-in-parking-lot-before-tonights-monday-night-raw/>

Also, how cool is it to see an actual angle that feels like it's going on in real life? Why can that only happen for Wrestlemania?

Fastlane 2016: The Scenic Route To Wrestlemania

Fastlane 2016

Date: February 21, 2016

Location: Quicken Loans Arena, Cleveland, Ohio

Commentators: Michael Cole, Byron Saxton, John Bradshaw Layfield

It's the second pay per view of the year as we're getting closer and

closer to Wrestlemania. In this case we have a triple threat main event of Dean Ambrose vs. Brock Lesnar vs. Roman Reigns for the #1 contendership in what should be one heck of a fight. Any of the three could win and that's what can make this even better. Let's get to it.

Pre-Show: US Title: Kalisto vs. Alberto Del Rio

Kalisto is defending and this is 2/3 falls. Del Rio goes right after the arm to start but Kalisto kicks away at the knees for a breather. JBL talks about how Goliath wins in real life as Kalisto hits the hurricanrana driver to set up a big dive out to the floor. Back in and Del Rio gets two off a snap suplex with Ranallo (only calling the pre-show) comparing this to a feud between rappers. Kalisto sends him into the post but Del Rio blasts him with a chair for the DQ, giving Kalisto the first fall at 4:05.

For some reason the second fall doesn't being immediately so Del Rio whips him all around ringside as we take a break. Back with both guys in the ring and Del Rio demanding that the second fall begin. Well I mean Kalisto has only had about three and a half minutes to recover so maybe they should. Del Rio does a standing version of the double stomp in the corner for the pin at 7:35.

The third fall begins less than a minute after the second ends with Del Rio getting two off a clothesline. The full version of the top rope double stomp is countered with a hurricanrana though and Kalisto speeds things up with the corkscrew cross body. Another hurricanrana driver gets two and a running tornado DDT gets the same for the champion. Kalisto gets crotched on top and actually doesn't counter the reverse superplex into the Salida Del Sol.

Instead Del Rio sends him out to the floor for another double stomp off the barricade. Kalisto dives back in to beat the count at nine and Del Rio is frustrated. He loads up ANOTHER top rope stomp (as in like the fifth one of the match) but Kalisto moves away. They go for what was supposed to be the Salida Del Sol but can't quite get it, leaving Kalisto to send Del Rio into the buckle for a rollup pin at 14:30.

Rating: C-. I really wasn't feeling this one as it felt like they were

trying to showcase how many different ways Del Rio could do that one stupid move in a row. On top of that, Kalisto doesn't even get to hit his big finishing move that made him a star in the first place and basically gets squashed until a fluke ending. I'm really not sure why this needed to be 2/3 falls and the match was a step down from their usually good stuff.

The opening video is the Eva Marie racecar theme with a focus on the main event.

Sasha Banks/Becky Lynch vs. Tamina/Naomi

Earlier today, Naomi said she and Tamina put the BAD in Team BAD. Never let her speak again. Becky tries to start but Sasha tags herself in, only to have Becky do the same thing a few seconds later. The quick legdrops nail Tamina with the spinning version getting two. Naomi comes in for her dancing kicks but Becky throws Tamina down with a suplex and BAD gets dropped on the floor. Naomi comes back with something like a Stunner over the top rope to drop Becky. Unfortunately this means we have to hear the racecar sound effects on every replay which are already old.

Back in and Tamina clotheslines Lynch for two before it's off to the chinlock. JBL: "Tamina could have been in the APA." It's off to Naomi for a legdrop and chinlock of her own before being sent back to the floor. Naomi pulls Sasha off the apron to break up a tag attempt, only to have Becky do some quick house cleaning and dive over for the hot tag to Sasha. It's time for the knees all around until Naomi misses the double knees in the corner.

A backstabber sets up the Bank Statement but Tamina pulls Sasha out to the floor. Back in and the Rear View gets two, followed by Tamina's superkick for the same with Becky breaking up the count. Sasha flips out of a double suplex and Becky comes in with a missile dropkick to both of them. The Bank Statement to Tamina and the Disarm-Her to Naomi are good for the double submission at 10:00.

Rating: C. This picked up a lot near the end but the first half was a lot of laying around in chinlocks and rest holds as we sat through Tamina and Naomi trying to have charisma. Naomi is one of those cases where you have

to wonder what they were thinking. She's incredibly athletic but for some reason they decide to make her a heel instead of focusing on all of her national abilities. Such is life in the Divas division.

We look back at the Intercontinental Title changing hands on Monday.

Intercontinental Title: Dolph Ziggler vs. Kevin Owens

Owens is defending and Dolph's hair is....odd. They fight up against the ropes to start and Ziggler eats a headbutt. Owens' chinlock is countered into something like a rear naked choke as we hear again about Ziggler's amateur background which he almost never uses. Back up and Ziggler throws him HARD into the buckle for an awkward looking landing. You can tell it's awkward as they show four replays of the thing.

We hit the chinlock from the champion until Ziggler avoids a charge, sending Owens shoulder first into the post. The rapid fire elbow drops get two for Dolph and Owens crotches him on the ropes to break up the running DDT. The Cannonball gets two, causing the champion to yell at Cole for talking bad about him. Now the DDT connects for two and Dolph loads up a superplex, only to have Kevin reverse into that spinning fisherman's superplex.

Both guys roll outside with Ziggler superkicking him down for a near ten count. Back in and they trade more superkicks with Owens having to kick out at two and a half. JBL: "We're at a superkick party!" They go outside again with the apron powerbomb being countered into a hurricanrana to send Owens into the steps. Back in again and Ziggler tunes up the band (which apparently is paying homage to Shawn Michaels because everything has to be), only to nearly kick the referee, allowing the Pop Up Powerbomb to retain Owens' title at 15:02.

Rating: B-. Just a longer version of any given match they've had on Raw in recent months (and by recent I mean several because these guys fight like once every few weeks) with the obvious and logical ending. They tried to pump up the idea of Ziggler in front of his hometown but even then people stopped caring a long time ago. Could it be because Ziggler has been the same guy for years now?

We recap the Wyatts being all evil and attacking the old guys, which of course includes that old rascal Ryback.

Wyatt Family vs. Kane/Big Show/Ryback

Bray is on the floor, sitting in Byron Saxton's chair. Ryback and Rowan get things going with the bearded one missing a charge in the corner. It's off to Big Show for the loud chops on Erick's exposed chest with Ryback coming in again for some of his own. Rowan elbows Ryback down and the tag brings in Harper for a dropkick of all things.

We get the Strowman appearance as the announcers hit all of their standard lines about how big and strong he really is. Like, really, really strong. Braun throws Ryback around and brings Rowan back in, allowing Ryback to hit a quick suplex. The hot tag brings in Kane as Cole brings up the Wyatts abducting Kane a few months back. Yeah remember that? It's still every bit as stupid. Kane cleans house for a bit until they get him down in the corner to start the slow motion exchanges.

Braun drops an elbow to the back of the head as we get a Bill Kazmeier name drop. A running boot misses in the corner and the hot tag brings in Ryback to clean house. Ryback slams Harper five times in a row (Cole: "This is incredible!" No Cole, it isn't.) before powerslamming him for good measure. Everything breaks down and Strowman is sent to the floor with Harper being tossed on top of his partners. Show spears (kind of) Strowman and Ryback Meathooks Harper. A Shell Shock (really a Samoan Drop) is enough to pin Harper at 10:36.

Rating: C. What? No really, what? There was no reason to have the Wyatts lose here and you have a team of makeshift goons go over them here? For what? Well at least Ryback got the pin and Bray didn't....yeah this isn't working for me. I mean, how in the world do you have the Wyatts lose here? I honestly do not get this and I really don't want to imagine where they're going next.

Roman Reigns talks about how everything changes tonight between himself and Ambrose. Dean comes in and says they're both going to Wrestlemania but he's tired of hitchhiking. Reigns: "I wouldn't book that trip just yet." Ambrose: "I already booked it! I got a great deal on Priceline!"

Neither of them are worried about Lesnar either.

We recap Brie Bella vs. Charlotte, which is built around Daniel Bryan retiring and Charlotte mocking Brie for her husband having to quit. Brie pinned her in a non-title match to earn the shot tonight.

Divas Title: Brie Bella vs. Charlotte

Charlotte is defending and throws Brie (wearing Bryan's kick pads) down face first to start. That gets us the first mock YES chant of the match as Byron talks about Brie wanting to listen to the birds chirp, sending JBL into a hilarious rant about how stupid that sounds. Brie comes back with some forearms and an armdrag, allowing her to WOO and strut because this is really about Flair.

Charlotte sends her out to the floor for a few moments before Brie counters an Alabama Slam into a sunset flip for two. Back in and Charlotte cranks on both arms but Brie tries (and horribly fails) at a YES Lock attempt, eventually settling for a crucifix for two. A Backpack Stunner breaks up Brie's sleeper and we hit a Figure Four Neck Lock into those rolling flips. JBL: "Maybe Charlotte is just tired of the birds chirping."

The BRIE MODE running knee sets up a Nikki Bella forearm for two. Charlotte comes back with chops (because neither of them can do anything but tribute moves) but the Figure Eight is broken up. A dropkick knocks Charlotte outside, followed by a missile dropkick back inside. As is so often the case in a Flair match though, Brie comes up holding her knee.

That doesn't stop her from firing off the YES Kicks (of course), followed by a Bella Buster for two. The Figure Eight is countered into the YES Lock but Brie swaps that for a half crab to prevent Ric from interfering. Charlotte finally kicks her off and a quick Figure Eight makes Brie tap at 12:14.

Rating: C+. The match was better than it had any right to be but amazingly enough, the combined forces of Daniel Bryan and Nikki Bella weren't enough to make me care about Brie. That kind of shortcut booking rarely works for me, especially when you have someone like Brie who has

been a loser and such a horrible in ring worker for so long. You can't just forget about that kind of stuff, no matter which of her relatives are hurt. But at least Charlotte got pinned clean, which of course no one is going to remember.

We recap AJ Styles vs. Chris Jericho, which is basically Sami Zayn vs. Cesaro from NXT minus the 2/3 falls stipulation because Kalisto vs. Del Rio needed to go six or seven falls. They split the first two matches and AJ convinced Jericho to do it again here tonight. This is almost guaranteed to be one of the better matches on the card.

Jericho talks about how you're only as good as your last match, which he promises to prove to AJ tonight.

AJ Styles vs. Chris Jericho

Feeling out process to start and AJ has to fight out of an early Walls attempt. Jericho has to do the same to avoid the Calf Crusher, which starts the dueling chants. AJ drops a knee for two and it's time to slug it out. A top rope ax handle drops AJ, who pops right back up with a dropkick. The chants start up again as the fans are definitely more into this than anything else all night.

They head outside with Jericho sending him hard into the barricade before slapping on a chinlock. JBL compares AJ coming over here to Kobashi or Hansen coming over from Japan in their primes. AJ fights up and sends Jericho to the floor, only to dive into a dropkick to the chest. Another chinlock doesn't get Chris very far as AJ fights back and hits a running forearm to a seated Jericho.

They mess up the moonsault into the reverse DDT (to be fair that's a really hard move to pull off) and Jericho scores with the enziguri for two. A Tesshocker (belly to back suplex into a faceplant) gets two more for AJ, only to have Jericho come back with a bulldog and Lionsault for another near fall. AJ comes back and tries the springboard forearm but Jericho springboards into the dropkick to break it up. The Pele stuns Jericho on the top and AJ loads up a super hurricanrana which is countered into the Walls.

AJ gets the break so Jericho throws him outside and puts him in the Walls on the floor. A Codebreaker brings AJ back in but he's way too close to the ropes. AJ's striking sequence is countered into a tiger bomb which is countered into the Styles Clash for a very close near fall. Now it's back to the Calf Crusher and Jericho finally taps at 16:28.

Rating: B. Were you expecting anything else here? They've had good matches the previous two times and this worked as well, though I liked their Smackdown match a little bit better. Jericho tapping clean in the middle of the ring is the right ending because you can quickly build him up for whatever you want him to do at Wrestlemania while AJ can move on to a feud he might actually lose.

Post match Jericho does the false heel turn into the handshake.

Kickoff recap.

We look back at New Day dancing a lot on Smackdown.

It's time for the Cutting Edge Peep Show (as hosted by Edge and Christian of course) with special guests the New Day. Edge plugs their new show (Christian: "Watch it. It's awesome.") but asks if we can be serious for a minute (Edge: "Lance Storm just got real mad.") because it's really nice to be here. This is where the first tag team ladder match took place and it's where they received their very first standing ovation....and here's New Day.

They immediately ask who (WHO WHO WHO) cares about what Edge and Christian did back in the day. It's time to be out with the old and in with the new, the New Day that is of course. Christian wants to talk about New Day's history, which started with the power of positivity, which was brutal and lead to indifference. Edge: "I've never seen so much chocolate act so vanilla." Then something happened even faster than Kofi dropped his fake Jamaican accent. Edge: "It's like if we had a threesome with his Beyonce, you would be our love child."

New Day is accused of ripping on local sports teams before doing just that. There's nothing wrong with an old classic. Kofi doesn't like the idea that New Day is called Edge and Christian ripoffs before going into

a rant about how lame the current tag team division really is. Apparently the League of Nations doesn't think much of New Day (and apparently WWE doesn't think much of the League as they can't get onto a show with six matches). Woods says New Day has already cooked the deal and now the League of Nations is hot garbage. Edge: "I'm starting to like you guys."

This brings out the League with Sheamus agreeing that New Day does look stupid. Woods says they can't get into a battle of fisticuffs because it's a day of rest and they're leaving. Edge: "But King Barrett hasn't gotten to stare at anyone menacingly yet!" Del Rio brings up making Edge retire five years ago, though Edge thinks he's accomplished more than Alberto in those five years. The Canadians leave and it's time for New Day to dance in the aisle as Edge and Christian do one more plug. There were some funny lines here but this was even more filler on a show full of it already.

Here are the Social Outcasts with something to say. Bo gives us some safety tips on the Road to Wrestlemania before Rose calls the team a group of beautiful Priuses. Bo: "Can I be a Volvo? They have great safety ratings." They go on for a bit until it's time for an impromptu match.

R-Truth vs. Curtis Axel

Axel grabs a headlock to start but it's time for Truth to dance and gyrate. Curtis gets in a shot and we get a victory lap, only to have Goldust come out to support Truth. Goldust trips Axel but then throws Rose inside for no logical reason, allowing Axel to grab a rollup for the pin at 2:15.

Post match Truth walks away again, as he should after that stupid move.

We recap the main event, which was made basically on a whim by Stephanie, which really doesn't leave HHH with an easy match for Wrestlemania. They've teased some issues between Reigns and Ambrose and both guys want to fight Lesnar again. Lesnar has stared at HHH, at least when the champion had the time to appear on a show with the belt.

Roman Reigns vs. Dean Ambrose vs. Brock Lesnar

Winner gets the title shot at Wrestlemania so we get some Big Match Intros. Brock drives Ambrose into the corner before throwing Reigns with the first suplex. A second German suplex sends Reigns flying but Dean comes back in with a missile dropkick to stagger Brock. Dean tries a German suplex on Brock but gets a hard glare and a belly to belly for his efforts.

Ambrose gets dropped on his head and it's back to Suplex City for Reigns. The fourth German sets up an F5 with Ambrose making the save. Lesnar chuckles at Dean, who slaps Brock in the face. That earns Dean a series of knees to the ribs and a German of his own. The fans, who seem to like Ambrose, want to see more suplexes. The F5 is broken up by a spear to give Reigns two but he Superman Punches Brock to the floor. Reigns dives into an F5, only to have Dean hit Lesnar low to make the save.

A DoubleBomb through the table (good looking one too) puts Brock through the table, leaving Reigns and Ambrose to have a fight for the title shot. Dean's bulldog gets two and we get the B00/YAY slugout. The Rebound Lariat drops Reigns and Brock is almost to his feet. He feels like a boss in a video game at this point. Reigns and Ambrose are smart enough to go after Brock and drive him into the barricade to keep him in trouble.

That means it's time for a second table and a second DoubleBomb. This time they bury Brock underneath the pieces of the table but Reigns punches Dean in the jaw, drawing even more booing. Back in and Dean dives into a Superman Punch but the spear is blocked with a knee. Dirty Deeds gets a very close two and Dean POINTS TO THE SIGN.

Another Dirty Deeds is countered as Reigns lifts Dean to his shoulders....and Brock comes back in to German suplex both of them at the same time. Brock is spent though and Reigns nails a spear, only to get caught in the Kimura. Dean finally comes in with a series of chair shots to Brock's back, followed by some more to Reigns. Roman pops up with a spear to Ambrose for the pin and the title shot at 16:47.

Rating: B. Where's the last five minutes of this? They were starting in on something with the chair and then Reigns just speared Dean for the win. Brock was treated better here and looked like a star but I'm still

mostly over the German suplexes. At least the Wyatts didn't interfere, which is pretty much what most people (certainly myself included) figured would happen. Good match but the ending was really sudden.

Reigns gets a lot of pyro until HHH comes out for the staredown to end the show.

Overall Rating: C+. The show had good action and the wrestling was much better than I was expecting but sweet goodness it felt long. So much of this stuff felt like it was being packed in because they NEEDED a pay per view this month. If nothing else, hopefully this teaches WWE (HA!) that airing matches over and over on TV before the pay per view isn't a good booking method. Watchable show and even good at times but I'm never going to want to watch this again.

Results

Becky Lynch/Sasha Banks b. Naomi/Tamina – Bank Statement to Tamina

Kevin Owens b. Dolph Ziggler – Pop Up Powerbomb

Ryback/Big Show/Kane b. Wyatt Family – Shell Shock to Harper

Charlotte b. Brie Bella – Figure Eight

AJ Styles b. Chris Jericho – Calf Crusher

Roman Reigns b. Brock Lesnar and Dean Ambrose – Spear to Ambrose

Remember to follow me on Twitter @kbreviews and pick up my new book of the Complete Monday Nitro Reviews Volume IV at Amazon for just \$3.99 at:

<http://www.amazon.com/dp/B01AXP08DK>

And check out my Amazon author page with cheap wrestling books at:

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

Fastlane 2016 Preview

It's that time again and I'm really not sure if this show is going to be any more interesting than last year's or not. They're making no secret out of the fact that this is a one match card which is only there as a stop before we get to Wrestlemania. However, the main event here should be awesome and more than enough to carry this thing. Let's get to it.

The pre-show match is 2/3 falls for reasons that I can't fathom. You would think that this would be perfect for AJ vs. Jericho but instead we're getting it on a match that we've seen four or five times already. I mean, it should be entertaining, but at the same time I have little reason to want to see Kalisto trade falls with Alberto before hitting a big Salida Del Sol for the win. This is a good example of a match that should have been on Raw or a big Smackdown but instead we're getting it here, thankfully on the pre-show. I don't have a ton of interest here but at least it should be entertaining.

We'll start with the token six man tag (not a bad thing) and probably the easiest match to pick. There's no reason to assume that the Wyatts don't win here as they're probably about to head to Wrestlemania for something against Brock so Bray can lose all over again. Since Big Show and Kane are there and expendable, you can almost guarantee that Ryback takes the fall here and probably most of the beating during the match. I mean, it just makes sense right?

There's no reason the Divas tag should be up for debate. It's pretty clear that this is all about putting Becky and Sasha over before they head to the triple threat (at least) at Wrestlemania. The idea that they'll implode before the end of the match has been presented well enough but there's no way that Tamina and Naomi go over here. It should be entertaining at least though and the makeshift team's charisma will be enough to carry this.

Charlotte retains the Divas Championship over Brie Bella. Why? It's Brie Bella. Even the powers of Daniel Bryan's retirement can't carry her that far.

In what should be another obvious title defense, Kevin Owens will retain the Intercontinental Title over Dolph Ziggler. As Ziggler has said, these two have fought well over a dozen times and Ziggler has won like two of them. Why that should make me want to see a title match between the two of them isn't clear but hopefully this sets up something better for Owens than a big multi-man ladder match for the title at Wrestlemania. Ziggler has no reason to go anywhere other than right where he is, which should be losing to a Pop Up Powerbomb here.

Maybe Owens can fight AJ Styles, who really should win his third match against Jericho. It's one of those matches that shouldn't have any doubt but there's a glimmer of hope because Jericho is capable of making you think an upset could happen. There's no reason to believe that AJ is going to lose and there's no reason that he should. Jericho exists to put young, talented guys, like AJ, over. That's all we're getting here, nicely wrapped up in a good match.

That leaves us with the main event and.....Reigns is going to pin Ambrose. I know a lot of people would like to see something else but I really can't imagine that this is anything but the Wyatts preventing Lesnar from getting the fall and then Reigns pinning Ambrose just like he did at Survivor Series. Ambrose was only added to this for the sake of taking the fall because you know Brock isn't going to. That leaves us with Reigns vs. HHH at Wrestlemania and roughly 80,000 people booing Reigns while WWE brags about the other 20,000 cheering. The match should rock though and that's almost just as important here.

Overall Fastlane is.....well it's Fastlane. It's a show that really doesn't need to exist and the name isn't doing it any favors as they're advertising it as a stop on the way to Wrestlemania. It's not a great card here as most of the matches are really predictable, though that's not always the worst thing in the world. The pre-show interview (because just having a match on that thing isn't enough) should be fun and I can think of worse ways to spend a Sunday night. Not many but at least some.

Remember to follow me on Twitter @kbreviews and pick up my new book of the Complete Monday Nitro Reviews Volume IV at Amazon for just \$3.99 at:

<http://www.amazon.com/dp/B01AXP08DK>

And check out my Amazon author page with cheap wrestling books at:

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

Thunder – September 27, 2000: He's Getting Away With It

Thunder

Date: September 27, 2000

Location: First Union Arena, Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania

Commentators: Stevie Ray, Tony Schiavone, Mike Tenay

I know we've been living in a Vince Russo world but now we're living in a world with Vince Russo as the WCW World Champion. Hopefully he isn't on the show as much this week but you can feel the recaps coming from here. It's probably too early to start setting up Halloween Havoc so tonight might be a stand alone show. Let's get to it.

We open with a recap of Monday's mess of a show.

Apparently it's not clear who the champion is. Of course it's not.

Disgo vs. Konnan

Before the match, Disgo fires the Filthy Animals and brags about having a new partner. They start very slowly and it's pretty clear we're waiting

on the partner to come in. Konnan takes over but gets sent outside, allowing a bald Alex Wright to beat on him for a bit. Back in and the Chartbuster gives Disqo the easy pin.

Rey and Juvy run in for the save.

Mike Sanders takes over Cat's office and has a note saying it's ok. No word on who signed it but Sanders having a note to permit it is funny for some reason.

After a break, the Thrillers are all in Cat's office as Sanders seems to be in charge tonight. His first decision: the Hardcore Title is vacated and WE'RE HAVING A TOURNAMENT!

Scott Steiner beats up security and the Disqo Duck. Of course you know this means war.

Here's Jeff Jarrett for a chat. He gets right to the point: Monday proved that Sting just doesn't have it anymore and is WAY past his prime. That brings him to Lex Luger (yes Luger, not the Total Package) who just happens to be in the crowd tonight. Luger is sorry for what he did on Monday because he shouldn't have helped Russo. No word yet on why he helped Russo in the first place or why he regrets it but I guess that's subtext. This brings out General Rection, who says he forgives Luger. Cue Lance Storm to go after Rection and it's a brawl to set up a tag match (likely with a side of swerve) for later.

The announcers talk for a bit.

Post break, Luger says he doesn't work here but he'll be in a match tonight. That's some fast clearance from the legal department.

The Thrillers are celebrating winning the Tag Team Titles. Leia Meow comes in and is basically ignored.

Juventud Guerrera wants a best of five series against Rey Mysterio for the #1 contendership. Didn't he win that clean last week?

Hardcore Title Tournament Semi-Finals: Sgt. AWOL vs. Johnny the Bull

If we're doing a four man tournament, couldn't we just have a fourway and get it over with instead? It's a stick battle to start because we didn't get enough of it with Johnny vs. Vito on Monday. Johnny gets put in a garbage can and beaten on even more, which means it's already table time. AWOL shrugs off a shot from Johnny and chokeslams him through the table for the fast win.

Post match Scott Steiner comes out to beat up AWOL (your potential future champion) before yelling about Goldberg. Stevie doesn't like Booker being brought up so he shoves Steiner, earning himself a pipe shot to the back.

Stevie is being checked on by a trainer but wants Steiner tonight.

It's time for the Lava Lamp Lounge with special guest Midajah. I'm sure there's some kind of Russo issue as he books a talk show with only women where a man loses everything he has every single week. Awesome starts hitting on Midajah until he finds out that Steiner is still here (so even he doesn't watch the show). There's no monitor in the back though, meaning Steiner can't watch.

That brings Awesome closer but also brings out Leia Meow for some reason, triggering a catfight. Awesome gets hit low and the set is destroyed again. Security breaks it up and Awesome is relieved that he still has his crystal ball....which he immediately drops. It doesn't break or anything but he does drop it.

Crowbar asks Jimmy Hart where Daffney is (when you need information, you go to Jimmy Hart). Apparently she and Ozzie are going to Australia before the rest of the company shows up there in a few weeks.

Steiner will fight Stevie later.

If you go to WCW.com, you can get an exclusive interview with Jim Duggan. It sounds better than This Week in WCW Motorsports.

Konnan has taken over for Stevie on commentary.

Tag Team Titles: Jim Duggan/Elix Skipper vs. Mark Jindrak/Sean O'Haire

Jindrak and O'Haire are defending of course. Before the match, Duggan

yells at the fans (and Gunns, who he tells to “shut up woman”) for having no honor. It’s a brawl to start as the fans chant for the champs by default. Skipper and Jindrak officially get things going with Mark ducking an early clothesline and bringing in O’Haire for a double throw. Back up and Elix tries a Matrix move but gets his head taken off by a clothesline.

Jindrak misses his no hands Lionsault and it’s off to Duggan for some big right hands. We hit the chinlock on Mark before Skipper comes in again for a chinlock of his own. Elix’s missile dropkick puts Mark down and Skipper lands on his feet. It’s really impressive until you remember that Koko B. Ware could do the same thing. Duggan chokes away and we’re in the third chinlock. Gunns breaks up a 2×4 shot though and crotches Elix on top, which draws out Sgt. AWOL to chokeslam Skipper down. Duggan goes after him in the aisle and a torture rack neckbreaker into the Seanton Bomb retains the title.

Rating: D. Those chinlocks in the middle took everything out of this match and made it dull stuff for the most part. Team Canada vs. the Thrillers gets to keep going as Russo continues his love of stable wars and likely tries to keep recreating DX vs. the Nation. I mean, the Canadians vs. the military guys is exactly the same as Rock vs. HHH right?

During the break, Sanders got annoyed at Elix Skipper for some reason. Here’s his reward.

Kronik vs. Elix Skipper

Skipper is smart enough to lay on the mat so Kronik walks away, only to try a dive onto Adams. So much for the Canadian educational system. A brief pummeling leads to the Meltdown, the full nelson slam and High Times to complete the squash. I have no idea what the point of this was but it ate up a few minutes.

Storm is annoyed that he wasn’t allowed to help Skipper. I really hope they’re not teasing a face turn for the Canadians.

Rey Mysterio vs. Juventud Guerrera

This is the second match in the best of five series with Guerrero up 1-0. Tygress is on commentary as the guys shake hands to start. Feeling out process to start as neither of them are sure of where to go. Rey takes over with an armdrag and a drop toehold into something like an STF. You don't often see him do something like that, especially since I didn't think he was tall enough to pull it off. La Majistral gets two for Rey and he monkey flips Juvy into the ropes, which sends Guerrero out to the floor. The referee drops out to check on him and the match is stopped due to an injury.

The worst part: the fans boo the match being stopped. This could be due to one of two things. First off could be that they're annoyed that a match was stopped and have no sympathy for what seems like a legitimate injury. If so, screw them. On the other hand though, could it be that they're so used to something screwy going on that they were annoyed at a swerve and just wanted to see what they thought was likely going to be the only good match of the show? If that's the case, I can more than sympathize.

This Week in WCW Motorsports. Maybe I was wrong about that Duggan interview.

We look at Juvy hitting the ropes again and it really was a hard landing. A knee injury of some sort wouldn't surprise me.

Hardcore Title Tournament Semi-Finals: Crowbar vs. Reno

Crowbar has taped up ribs so Reno goes right after them as he likely should. A trashcan lid to the ribs has Crowbar in trouble but he grabs a northern lights suplex for a quick two. Reno goes right back to the ribs so Crowbar pelts a trashcan at him. The ribs are good enough for Crowbar to score with the slingshot legdrop before hitting Reno with a baseball bat. I'm not sure what it says when the spot that made Sting the biggest star in the promotion is now just a transitional move.

They head over to the announcers' table but Crowbar takes WAY too much time setting it up. Since Reno is kind of a goon though, Crowbar still puts him on top and hits a nice dive over the top to crush both Reno and the table again. The referee is counting both guys for whatever reason.

If you're counting, shouldn't you be disqualifying them for all of the weapons? Even when they stop following the rules they don't make sense. Reno throws him back in and grabs a t-bone suplex. Cue Johnny the Bull to trip Crowbar and set up the Roll of the Dice for the pin.

Rating: D+. This got some more time to make up for the previous match going short and there's nothing wrong with that. I'm still not wild on the Hardcore Title existing in the first place, but at the same time at least Crowbar is getting some TV time. He's been one of the highlights of this year and it's a shame that the Daffney storyline keeps getting put on hold.

Mike Awesome runs out for the save post match.

Mike Awesome says he can help Crowbar with his "chick problems". Is that still a thing?

This week's sitdown interview is with Vince Russo, complete with title belt and a neck brace. Apparently there's some question as to who is champion but Russo says he's the one here with the belt because he left the cage first. Russo isn't an athlete or a sports entertainer but on Monday, he showed that at any given time, he can walk into a ring with anyone and walk out champion. However, he's done competing and he'll make his decision with the title on Monday.

Russo certainly isn't afraid of Goldberg and he'll deal with him on Monday too. As for Monday, Ric Flair better stay away or Russo will drop a bombshell on the entire Flair family. Ric knows what it is and he knows what's best for him. Tenay asks about Luger but Russo had no idea about what happened. Russo doesn't like these questions so Monday, Tenay is going to fight.

So yeah Russo is a top heel, the World Champion and getting to laugh at everyone. Now in a normal wrestling company, this would lead to people beating him up and humiliating him to get their revenge and send the fans home happy. However, we're not in a normal wrestling company because we're in Vince Russo's WCW, where Russo gets to be champion, smirk, and probably sleep with Stacy Keibler. Now why would I want to watch something like that? I'm not sure of course, but I'm not as smart as

Vince Russo.

Reno and the Thrillers celebrate.

Luger and Rection say they'll win.

Scott Steiner vs. Stevie Ray

Stevie is in jeans. Steiner throws him to the floor to start and whips Stevie into the barricade before taking him back inside for the bicep elbow. A t-bone suplex and a backbreaker allow Steiner to do some push-ups as this is a squash so far. Stevie pops back up with a bicycle kick but has to catch Midajah's cross body. Scott's low blow and a pipe shot set up the Recliner for the submission to end this in a hurry.

General Rection/Lex Luger vs. Lance Storm/Jeff Jarrett

Non-sanctioned while still being on a WCW show and in a WCW ring. The Canadian national anthem goes on for a good while tonight, likely due to filling in more time. It's a brawl to start and all four head outside until Luger brings Jarrett back inside for a gorilla press and some clotheslines.

We settle down to an actual match with Jarrett putting Luger in a sleeper until a quick suplex breaks it up. Off to Storm for some stomping before Jeff comes back in and promptly runs into a double clothesline. It's off to Rection vs. Storm with the General taking over. Luger holds Lance down for the moonsault....and turns on Rection because of course. A torture rack from Luger sets up the Maple Leaf from Storm for the submission.

Rating: D. Nothing main event here but at least we all get to fill in the SWERVE box on our WCW Bingo card. It really is kind of amazing that Luger is still the exact same boring guy that he was when we last saw him several months ago. You would think he would have some fire in there somewhere but he really is just a guy with muscles doing a move here and there.

Overall Rating: D. Another not great show here and unfortunately it's turning into a modern day Smackdown where you get a token title match every now and then but the general message is "tune in Monday if you want

to see anything happen.” The Russo stuff was nowhere near as bad this time but putting Tenay in the ring on Monday made my eyes roll. As I’ve mentioned a time or two: not everything has to be an angle and not everyone has to be a character. This wasn’t the worst show by any stretch but just nothing to see here.

Remember to follow me on Twitter @kbreviews and pick up my new book of the Complete Monday Nitro Reviews Volume IV at Amazon for just \$3.99 at:

<http://www.amazon.com/dp/B01AXP08DK>

And check out my Amazon author page with cheap wrestling books at:

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

Lucha Underground – February 17, 2016: She’s Right Behind Us

Lucha Underground

Date: February 17, 2016

Location: Lucha Underground Temple, Boyle Heights, California

Commentators: Vampiro, Matt Striker

The show is starting to pick up as the big stories are starting to show signs of potential. Last week we found out that the cops are after Dario and have already infiltrated the Temple, which could set up something huge by the end of the season. Somehow we’re going to be a sixth of the way done with the season after tonight, but to be fair it took a long

time for last season to come together too. Let's get to it.

The opening recap looks at the issues between Ivelisse/Son of Havoc/Angelico, which lead into Pentagon Jr. breaking Mil Muertes' arm.

Ivelisse comes in to see Catrina and wants another shot at the Disciples of Death and the Trios Titles. Catrina says there's no such thing as an automatic rematch around here (SWEET) so if they want another shot, they have to beat another trios team tonight. Ivelisse is fine with that and can't wait to get her hands on Catrina. That could be quite the brawl if Catrina can go even slightly in the ring.

Vampiro promises that Pentagon Jr. will beat Prince Puma later. I'm getting a bit of a Bobby Heenan vibe from him as he clearly wants to manage but has to hold it back. There's even that medication to match Heenan's booze.

Angelico/Ivelisse/Son of Havoc vs. Chavo Guerrero/Cortez Castro/Cisco

Muertes is watching as always and remember that Cortez is the undercover cop (which isn't known by the commentators). The fans chant what sound like Spanish slurs at Chavo and the Crew as Cisco (thankfully in different gear this season) gets armdragged down by Angelico to start. It's off to Ivelisse and Cortez with the non-undercover cop firing off knees to the chest. Cortez blasts her in the face and brings in Chavo (with his out of place white shorts) as the heels take over with cheating in the corner.

Ivelisse kicks away at the leg and then the face, allowing for the tag off to Havoc. The standing moonsault gets two on Cisco but Chavo trips Havoc in the corner, allowing for some triple teaming. Havoc fights off the goons and makes the tag to Angelico, who easily beats up all three of them. An enziguri from the mat (always cool) drops Cisco and Angelico hits the big dive, followed by a top rope double stomp for the pin on Cortez at 5:57.

Rating: C. It's kind of hard to care about the Trios Titles when they're not so much a division as much as they are a prop in this one particular story. Still though, Angelico and company have really turned into an

interesting group that I want to see get the belts back. They're getting the story right and that's the best thing you can do in something as simple as this.

Post match Chavo yells at the Crew until Texano makes his return and goes after Chavo, who bails like a real coward.

Video on Johnny Mundo, who says he hasn't been treated like the star he really is. Like seriously, putting him in the opening match at Ultima Lucha? Not that it matters as he stole the show anyway. This was a nice little profile on Mundo and summed up his character perfectly for outsiders.

Joey Ryan comes up to Cortez and brags about being a better cop because he's better at convincing people he's a better luchador, which he'll prove next.

Prince Puma is the luchador of the week, which I believe he's been every single week.

Cage vs. Joey Ryan

Ryan comes out to the music that Big Dick Johnson used to strip to in WWE. This is the standard Joey Ryan entrance as he rubs oil all over himself and Striker saying he looks like Joey's evil twin brother. The fans are starting to get WAY into Cage which is a really good sign for his future. Joey uses his lollipop for a cheap shot (it works) but Cage just DROPS HIM with a clothesline.

Cage misses a charge into the post though and Joey nails a nice dropkick. A northern lights suplex keeps Cage's arm in trouble but the hammerlock slam just isn't going to work. Instead Cage powerslams him down and goes up for a moonsault...which only hits mat. Joey actually hits a spinebuster and three superkicks for two. Cage is tired of this defense nonsense though so he powerbombs Joey into a backbreaker and loads up a STEINER SCREWDRIVER (Cage: "KICK OUT OF THIS!") to knock Joey out cold (Striker: "Joey Ryan is DEAD!") for the pin at 4:06.

Rating: C. Not a great match or anything but anytime you have a Steiner

Screwdriver (which means a few Steiner matches in the early 90s), it's just a better day. If you somehow haven't seen that before, go look it up because words simply do not do it justice. Ryan looked good here but Cage is doing Ryback better than Ryback.

Post match Johnny Mundo runs in for a spear (nice nod to Muertes) and a beatdown but Cage pops up and lays him out with Weapon X.

Rey Mysterio is training with the new Dragon Azteca. We get some backstory on the original Dragon and his connection to Cueto's family. Apparently Cueto's father came to Mexico to try and find the descendants of the seven tribes to let them fight again. Cueto's father became obsessed with the bad side though and sacrificed his son to be a vessel for the gods, which lead to Matanza. Rey advises Dragon to not seek revenge but then tells him to reunite the seven tribes, which apparently Rey knows how to do.

Mundo vs. Cage is next week's main event, as it should be.

Prince Puma vs. Pentagon Jr.

Puma tries a quick headscissors but Pentagon lands on his feet as Vampiro is in full on coaching mode. A second headscissors works a bit better for Puma but he has to bail out of a dive. Back in and Pentagon hits one of the loudest chops I've ever heard before dropping Puma with a backbreaker. A running cutter drops Pentagon though and the fans aren't sure who to cheer for. That's a good sign as Puma should still be a big star even though Pentagon has risen up the card in a hurry.

Puma hits a great looking corkscrew dive to take Pentagon down again but he jumps over Puma in the corner and pulls him down into the Backstabber for a SWEET counter. Vampiro is ticked that there was no leg hook on the cover though and talks about Pentagon going back to his old ways.

Puma's comeback is stopped by a dropkick and both guys are down again. Back up and they chop it out but the Package Piledriver is broken up. Puma kicks the heck out of his head but the springboard 450 hits knees. Now the Package Piledriver connects but Pentagon loads up a surfboard instead of covering but Puma bends backwards for a cover and pops his

shoulders up at two for the pin at 7:45.

Rating: B. Good stuff here and the ending was a nice touch as Pentagon looks to be missing a few steps without Vampiro guiding him. You can see Vampiro wanting to mentor him but at the same time wanting to retain his new found sanity. It's pretty obvious that he's going to snap at some point and when that happens, Pentagon is going to rocket up the card.

Post match Pentagon lays out the referee but gets kicked in the head again. Puma teases breaking Pentagon's arm, even drawing Muertes off his throne. Instead though Puma says something to Pentagon and lets him go.

Sexy Star is stumbling through the hallways in a scene that feels like it's out of a slasher movie. She runs into the Mack, who asks who did this to her. Star says Moth, but means Moth's sister, who is apparently right behind her.

Overall Rating: B. Good wrestling, good storytelling and good storyline advancement. What more can you possibly ask for from about forty five minutes of wrestling TV? Well you could ask for less of the Crew but they fill in spots well enough. There's a ton of potential for things around here though and that's the cool thing about Lucha Underground: you don't know how awesome some of the stuff they have could be and you want to keep watching to see what they have.

Remember to follow me on Twitter @kbreviews and pick up my new book of the Complete Monday Nitro Reviews Volume IV at Amazon for just \$3.99 at:

<http://www.amazon.com/dp/B01AXP08DK>

And check out my Amazon author page with cheap wrestling books at:

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

Smackdown – February 18, 2016: The Go Home Exit

Smackdown

Date: February 18, 2016

Location: Citizens Bank Business Arena, Ontario, California

Commentators: Michael Cole, Byron Saxton, Jerry Lawler

We're three days away from Fastlane and the big story tonight is Brock Lesnar making a very rare Smackdown appearance. There's no word on what he'll be doing but you can assume it might have something to do with Dean Ambrose and Roman Reigns, who are teaming together to face the Dudley Boyz tonight. Let's get to it.

We open with a long recap of Ambrose losing the Intercontinental Title on Monday thanks to Stephanie's influence.

Opening sequence.

No Mauro Ranallo tonight due to a bout with the flu.

League of Nations vs. Dolph Ziggler/Lucha Dragons

Kevin Owens is on commentary. Kalisto and Rusev get things going with the masked man firing off kicks to the meaty Bulgarian thighs. Alberto comes in and gets taken down with a standing Lionsault for two. An old Jack Brisco spinning sunset flip out of the corner looks to get two for Cara but he tagged Kalisto by mistake. Everything breaks down for a bit and the Dragons dive through the ropes to take down Sheamus and Del Rio, followed by Ziggler coming off the top to elbow all three of them as we take a break.

Back with Rusev holding Cara in a chinlock before it's off to Del Rio for a tilt-a-whirl backbreaker. That means it's time for another chinlock from Alberto, followed by some Irish Curses from Sheamus for two. Owens

goes on a funny bit about not liking idiots but having other reasons to not like Cole.

Cara finally kicks Del Rio down and tags in Ziggler to speed things up. Dolph's superkick to Sheamus is broken up but the running DDT works a bit better. Everything breaks down and Del Rio kicks Cara in the mask, followed by throwing Kalisto hard into the barricade. Back inside, Ziggler hits a quick Fameasser for two on Sheamus, which draws Owens off commentary. The distraction lets Sheamus nail a Brogue Kick for the pin on Dolph at 11:27.

Rating: C-. So the League gets a pin on the #1 contender despite none of them having a match on Sunday's pay per view card. It wasn't anything out of the ordinary here though and that's pretty good for the most part. The wrestling was fine and they went with the formula that they've perfected on Smackdown, meaning this was acceptable but nothing I'll remember in about an hour.

Owens leaves with Ziggler's vest.

Tamina vs. Sasha Banks

Sasha gets slammed head first into the mat to start but flips out of a belly to back suplex to get away for a bit. The running knees in the corner have Tamina in trouble and Naomi gets knocked off the apron. A sitout bulldog sets up the Bank Statement to make Tamina tap at 2:22.

Sasha gets beaten down post match until Becky makes the save, only to be shoved away by her partner. This continues a simple story but it's been booked well.

Post break Becky wants to know what that was. They're coming up on Wrestlemania and it's going to take a win at Fastlane to give them momentum. If Sasha wants to let her ego get in the way of their Wrestlemania moment, Becky is done right now. They agree to fight together on Sunday.

Here's Chris Jericho to address AJ Styles' challenge to him from Monday. Jericho is ready to answer but he wants AJ to be here face to face.

Instead here's the Miz to interrupt with an announcement of his own. Jericho hopes that it's Miz quitting the business because everyone has been begging for it for years. Miz says he isn't quitting but he certainly wouldn't do it here. The announcement is that he's ready to fight Jericho here and now, which earns him a throw to the floor.

Chris Jericho vs. The Miz

Thankfully this starts after a break instead of that stupid ring the bell and go to a break thirty seconds later. A suplex puts Miz down and it's time for some right hands in the corner. Miz sends him into the post as the announcers debate what celebrity lists these two are on. The fans want AJ but get a knee to Jericho's back and a chinlock. That goes nowhere so Jericho dropkicks him and goes up, only to get punched in the face. A trip to the floor doesn't do much as Miz takes him back inside for more left hands to the face. We take a break and come back with Miz holding a chinlock.

The Reality Check gets two and it's right back to the chinlockery. Jericho fights back again with an ax handle and counters another Reality Check (like any signature move, it's only one per midcard match) into a failed Walls attempt. Miz's short DDT and big boot get two each so he starts ripping at Jericho's face in the corner. The running corner clothesline is easily countered into the Walls though and Miz taps at 12:22.

Rating: C+. As has been the case lately, Miz is on a roll and having a string of good matches. Now maybe that's due to having matches against Chris Jericho and AJ Styles but at least it's been better than the usual five minute nothings that he does every week. He's been a good cog for this feud and kept things from being the normal tropes. Good stuff here as Miz continues to be a pleasant surprise lately.

Post match Jericho calls out AJ for the big answer. AJ comes out but Jericho doesn't seem interested in wrestling him again. He respects Styles but doesn't really like him, which is why there won't be a third match. AJ blasts him in the face with his striking sequence and that's enough for Jericho to change his mind. That's rather heelish of AJ, who

lost clean last week and now uses violence to get what he wants.

We look back at Heyman and Reigns' exchange on Monday.

Ambrose says he's fine after losing the title on Monday but tonight he just wants to go fight. That's fine with Reigns, but Dean better not try that Dirty Deeds stuff again. Reigns leaves and Dean runs into Heyman. Paul shakes off Ambrose's threats by saying Brock is here and he wants a piece of Dean. That's freaks Ambrose out so badly that he asks Heyman for advice before deciding to deal with Brock on his own later.

New Day says they can't wait to be on the Cutting Edge Peep Show because they're real musicians. On Sunday they're ready to get in their stretch limousine and make their way to the Hall of Fame. Edge and Christian are out of style because it's not the 1990s again. Tromboning and dancing (a LOT of dancing) take us out.

Video on Charlotte, as sponsored by Geico.

Charlotte vs. Natalya

Non-title and Natalya gets the jobber entrance. Charlotte's early headscissors attempt doesn't work so Natalya grabs a headlock and hits a quick basement dropkick to send Charlotte outside. Ric tries to give some advice and we take a break before coming back to see Charlotte spinning out of a leg lock. Charlotte bails to the floor and a Ric distraction lets her kick Natalya in the face. Back in and it's off to the bodyscissors for a bit before Natalya fights up and sends her outside with a German suplex. Charlotte pulls the ring skirt away though to tweak Natalya's knee, setting up the Figure Eight for the submission at 7:40.

Rating: C-. This was fine as Natalya continues to be fine as the veteran jobber. I mean, I still don't buy for a second that Brie is going to win the title on Sunday, even for a feel good title change to cash in on Daniel Bryan. Charlotte is getting the hang of the main roster now that she has a character but Ric needs to go as there's really no need for him.

Post match Charlotte does the YES chants to draw Brie out. The YES Kicks

send Charlotte running and a YES chant starts.

This week, Goldust is Dusta Rhymes and has some bad rap. Truth likes it to start but eventually turns him down with a rap of his own. Goldust looks sad, which makes me think they might not wind up teaming after all. At least it's different than the Booker T. formula.

We look back at the Wyatts going even crazier and the ending of Monday's show.

Roman Reigns/Dean Ambrose vs. Dudley Boyz

They take their sweet time on the entrances until Ambrose and D-Von get things going. Dean gets early near falls of a cross body and bulldog before it's off to Bubba. A lot of shouting is enough to bring Reigns in and the crowd...doesn't seem to care. Bubba wins a slugout and elbows Reigns in the back of the head but charges into a Samoan Drop. D-Von gets double suplexed and Bubba is sent to the floor as we take a break.

Back with Bubba cranking on Dean's neck and the reverse 3D getting two. D-Von slaps on a chinlock (despite not actually grabbing the chin) and it's back to Bubba for some stomping. The slow paced (and mostly ineffective) offense continues with another D-Von chinlock. It doesn't help that we're just waiting for Brock to come out here. Bubba tries to start a LET'S GO AMBROSE chant but it's a Reigns distraction allowing Dean to knock Bubba down on the top rope.

Thankfully a few right hands aren't enough to even things up and Bubba knocks him off, only to miss the backsplash. The hot tag brings in Reigns to clean house with the usual but he loads up the Superman Punch right before Brock's music hits. The Dudleys use the entrance for a sneak attack but Reigns blocks the 3D. Dean dives onto D-Von but Brock decks him for the DQ at 13:08.

Rating: D+. This really didn't work as most of it was the Dudleys doing slow offense until Brock came out. It wasn't even a secret as we got a BROCK LESNAR TONIGHT graphic before the match. At least they did something besides the League of Nations to put the Shield boys over for a change though, which they've been getting better at in recent weeks.

Brock cleans house post match until Reigns gets in a Superman Punch. The spear almost hits Ambrose though and Dean tries Dirty Deeds, earning himself a Samoan Drop. Brock F5's Reigns but here's HHH (how nice of him to make an appearance as his title has been the main focus lately) to stare Brock down to end the show.

Overall Rating: C. They've been picking things up lately around here and it's been a nice change of pace. This has felt a lot more like the wrestling show that Raw just isn't and that's the best thing Smackdown can really be. If nothing else this was a good way to help set up Fastlane, which had a good build all night, even if it's for a weak pay per view.

Results

League of Nations b. Dolph Ziggler/Lucha Dragons – Brogue Kick to Ziggler

Sasha Banks b. Tamina – Bank Statement

Chris Jericho b. The Miz – Walls of Jericho

Charlotte b. Natalya – Figure Eight

Roman Reigns/Dean Ambrose b. Dudley Boyz via DQ when Brock Lesnar interfered

Remember to follow me on Twitter @kbreviews and pick up my new book of the Complete Monday Nitro Reviews Volume IV at Amazon for just \$3.99 at:

<http://www.amazon.com/dp/B01AXP08DK>

And check out my Amazon author page with cheap wrestling books at:

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

Wrestling Wars Podcast Episode 40

The Three Wise Men gather to discuss the Undertaker's potential opponents for Wrestlemania and to preview Fastlane.

<http://mightynorcal.podbean.com/e/wwp-40-kb-and-shocky-join-me-to-break-some-news-on-the-undertaker-and-to-preview-fast-lane/>

Ring of Honor TV – February 17, 2016: An Actual Prospect

Ring of Honor

Date: February 17, 2016

Location: Cabarrus Arena and Events Center, Concord, North Carolina

Commentators: Kevin Kelly, Nigel McGuinness

The Anniversary pay per view is almost here and we're also getting closer to the end of the first round of the Top Prospect Tournament. However, we're also getting closer to the end of this taping cycle which means things have a tendency to start dragging. Ring of Honor isn't the best at going week to week so there's little connection between shows. That can make things hard to keep track of but hopefully it isn't a major issue here. Let's get to it.

Top Prospect Tournament First Round: Jason Kincaid vs. Lio Rush

Two smaller guys here with Kincaid looking like Erick Rowan minus about 100lbs (but with some hair) and with pictures of a woman and a skull on his thighs. Nigel thinks Lio is in the vein of ACH. Well at least they don't look the same. Lio kicks at the leg to start but Kincaid heads to the apron for a slingshot flip neckbreaker. Off to a Gory Stretch on Rush, followed by something like a standing abdominal stretch (as in Lio isn't twisted around) into a jawbreaker.

Kincaid takes off his shoulder pads vest (that helped) but Lio knocks him outside for a flip dive. Back in and something like a spinebuster into the corner has Lio in trouble, though he's still able to head outside before Jason can go Coast to Coast. That's fine with Jason as he does it anyway, actually hitting the Coast to Coast with Lio on the floor. He's not done though as Kincaid dives through the ropes into a flip Diamond Cutter. Jason's top rope double stomp misses though and Lio catches him in a standing C4 for the pin at 5:05.

Rating: C+. Best match of the tournament so far and I'm really hoping Kincaid gets another look after that performance. One important thing here was Kelly putting over Jason's backstory as coming up from pure poverty to get where he is today. That helped set Kincaid apart and let us connect to him a bit, which is the best thing you can do here. Unfortunately ROH felt the need to add another generic high flier because they don't have enough of them yet. I mean, Nigel said Rush is exactly like ACH, so why would they want to go with him when they already have ACH?

Will Ferrara/Caprice Coleman vs. Beer City Bruiser/Silas Young

Prince Nana is on commentary to continue this story which feels like it's been going on for six months despite not actually going anywhere. Coleman and Young get things going with a slugout as Kelly asks Nana about going after Donovan Dijak. Nana says the pieces of the puzzle are all in the letter and that's all Kelly needs to know. Coleman takes over but Ferrara tags himself in, much to his partner's annoyance.

A rollup gets two for Will but he goes with a much more effective German suplex to send Silas into the corner, meaning it's off to the much bigger

Bruiser. For some reason Ferrara tries to slam the big man and gets crushed as he deserved after something that stupid. The villains take turns beating on Ferrara until Bruiser misses a charge and Coleman gets the lukewarm tag.

Everything breaks down and Bruiser tries a superplex on Coleman, only to have Ferrara run in for a powerbomb. The Sky Splitter is broken up but here come the Boys (so much for selling a big beatdown) for a distraction, allowing Ferrara to DDT Bruiser on the floor. Now the Sky Splitter is enough to put Young away at 6:10.

Rating: C. Not bad here but again I lost all interest in whatever Nana is doing months ago. If he wants to reform the Embassy or whatever then so be it but that's just it: so be it already. Instead of just giving people envelopes and showing them the way or whatever, do something because a Ferrara/Coleman/whoever else he has stable isn't exactly thrilling in the first place.

Here's the Decade with something to say. Whitmer has been hearing Steve Corino promising to come here tonight and have someone deal with BJ. Corino has three friends in wrestling and most of them are gone from this company already. This brings out Corino, who doesn't exactly seem ready to fight.

No one wants to hear Whitmer talking week after week (I don't mind it) and now BJ thinks Corino is the one coming for him. That's going to happen one day but it's not just yet. Someone has come to Corino and offered to take Whitmer out...and apparently it's Adam Page. The brawl is quickly on and the fans have no issue cheering for Page as security comes in to break it up. This makes as much sense as anything else if Corino is too hurt to fight.

We run down the PPV card, including a video of All Night Express beating War Machine via DQ to set up their No DQ match. The triple threat main event gets a quick video as well.

Mark Briscoe vs. Tim Hughes

Hughes is small and very pale. Mark knocks him into the corner as you

would expect from a star beating on a jobber in a squash match on the weekly TV show. A Russian legsweep gets two on Hughes but Tim comes back with a long sidewalk slam. That just earns him some Redneck Kung Fu and a fisherman's buster, followed by the Froggy Bow for the pin on Hughes at 3:50.

Rating: D. This was what it was with Mark getting a squash that he really didn't need. I'm not sure what they were going for here as Briscoe is ready for a big tag team showdown, so why give him something like this? Nothing to see here and on top of that it wasn't even all that entertaining.

ACH/Matt Sydal vs. Young Bucks

The IWGP Junior Heavyweight Tag Team Titles aren't on the line here and for the sake of simplicity I'll only refer to Matt Jackson as Matt. The handshakes take a while but thankfully they wait until after the break of the opening bell. Sydal slaps a belt out of Matt hand to start and it's an early superkick party to send the non-champions to the floor but Sydal dives out to drop both Bucks.

Back in and ACH dives in, followed by a leg lariat and dropkick to Matt. A bit too much posing allows Nick to score with a superkick though and it's time for a double superkick to send Sydal to the floor. The Bucks superkick an invisible ball into the crowd and we take a break. Back with Nick riding ACH's arm and posing on the apron like a heel should, even though he's a face here.

It's time for more invisible basketball but ACH trips them up, allowing Sydal to come in off the hot tag. Everything breaks down and the slingshot X-Factor drops ACH and it's yet another superkick party. More Bang For Your Buck is broken up but Sydal misses the Shooting Star, allowing Matt to hit another superkick. Nick's Swanton is good for two but More Bang For Your Buck is countered again with some raised knees. Now the Shooting Star connects on Matt for the big upset win at 10:11.

Rating: C. I'm not wild on the teams here and I'm not sure how much I like champions losing clean, even if they're champions in another promotion but there was something about that ending I did like. The

Bucks' offense was countered and Sydal/ACH get another win over them, which again I know because Kelly told us that at the start of the match. It sounded like a minor detail to start but knowing that helps the story they're going for here. Again, well done and something so easy to do, which is what makes it so frustrating when most companies don't do it.

Overall Rating: C. This was fine for the most part, but again they're not exactly doing a great job of building up the pay per view. I know the World Title isn't always the most important thing in Ring of Honor but they seem to go out of their way to not have Lethal out there. It's nice for a change, but at times it becomes a bit annoying as whether Ring of Honor likes it or not, the World Title is going to be seen as the most important thing in the promotion. Still though, totally watchable show here, even with the midcard getting the focus.

Remember to follow me on Twitter @kbreviews and pick up my new book of the Complete Monday Nitro Reviews Volume IV at Amazon for just \$3.99 at:

<http://www.amazon.com/dp/B01AXP08DK>

And check out my Amazon author page with cheap wrestling books at:

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

NXT – February 17, 2016: The TV Fastlane

NXT

Date: February 17, 2016

Location: CFE Arena, Orlando, Florida

Commentators: Tom Phillips, Corey Graves

Tonight is a big show for NXT as we'll find out the #1 contender for Finn Balor's NXT Title with the title shot coming at Takeover: Dallas in about six weeks. Other than that we're starting to see the next challenger to Bayley's Women's Title as Asuka seems ready to come after the belt. Let's get to it.

We open with a recap of Sami vs. Joe to bring us to tonight.

Opening sequence.

Enzo Amore/Colin Cassady/American Alpha vs. Scott Dawson/Dash Wilder/Blake and Murphy

No Carmella this week. Dawson and Gable get things going with the fans cheering for Chad as you would expect. Gable rides him to the mat and Dawson is quickly frustrated. Everything breaks down and the good guys clear the ring in a big stereo throw over the top. Back from a break with Blake holding Gable in a chinlock before Dawson scores with a good looking elbow to the jaw.

The heels keep taking turns on Gable in the corner until Dash plants him for two and puts on a chinlock. Back up and Gable collides with Wilder, finally allowing for the tag off to Jordan. Everything breaks down with Colin feeding Dawson into a belly to belly from Jason. Grand Amplitude gets two on Dawson with Dash making the save. Not that it matters as the Rocket Launcher puts Dawson away a few seconds later at 12:58.

Rating: C+. Totally standard and run of the mill "take four teams and throw them together into a big match" deal here and there's nothing wrong with that. American Alpha should be ready to go after the belts in Dallas while Enzo and Cass should be on the main roster by then. Good match here though, even with the heels being badly outshined.

Deonna Purrazzo is ready for a shot at revenge on Asuka when Emma and Dana Brook come in to say they run this place.

Deonna Purrazzo vs. Asuka

Asuka starts fast with some kicks to the ribs and a leg bar to make things even worse. Back up and Deonna fires off some forearms but makes the mistake of slapping Asuka in the face. Asuka easily takes her down into an ankle lock before tucking the ankle behind Deonna's back for a suplex. A tease of the Asuka Lock sets up a hard spinning kick to the head to put Purrazzo away at 2:53. Total squash.

We look back at Eva Marie and Nia Jax beating down Bayley and Carmella until Asuka made the save.

Nia and Eva say they were justified last week because Nia would have won the battle royal if she had been healthy. Asuka needs to stay out of their business. Eva sounded better here but still very scripted while Jax sounded natural.

Tye Dillinger vs. Alex Riley

Apparently Riley has called NXT a joke, which sends Graves on a tirade against Alex's facial hair. They fight over wrist control to start until Tye nips up and shouts TEN. A hard clothesline from Riley earns a ONE as Graves thinks Riley has been ripped off by an Uber driver to make him this mad. Alex's chinlock doesn't go anywhere and Tye comes back with a Thesz Press, only to charge into a hard right hand. Riley grabs a full nelson but gets rolled up for the pin at 3:16.

Rating: D+. Not much here but that's the case almost every time Riley is out there. The promotion has passed him by since his injury, though to be fair it had probably passed him by years ago. Dillinger has something there with the TEN gimmick but he needs something else to go with it.

Finn Balor congratulates Apollo Crews on a great match last week and knows that Sami and Joe are going to give it their all tonight.

Baron Corbin comes in to see Regal and demands to be put in the #1 contenders match tonight. That gets him nowhere so Baron threatens violence and leaves.

Sami Zayn vs. Samoa Joe

Winner gets the title shot at some point in the future. Sami bails from a

kick to start but gets caught in a wristlock to take him to the mat. Back up and Sami fights out of a headlock before running Joe over with a shoulder. The SAMI chants replace the OLE's as Sami grabs a wristlock. Joe gets sent to the floor and Sami teases a dive but has to backflip into the ring again as we take a break.

Back with Joe nailing a hard chop and catching a charging Sami with the Rock Bottom out of the corner. Sami tries slugging it out for some reason so Joe sweeps the leg to take over again as Zayn's face goes right into the mat. A hard kick to the face keeps Sami in trouble as they still haven't really cranked it up like you would expect them to. At least we're getting some loud strikes from Joe to make you cringe every time.

Sami tries to fight up but gets kicked again, only to come back with a clothesline to put Joe down. The Blue Thunder Bomb is easily blocked but Sami finally pulls him up for two. That's fine with Joe as he kicks Sami in the face (why try anything too complicated) and drops a backsplash for two more.

Back up and Joe tries another clothesline but has to fight out of a Koji Clutch attempt. A snap powerslam gets two for Joe but now it's Sami slugging away. Joe's enziguri in the corner staggers Zayn but he's still able to suplex Joe into the corner. The Helluva Kick is countered into the Koquina Clutch but Sami gets a rope. Sami is almost out of but still escapes the Muscle Buster, setting up the Helluva Kick for the pin out of nowhere at 16:12.

Rating: A-. This kept a slow pace throughout but they were hitting each other so hard that it was difficult to not get sucked in. Sami collapsing into the pin at the end is perfect for him as he is always fighting from behind and both guys are even in the end. This was the usual good stuff from a big time NXT main event, but did you really expect anything else?

However, all four shoulders are down and the referee looks confused. Regal comes out and gets an explanation but the referee says he can't pick a #1 contender because that was a draw. Confusion reigns as we go off the air.

Overall Rating: B+. It's another strong episode of NXT with the big main

event anchoring the whole thing. They're doing a good job of setting up things for the Dallas show while not blowing anything big or making it seem like they're trying to stretch it out. At this point we're only six weeks away from Wrestlemania weekend so just let everything be built up especially well instead of doing the whole thing early.

Results

Enzo Amore/Colin Cassady/American Alpha b. Scott Dawson/Dash Wilder/Blake and Murphy – Rocket Launcher to Dawson

Asuka b. Deonna Purrazzo – Spinning kick to the head

Tye Dillinger b. Alex Riley – Rollup

Sami Zayn vs. Samoa Joe went to a draw

Remember to follow me on Twitter @kbreviews and pick up my new book of the Complete Monday Nitro Reviews Volume IV at Amazon for just \$3.99 at:

<http://www.amazon.com/dp/B01AXP08DK>

And check out my Amazon author page with cheap wrestling books at:

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