

# Middle Kingdom Wrestling – September 30, 2015: Short And Short

## Middle Kingdom Wrestling Episode 3

Date: September 30, 2015

Location: CWE Gym, Dongguan, China

Commentator: Eddie Strong

This show is kind of growing on me. I'm digging what they're going for with the really short TV shows and simple booking. I could go for some stories and better wrestling but that's a universal issue in wrestling, even in China. We're on to the semi-finals tonight and it should be easier now that I have an idea who some of these people are. Let's get to it.

These shows are getting even shorter as this is under fifteen minutes long.

### The Slam vs. King Michael

This is incorrectly billed as a tournament match. Michael is a big fat guy and Slam reminds me of Gillberg. He even has similar music to Goldberg. Slam pounds away like he's a guy twice his size and drops Michael with some forearms to the chest. A leglock sends Michael to the ropes but he clotheslines Slam down and smiles into the camera.

The required fat man splash gets two on Slam and a fat man shoulder drops him again. Michael's chokebomb is good for two and the argument with the referee allows Slam to come back with a string of forearms, followed by a springboard clothesline for two. Something like a belly to back slam and a big stomp is enough to put the King away.

**Rating:** C-. This was way better than it had any right to be with Slam looking like a combination of Taz and Goldberg as he fought like a guy 100lbs heavier than he actually is. Michael was your standard fat man who

couldn't do much aside from basic power moves but Slam more than made up for it. I could go for more than big forearms but that might come against someone who can give him more back.

### MKW Title Tournament Semi-Finals: Selfie King vs. Black Mamba

Da Li Sam is with Mamba again in a partnership that hasn't been explained. Mamba isn't interested in a picture to start so he loses a test of strength instead. So apparently King is really strong. I mean, he's in good shape but it's hardly great. Mamba claims his shoes are messing up and the distraction lets Sam come in with a powerbomb for the pin to advance.

Mamba and Sam take a picture over King's unconscious body. Not bad.

Wait we're not done as the promoter comes up and points out the shenanigans, meaning Mamba is disqualified. I'm not a fan of that sort of an ending and it feels like they went this way for a shortcut instead of a full on match. Even a short one would have been fine and it would have padded the show out a bit.

Roll credits.

**Overall Rating:** C-. This didn't do it for me as well as the previous show but to be fair a show can only be so bad in fifteen minutes. The Slam was definitely the highlight of the show and it's a good idea to take some of the focus off the tournament for a change. Good enough show here but it's a step down from last time.

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# Middle Kingdom Wrestling – September 17, 2015: In Any Language

## Middle Kingdom Wrestling Episode 2

Date: September 17, 2015

Location: CWE Gym, Dongguan, China

Commentator: Eddie Strong

This show wasn't terrible the first time I looked at it and maybe the second show is going to be better. If nothing else I'm kind of interested in seeing which of the two matches from the first show is the more accurate indicator of what this promotion is about. Maybe the commentator won't be as annoying this time either. Let's get to it.

I'm not sure what the deal is with the dates but I'm going with when they're posted on Youtube.

The intro is the same last week, down to the same video packages and captions.

The Slam (CWE Champion. For the first time it's confirmed that CWE and MKW are different things) is in the ring and wants to talk to the MKW GM about why he isn't in the title tournament. The unnamed GM isn't sure what to say so Slam demands a match against a big man in the future, which is granted. So we have another angle.

## MKW Title Tournament First Round: Jason vs. Dalton Bragg

Bragg's entrance is in fast motion. I'm digging the way they're doing things differently like that as it's not something you see in most

promotions. Before the match we get a video on American Dalton Bragg, who brags about his success in America. I'm more interested in his South Park tattoos. He knows he's better than everyone in the tournament, including the Slam. That's still kind of confusing and they need to clear it up. Maybe with a bracket or something.

The match is joined in progress with Bragg kicking Jason in the head for two. A Codebreaker gets the same as we're told that Jason is Slam's student. Jason comes back with a PerfectPlex and a Boston crab but Dalton rolls through for two. Bragg can't get Jason up for what looked like a powerbomb and drops him into something like a Dominator instead for the pin. Too short to rate but Bragg is more polished and has a better presence than anyone else so far.

This show is already better than the first one and we're not even half done.

#### MKW Title Tournament First Round: Ash vs. Black Mamba

Kobe Bryant is in this tournament? Ash has an American flag on the back of his vest but there are no videos this time. Instead Mamba grabs the mic and says he knows he's underrated but he has a secret plan. He brings out someone named Da Li Sam as a coach and I guess we're supposed to know who that is. Mamba is another of Slam's students and it seems that a lot of these people wrestle in WWE. Ash drops Mamba but Sam pulls his.....whatever Mamba is to him to the floor for a conference.

Back in and Da Li trips Ash up but Ash runs Mamba over anyway. We get a chase on the floor and Mamba finally takes over with an ax handle on the way back in. A lot of choking from both Mamba and Sam sets up an STO (not STF commentator) for two on Ash. Mamba grabs a camel clutch (called a signature move) but Ash fights back with a Stinger Splash and backbreaker but Sam shoves Ash into the referee. The brawl is on and the much bigger Sam (his head is over the top rope while he's standing on the floor) sends Ash into the post for a long countout.

**Rating:** C. The wrestling wasn't great but there was a far more important key here: I got the idea they were trying to present even though I have no idea who these people are and know nothing about them. It's a sign of

better storytelling and that's the most important thing in wrestling. You really should be able to tell what's going on no matter what and they covered that here.

The credits and a preview for next week take us out.

**Overall Rating:** B. Again on the sliding scale but this was WAY better than last week. There's definitely better wrestling here with the stories being more well rounded and the ideas being easier to understand. I'll keep watching this as it's only twenty minutes and I can go for a change of pace to the simple stories and basic booking. Much better show this week though the commentator is still annoying.

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# Smackdown – October 1, 2015: A Lucha Libre Tradition And Split Personalities

## **Smackdown**

Date: October 1, 2015

Location: Times Union Center, Albany, New York

Commentators: Booker T., Jerry Lawler, Rich Brennan

Oh joy it's another Smackdown. We're getting closer to the show moving to USA in January, meaning the show is the same lame duck that it's been for years now. I'm really hoping this show gets a new life on the new network but for some reason WWE is perfectly happy to have the show just exist on Fridays with nothing important happening. Let's get to it.

On a sidenote: today is five years to the day since Smackdown debuted on SyFy.

We open with a recap of Kane and Rollins on Monday. I'm still trying to figure out if I'm supposed to cheer for the demon who tried to drag Seth down to whatever was beneath the ring or the guy who cheats all the time and attacked Kane because he couldn't handle someone disagreeing with him.

Here's Rollins to open the show. He has the belt with him, even though Kane was last seen with it on Raw. Rollins is livid and demands that Kane get out here so here's Corporate Kane on crutches. Kane is glad to be back at his job, even if it includes dealing with Rollins acting like a spoiled brat. It's time for exposition mode (that should be Rollins' finisher as it puts more people out than the Pedigree) as Rollins recaps the entire story and explains everything again before they argue over who needs psychiatric evaluations.

Kane is just a corporate boss and the demon is a figment of Seth's imagination. Maybe Rollins is just trying to get out of his US Title match this Saturday in Madison Square Garden. I certainly would want to get out of another loss because someone was stupid enough to have the World Champion feud with the US Champion and lose every match.

Kane says there's a demon chasing Rollins but it's not him. He could use a pick me up though so how about Rollins teams with the New Day against the Dudley Boyz and Demon Kane. You mean the figment of his imagination? So it's a handicap match? Rollins says no, but Kane says he'll be at ringside to make sure the demon is in action. Lawler: "This proves that Kane is smarter than the average bear!" Well we were running low on Hanna-Barbera references so thanks for covering us King.

## Team Bella vs. Team BAD

Before the match, BAD brings up the obvious point: no one cares who started the Divas Revolution. I do love how they keep arguing about this when it's a rare occasion where you can point to the night Stephanie started it but no one brings her up in the whole thing. Sasha says the only thing anyone is going to remember is Team BAD taking over. Booker: "That's hot."

Brie kicks at Sasha to start and is actually getting close to figuring out the timing on those YES Kicks. It's off to Naomi vs. Alicia but Tamina makes a blind tag and takes Fox down with a clothesline. Nikki bounces off Tamina and gets taken over in the Samoan drop. The Bellas are sent to the floor and we take a break.

Back with Nikki sending Naomi to the apron and Alicia offering a distraction so Nikki can hit the big forearm. Fox puts on the chinlock but the fans want Sasha. A double clothesline finally allows the hot tag to Banks for some house cleaning. The double knees in the corner get two on Nikki as everything breaks down. The Rack Attack is broken up and Sasha grabs the Bank Statement to make Nikki tap at 11:11. Booker: "THAT WAS SMOKING HOT KING!"

**Rating:** C+. This got going by the end but as usual they seem to have no idea how the story goes. As best as I can tell, at least Sasha is a face now but Naomi and Tamina are somewhere in the middle but closer to face than heel. Of course this all happened without a turn of any kind and we're just supposed to figure it out as we go. At least Sasha got to beat Nikki, who hopefully moves away from the title soon enough. Then again this match isn't likely to ever be referenced again.

New Day teaches Seth Rollins the virtue of clapping, with Woods tying it into saving the tables of the world. Seth needs to drop the Cross Fit training and believe in the power of being positive. Rollins joins in and dances away to some trombone playing. Kane limps in and smiles. They're even making Rollins entertaining again.

Charlotte and Becky are getting annoyed at Paige for being whiny when Paige pops in. Paige doesn't want to hear it so Charlotte says you're

with us or against us. Becky and Charlotte leave but are replaced by Natalya, who threatens Paige if she ever disrespects her again. It's amazing how much more interesting these basic stories (like the ones they use on NXT) are than some team battle series which overshadows the title.

### Intercontinental Title: Kevin Owens vs. Ryback

This is Ryback's rematch after Owens took the title from him at Night of Champions. Kevin bails tot he floor to start but Ryback goes right after him. Back inside and the fight over a suplex with Ryback lifting him up for a nice delayed vertical. Ryback is sent into the post though, setting up a DDT for two from Owens as we take a break. Back with Owens elbowing him in the face and dropping a backsplash for two.

Time for the standard chinlock because that big build up to the chinlock had to be killed before it got over. The FEED ME MORE chants get Ryback to his knees and a swinging belly to belly puts Owens on the mat for a change. A sitout powerslam gets two on the champ so he comes out of the corner with some slaps to the face. Ryback is ticked off so he charges into a boot for two. The Meathook connects but Owens rolls outside again and takes the countout at 11:28.

**Rating:** C-. They had a decent power match going but it was clearly just a matter of killing time until they got to the ending. I mean, there hasn't been a title change on Smackdown in over two and a half years and I really didn't expect them to change anything tonight. I'm sure we'll see this again at the pay per view.

Ryback escapes the apron powerbomb and Shell Shocks Owens post match.

Video on Lesnar vs. Big Show.

### Lucha Dragons/Neville vs. Ascension/Stardust

Well they had to have a rubber match before people started taking the shows hostage without knowing who the better team was. Viktor takes Cara down to start but an attempt at a slingshot powerbomb (like Blanchard's slingshot suplex) is countered into a hurricanrana. Stardust comrs in but gets kicked down by Neville, followed by a standing shooting star press



for two. Everyone goes to the floor for a staredown and we take a break.

Back with Neville firing off his kicks to Viktor, who slugs Neville off the ropes and hits a middle rope falcon's arrow of all things for two. Stardust misses a charge out to the floor though and the hot tag brings in Kalisto to really speed things up. The Queen's Crossbow is countered into a tornado DDT and Cara dives through the ropes to take Viktor down. Stardust and Neville fight to the floor, leaving Kalisto to hit a quick Salida Del Sol to end Konor at 8:48.

**Rating:** C. Take a fun feud and then drag it out until there's nothing left to do with it and the matches start going nowhere. I'm assuming Neville or Stardust move on to fight Barrett now and the feud ends because the idea of pushing a feud beyond a best of three series is unthinkable in WWE. I mean, it was a rubber match and rubber is like, impressive.

We recap Reigns and Wyatt's brawl on Monday. Bray using a person as a projectile is still awesome.

Here are the Wyatts in the arena to address Reigns. Bray has fought many men over the years but he's never met anyone like Reigns. On Monday, they created complete chaos but it's still anyone but you Roman. Cue Reigns on his own but Bray tells the monsters to step to the side. Roman slowly gets in the ring and stares Bray down.

Bray raises the mic but Roman cuts him off, making Bray's eyes open wider than they have in a long time. Reigns: "Hell in a Cell." Bray, not on the mic, says what looked to be like "I would be delighted." Reigns leaves and Bray says he hopes Roman is willing to sacrifice everything and die. Cool stuff here, as is usually the case when Reigns plays it serious. This is the logical way to blow off the feud too, as it's a match culminating inside the Cell instead of just having a match inside because the calendar says so. In other words: it's what people have been saying since they started the Cell PPV.

#### Kane/Dudley Boyz vs. New Day/Seth Rollins

It's Demon Kane in the mat and Corporate Kane (who claps along with New

Day's entrance) sitting at ringside. Translation, we're starting with a handicap match. Woods is on the floor and it's Big E. vs. D-Von to start as Booker is giving shoutouts to his old band director. All five come in for a staredown and we're off to a break about a minute and a half in. Back with D-Von getting stomped down in the corner.

Woods plays the trombone and New Day does some dancing on the apron until D-Von is tossed to the floor. Rollins busts out a suicide dive and takes out Kane in the process, damaging the leg again. Seth freaks out over Kane going to the back and follows him up the ramp, leaving us with a regular match for a bit. Kane gives Rollins an evil smile and you should know what's coming.

Reality sets in on Seth as D-Von suplexes Big E., allowing for the tag off to Ray. Bubba splashes Kofi in the corner and knocks Rollins out to the floor. D-Von dives on New Day and here's Kane. Destruction begins and Rollins bails, allowing the 3D to take Kofi out for the pin at 10:37.

**Rating:** D+. There wasn't much to the match aside from an obvious ending. I'm actually digging the idea of Kane going back and forth like this, but I really don't need Michael Myers Kane as a face, or in a title shot for that matter. It's a cool enough idea but I'm not a fan of sitting around waiting on a twist that everyone knows is coming.

Kane grabs the title again and lays out New Day and the Dudleyz. Rollins comes out on the stage to end the show.

**Overall Rating:** C. What was with all the six man tags tonight? This show felt more energetic than usual but most of the wrestling brought it back to earth. I like the idea of having Reigns vs. Wyatt made for the pay per view here as it felt like an important moment for a change, even if it's something that will likely be mentioned on Raw half a dozen times in the first hour. Still though, fun enough show that felt bigger than most weeks.

## Results

Team BAD b. Team Bella – Bank Statement to Nikki

Ryback b. Kevin Owens via countout

Lucha Dragons/Neville b. Ascension/Stardust – Salida Del Sol to Konor

Kane/Dudley Boyz b. New Day/Seth Rollins – 3D to Kingston

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## **New Column: Bound For Something New I Hope**

Taking an in depth look at Sunday's main event and why it could be the most important match TNA has ever had.

<http://www.wrestlingrumors.net/kbs-review-bound-for-something-new-i-hope/42092/>

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# Impact Wrestling – September 30, 2015: Only TNA

## Impact Wrestling

Date: September 30, 2015

Location: Impact Zone, Orlando, Florida

Commentators: Josh Matthews, D'Angelo Dinero

It's the go home show for Bound For Glory and the big question is what does Dixie Carter have in store for her nephew Ethan at the show. Last week's show ended with a teaser of a special guest referee for Sunday's title match, even though it should be pretty easy to figure out where they're going with the story. Let's get to it.

We open with a recap of Galloway winning the title shot last week.

Here are Ethan and Tyrus to open the show. Ethan doesn't get why no one is talking about him four days before the biggest show of the year. Everyone is talking about Drew Galloway when he hasn't even won anything yet. Even Dixie Carter is talking about Drew and the champ wants her out here right now to explain herself.

Dixie gets right in his face and talks about how Drew stood up for TNA after Ethan wanted nothing to do with the war against the company their family owns. Ethan says he's sleeping fine at night as the World Heavyweight Champion. This Sunday, Drew isn't going to beat him because Drew can't do it. Cue Galloway to tell Ethan to shut his bloody mouth. No one likes Ethan because he turned his back on the company.

Drew says this is his company in the first place and the belt makes him the best in the world. Ethan better hope that Drew never stops talking because the only thing he does better than talk is fight. The champ says this Sunday, Drew isn't going to stand up because he better stand down. Drew isn't coming to Sunday to be the savior, but he is coming to be the champ. This was good stuff and as well done of a thrown together build as they could have had.

James Storm blames Mahabali Sheera for the downfall of the Revolution.

Ethan tells Dixie that he'll take out the future on Sunday.

Recap of Sheera rebelling against the Revolution, which started falling apart as a result.

### James Storm vs. Mahabali Sheera

No DQ. Sheera starts the brawl in the aisle but Storm hits him low to take over. Storm's cross body is caught in a fall away slam but James grabs a Backstabber. Two chairs are set up in the middle of the ring and Storm slams Sheera "through" them for two. Now it's table time but Storm spits beer in the referee's eyes.

The worst spear I've ever seen (like worse than Christian's) gets no cover and Storm is able to get in a cowbell shot to the head. Eye of the Storm through the table gets two so Storm breaks a beer bottle. Cue Manik and Abyss for a Black Hole Slam and frog splash, setting up the Sky High to give Mahabali the pin at 7:30.

**Rating:** C-. If you believe the reports, this is supposed to be the big star at the India tapings. I'm not wild on Sheera either way but this wasn't much of a match. Then again, that's almost always the case with TNA's gimmick matches as they're so overused that it's hard to get into one over the other. Storm is gone from the company now and if they've ever wasted a potential star like they did with him, I can't come up with the name.

Here's Bobby Roode with something to say. Roode is proud to be King of the Mountain Champion and is ready to defend the title with respect. There's going to be an open challenge on Sunday and here's Lashley to interrupt. Lashley came here to face the best competition in the world and to collect titles. They've had some great matches all year so why not one more time on Sunday for the King of the Mountain Title. Roode accepts. They also respect each other a lot because that's required in TNA.

Taryn tells the Dollhouse to destroy the Beautiful People once and for

all tonight.

### DJZ vs. Tommaso Ciampa vs. Trevor Lee

Lee and Brian Myers will be getting their rematch for the Tag Team Titles on Sunday. Ciampa starts fast by suplexing DJZ onto the apron but Lee hits a nice flip dive to take Ciampa down. DJZ comes back in with a middle rope elbow and a double tornado DDT. Lee German suplexes Ciampa for two but he comes back with Project Ciampa (powerbomb into a backstabber) for two on Trevor. The break up sends Ciampa to the floor though and Lee's flipping cross body into a powerslam is good for the pin at 4:16.

**Rating:** C. So let me make sure I've got this straight. Lee, who is about to fight for the Tag Team Titles, wins an individual match by pinning someone going into a multi-man match for a singles title while Ciampa, a guy who isn't even a full time wrestler here, was RIGHT THERE for the fall. Only in TNA.

The Beautiful People are ready for the Dollhouse, even though Angelina has a busted shoulder (read as she's pregnant). Velvet wants Taryn at ringside because just like her, it's going to be ugly.

Brooke talks about what it means to be a Knockout. She wants the title back.

Ethan isn't worried about whatever Dixie has planned for him.

### Dollhouse vs. Beautiful People

Marti/Rebel/Jade vs. Madison/Velvet here. Velvet's "Let's Cuddle and Watch Star Wars" shirt is about as awesome as you can get. It's a brawl to start with Madison sending Marti into the corner. Off to Jade for some kicks to the ribs as Pope refuses to predict a winner between Kong and Kim, citing disrespect. Madison sends Jade into the corner and makes the tag off to Sky.

More kicks have Jade in trouble so she brings in Rebel (in pink gloves) for even more kicks. A double clothesline puts both of them down and it's off to Madison vs. Marti with the Rayne Drop connecting for two.

Everything breaks down and Velvet avoids having her arm crushed. Rebel throws powder in Madison's eyes and Marti grabs a rollup for the pin at 6:20.

**Rating:** D. This really didn't do it for me as they had a bunch of kicks and then a brawl at the end. Also, I don't know about you but I could see two big factions facing off on pay per view as an interesting idea but why do that when you can air it in a nothing match on TV instead? As usual, only in TNA.

Eric Young wants to fight anyone.

Gail Kim is ready for Awesome Kong and doesn't know what to expect when they square off on Sunday.

Eric Young comes out to yell about Sgt. Chris Melendez having so many people help him with that one win. Eric declares himself God. This brings out Robbie E. of all people because he wants a fight. Robbie's offense doesn't do much as a low blow puts him right back down.

This brings out Melendez for the real fight but Eric puts him down one more time. Young goes for a chair but Chris takes it away and sends Young running. Now it's Mr. Anderson to block Young from escaping and ask him about where God has been all his life. A bunch of people in the back want to beat Young up but Anderson, Melendez and Robbie take their turns on him instead.

Matt Hardy comes in to see Galloway and let him know that if they win their tag match tonight, Sunday's main event becomes a three way. Drew loves the idea and says that's why they're here.

Young yells at Dixie about how unfair that was so Dixie gives him Kurt Angle on Sunday.

Video on Sunday's card.

Ethan Carter III/Tyrus vs. Matt Hardy/Drew Galloway

If Matt and Drew win, Matt is added to Sunday's World Title match. Tyrus kicks Drew in the ribs to start before it's off to Drew vs. Matt. Hardy

has some more luck and gets in a few shots of his own but the Twist of Fate is easily broken up. The villains take over with Tyrus slapping on a chinlock before stepping on Matt's ribs as we take a break. Back with Matt making a comeback and tagging in Drew to clean house. A running boot to the face is enough to put Tyrus away at 13:20, putting Matt in the title match on Sunday.

**Rating:** D+. How in the world was this a thirteen minute match? It felt like it ran about five minutes and I can't remember a thing about it. This really didn't need to have a stipulation attached but we wouldn't be in TNA if they didn't add something in for the sake of adding it in. We're not even done with that yet.

Dixie comes out and announces Jeff Hardy as the guest referee for Sunday's main event. Shocking indeed.

**Overall Rating:** C. This was WAY better than in previous weeks. Like, staggeringly better in parts. They addressed the major matches on Sunday and built them up well enough to make me a lot more interested in the show than I was before. Above all else though, everything seemed like it had a purpose. It wasn't a bunch of filler disguised as a wrestling show and that's a very nice change of pace.

However, there is one major issue. TNA spent their entire go home show building up Carter vs. Galloway but then they throw Matt Hardy in with like two minutes to go. Not only is Matt not a logical move (he's lost his two title shots already) but it feels as shoehorned in as anything I've seen in a very long time. I'm not a big fan of triple threats in the first place and throwing in someone who doesn't belong there makes it even worse. I could go for a break from the Hardys as well as TNA really needs to get away from these old acts. It's not like their ratings are amazing with Jeff on top or anything so why not try something new?

## Results

Mahabali Sheera b. James Storm – Sky High

Trevor Lee b. DJZ and Tommaso Ciampa – Spinning powerslam to DJZ



Dollhouse b. Beautiful People – Rollup to Rayne

Matt Hardy/Drew Galloway b. Tyrus/Ethan Carter III – Big boot to Tyrus

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# **NXT – September 30, 2015: Go Home If You Will**

## **NXT**

Date: September 30, 2015

Location: Full Sail University, Winter Park, Florida

Commentators: Rich Brennan, Corey Graves, Byron Saxton

This is the go home show for next week's Takeover: Respect show and the main story tonight is finding out the final four in the Dusty Classic. The semifinals and finals are next week, meaning most of the card is already set. I'm sure we'll also get the hard sell for Bayley vs. Sasha II. Let's get to it.

We open with an update on the tournament. Here are the updated brackets:

Rhyno/Baron Corbin

Chad Gable/Jason Jordan

Scott Dawson/Dash Wilder

Finn Balor/Samoa Joe or Enzo Amore/Colin Cassady

Opening sequence.

### Dusty Rhodes Tag Team Classic Quarter-Finals: Enzo Amore/Colin Cassady vs. Finn Balor/Samoa Joe

Enzo and Cass are classic guys and if you're not a fan of Dusty Rhodes, you must be S-A-W-F-T! Balor now has a slightly altered entrance, a leather jacket and the BALOR CLUB sign for his tron video. Joe and Cass get things going and they slug it out onto the floor, only to have Enzo nail a suicide dive. Balor adds in a flip dive and we take a very early break. Back with Enzo hitting a middle rope DDT on the champ.

The hot (?) tag brings in Cass for some splashes to Joe and big boots to both guys. A big running elbow gets two on Joe and Cass plants him with a Boss Man Slam. The Rocket Launcher connects but Joe rolls over and lifts Enzo to the top for the Muscle Buster. Finn adds the Coup de Grace to advance at 7:12.

**Rating:** C-. Well that was short. Balor and Joe winning is the better choice as it's going to make for a bigger impact when they either win the whole thing and fight over who earned the win or screw up and split as a result. Either way it's a good idea for a story and a good way to set up what should be a really fun title match down the line.

Tomasso Ciampa and Johnny Gargano are disappointed by their loss but tonight it's about moving forward against Apollo Crews. Tyler Breeze comes in and says he'd love to fight Ciampa later tonight.

Video on Asuka.

### Johnny Gargano vs. Apollo Crews

Gargano flips out of a fireman's carry to start and puts on something like an Anaconda Vice/Tarantula combo for a few moments. Four moments of

course because he has until five. Crews dropkicks him out to the floor but Gargano comes back in with a slingshot spear through the ropes for two. Cool move. Some kicks get two more for Johnny but Crews shrugs them off and hits the gorilla press and standing moonsault for the pin at 4:05.

**Rating:** C. Crews is gathering up wins and it's nice to see him beating people other than just jobbers. His match with Breeze should be a really good test for him as Breeze is known for putting on good matches in the big moments and both guys need a win on a big stage like this. Good enough match here and a good launching pad for Crews going into Takeover.

Regal brings Dana Brooke and Emma into his office to announce Dana vs. Asuka next week. Brooke is thrilled until Regal shows them an Asuka highlight reel. Emma: "Good luck with that."

Nia Jax video.

#### Dana Brooke/Emma vs. Peyton Royce/Billie Kay

Peyton grabs some quick rollups for two each on Dana as the fans chant for the jobbers. It's off to Billie vs. Emma with Kay getting two off a delayed suplex. Dana calls Kay a billy goat and the villains take over in the corner. Both of them put on a bodyscissors to keep Kay in trouble but she finally gets over for the tag to Peyton. Things go a bit better for Royce with a dropkick getting two on Dana but Emma grabs her leg, setting up the sitout Death Valley Driver for the pin on Peyton at 6:48. That move needs a name.

**Rating:** D+. This was pretty dull stuff but at least Brooke gets to look dominant before she gets destroyed by Asuka next week. Dana plays a good heel and the alliance with Emma works well enough. The bodyscissors dragged a lot of the life out of this one though and it could have been a good big shorter.

Chad Gable/Jason Jordan say they're the favorites going into their match next week. Then it's on to the finals where they probably won't be facing Dawson/Wilder. That brings in Dawson/Wilder for some serious bickering.

## Tommaso Ciampa vs. Tyler Breeze

Ciampa's video mostly says Johnny Gargano. Feeling out process to start as they trade rollups for no counts. Breeze winds up riding Ciampa like a short horse until Ciampa hits a running knee in the corner. Tyler comes right back with a neckbreaker and a front facelock as things slow down again. Ciampa fights up again and lifts Breeze up for a hanging downward spiral, only to block a rollup attempt that Breeze wasn't trying.. These two are really not clicking so far. Tyler dropkicks him out of the air for two and hooks a Killswitch for the pin at 7:49.

**Rating:** D+. I wasn't liking this one for the most part as they seemed like they were on different pages. Breeze has worked well with almost anyone he's been out there with and I'm not the biggest Ciampa fan in the world. It was no secret that Breeze was going to win here but unlike Crews, he didn't make it into a very entertaining match.

Baron Corbin and Rhyno say they'll win the tournament.

We run down the Takeover card.

A long recap of Bayley winning the Women's Title and the build to the Iron Woman rematch ends the show. Good stuff here with Bayley studying Iron Man matches and training to go half an hour.

**Overall Rating:** C+. The wrestling wasn't great here but they did a really good job of setting up next week's show. This was quite the go home show, which is something you often get around here. Next week's Takeover definitely feels like one of the lower level specials they've had but I could see the wrestling really making up for a lot of the lack of stories. Good enough this week as they made me want to see next week's big show.

## Results

Samoa Joe/Finn Balor b. Colin Cassady/Enzo Amore – Coup de Grace to Amore

Apollo Crews b. Johnny Gargano – Standing moonsault

Dana Brooke/Emma b. Peyton Royce/Billie Kay – Sitout Death Valley Driver

to Royce

Tyler Breeze b. Tommaso Ciampa – Killswitch

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# Monday Nitro – May 8, 2000: I Bet They Can't Even Spell DQ

## Monday Nitro #239

Date: May 8, 2000

Location: Trans World Dome, St. Louis, Missouri

Attendance: 6,545

Commentators: Scott Hudson, Mark Madden, Tony Schiavone

Sanity. I beg of you, let there be some sanity on this show. We're FINALLY past the David Arquette title scene, meaning it's time to start the build to Ric Flair vs. Jeff Jarrett for the World Title at the Great American Bash. Last night's show was pretty much a disaster, which you could actually argue as a major upgrade. There might even be rules tonight! Let's get to it.

By the way: the Trans World Dome has a capacity of 66,000 people. Whoever

decided to book this building needs to be shot.

We open with a recap from last night which doesn't work in a minute long package either.

Page is sitting next to Kanyon's hospital bed with Kanyon in a halo. The New Blood came in and destroyed Page because, as Punk said on Raw that one time, security around here sucks. Kimberly emptied a bedpan on him because that kind of stuff is funny you see.

The Millionaire's Club's bus arrives. You can hear Flair talking about wrestling history in this city from here.

Here's the New Blood, complete with David Arquette in a yellow suit and matching fur coat, to open things up. Bischoff goes through the entire plan of being in league with Arquette the whole time and how they handed Page and then Arquette the title just because they felt like it. So in other words, they did this whole thing for the sake of having fun and were willing to just drop the title because they were bored one day?

Bischoff says he did it to get under the skin of the internet wrestling fans who all thought it was a disgrace to have Arquette win the title. He wanted to royally screw Page. So....he made him World Champion? Arquette does the big over the top heel speech about how you can't trust anyone from Hollywood and he roped Page in and became World Champion. Jarrett brags a bit and we cut to the back to see Page arriving. Kimberly says it's all about her and rips open her coat to reveal very little clothing aside from a purple sports bra with ME written on it. Bischoff: "It's all about....her!"

Awesome makes fun of Kanyon being crippled and here's Page for the brawl. House is cleaned and Arquette takes a Diamond Cutter, only to have Jarrett, Awesome and Cat come back in for the beatdown. This brings out Sting to clean house, which draws in Bagwell/Douglas (confirmed as the champions. It only took five days to figure that out, but Kronik cancels them out and the Millionaire's Club stands tall.

Post break, Bischoff makes Awesome vs. Page in a stretcher match and Sting vs. Jarrett in a title match.

## Hardcore Title: Ralphus/Norman Smiley vs. Terry Funk

Funk is defending and Norman/Ralphus are fired if they lose. Norman sends Ralphus after Funk first and it works even worse than you would expect it to. The champ knocks Norman into the crowd and they quickly fight into the back with Smiley jumping into a golf cart to chase Funk around.

Terry gets on the back of the card and they go crashing into some crates. This is eerily reminiscent of Kane vs. Raven vs. Big Show at Wrestlemania XVII. They wind up in the kitchen and start beating each other over the head with cookie sheets. Ralphus joins them and gets beaten down all over again. Funk pounds them both down with a sheet and gets the pin to retain.

**Rating:** C. Oh come on how can you not love Ralphus? It's a stupid match and a stupid idea that needs to die already but I had a good time with this due to them cutting it down to about four minutes instead of the ten minutes they went at Slamboree. This was one of the more entertaining hardcore matches with the golf cart as a funny idea. Norman and Ralphus have potential.

The announcers talk about David Flair turning on his dad.

Ric tells Luger that he has to deal with David on his own.

Here's Ric to talk about how Terry Funk told him if he wanted to be a big star, he had to make it to St. Louis on a Friday night. He holds up the NWA World Heavyweight Title (held by Naoya Ogawa at this point) and talks about first seeing it around the waist of Jack Brisco and they gave every single thing they had to be the biggest stars in the world. Then that title went away and the current World Title (Flair holds up a bad looking copy) took its place. "Jarrett, it was mine before it was yours."

All of this gold means nothing though when you compare it to what happened last night. Ric wants David to come out here right now and apologize for what he did and be his own man instead of trying to be Ric Flair. Cue David and Daffney but Russo quickly joins them. Last night, Russo spat in the face of a long list of people who stand for tradition. Of course he has an actual list and the top name is Ric himself. Now

David is standing next to the father that he never had.

Ric tells David that they discussed this when he got in the business a year ago. He told David that people would pull him aside and try to manipulate him. David says he's angry at Ric (he doesn't say dad) and Russo wants to make father vs. son at the Great American Bash. Ric pulls out his phone and says he'll call Vince McMahon right now and have David on Raw next week. David hugs Ric, who goes after Russo, only to have David hit Ric with another Statute of Liberty. The angle is good and interesting, but as usual it's all about making Russo look good.

Post break, Ric says he's had it and leaves.

Here's Chuck Palumbo to Luger's (the announcers are using the name again) entrance to introduce himself. He calls out Luger so here's Lex to clean house. Russo and Bischoff's security comes out to kidnap Liz (again?) but Luger goes after them, allowing Palumbo to hit Lex with the exercise bar. Liz is taken away.

Post break Russo yells at Liz and puts her in her first ever match against Daffney. If Liz wins, she can go with Luger.

#### Shawn Stasiak vs. Captain Rection

Stasiak runs down Mark McGwire for some easy heat. Rection shrugs off some early offense and pounds down right hands in the corner. Cue Miss Hancock to watch as Hennig comes down to shove Stasiak out of the way of a splash. The PerfectPlex gives Stasiak the pin.

Kevin Nash comes out and destroys Stasiak with a big boot and Jackknife. Nash wants Russo to come out here and face him tonight because he didn't kill Nash last night. Instead he gets the Filthy Animals with Kidman saying that Nash is low on the scrotum pole (censored when Kidman says it, not censored when Madden repeats it).

Last night Kidman got rid of Hogan and tonight he'd be glad to get rid of another giant. Konnan says screw the Wolfpac and Nash's over the top shocked face is rather funny. Rey gets in a bat shot to Nash's knee but Hogan (Madden: "Oh no not again.") makes the save. Nash grabs the mic and



issues a challenge for a street fight tonight. Hogan says first they have to take a Russo and wipe their Bischoff. I bet he spent all day coming up with that line.

#### Mike Awesome vs. Diamond Dallas Page

Stretcher match. Bischoff and Kimberly are here for commentary. Page is on Awesome during the entrance and they're quickly on the floor. He throws Mike onto the announcers' table but Awesome comes back with a right hand to the head as they go inside. They miss a few shots until Page finally nails a big clothesline.

A DDT drops Mike again but Kimberly wants Page to sign the divorce papers RIGHT NOW. Awesome gets in a cheap shot and DDT's Page on a chair twice in a row. Page gets off the stretcher though so Awesome hits him with a chair to bust him open. A powerbomb puts Page through the table and Bischoff has Page sign the papers in his own blood before putting him on the stretcher for the win.

**Rating:** D+. I wasn't wild on this one as it was much more story than a match but at least they gave it some time (well time by this era's standards) for a change. The stuff with Kimberly is fine but again it comes off like a way to have Bischoff next to a gorgeous woman instead of any valid storyline reason.

Russo asks Steiner for protection tonight but Steiner blows him off. Post break Russo is asking Tank Abbott.

Jarrett says he'll win tonight.

Here are Steiner and the girls with something to say. Steiner talks about beating Rection last night and he found one of his own with the girls at the hotel. After some more sex talk, Steiner calls out that amoeba Booker T. Tank Abbott comes in from behind and knocks Steiner out cold.

Sting says he'll win tonight.

#### Harlem Heat vs. Kronik vs. Harris Twins vs. Mamalukes

Elimination rules. Adams and Clark have the title belts so Bagwell and

Douglas to watch. Kronik fights off all six men until it's one of the Twins in the ring. Clark takes him down with a top rope clothesline but let's cut to Steiner in the back shouting for Tank. Schiavone: "He may be looking for Tank Abbott!" Everyone gets in for another big brawl but Adams hits an F5 for the pin on Vito to even things up a bit more. A big boot takes out Don and it's 2-2 so Bagwell and Douglas try to help. Harlem Heat double teams Clark down but Cash screws up, leaving High Times to knock Big T. silly and give Kronik the win.

**Rating:** D. This was another big mess that didn't get anywhere because it was too much going on. Kronik is clearly getting the titles soon and it's a good thing to get them off the transitional champions as fast as possible. It also goes to show you how far the division has fallen recently, but at least the Twins are just another team.

Scott Steiner comes out and beats up whoever is in his way before calling out Russo and Abbott. A lot of swearing sends us to the back where Tank is telling someone to get this right. Back from a break and Goldberg's music plays. Steiner looks bored and it's Tank Abbott doing Goldberg's entrance. Tank gets caught in a t-bone suplex followed by a belly to belly before Steiner mounts him with a choke. Rick Steiner returns through the crowd and helps Tank beat him down.

Russo tells someone to be on standby.

### Elizabeth vs. Daffney

Liz is in camo pants and a black t-shirt and starts catfighting. Cue Madusa about thirty seconds in to attack Liz, so I guess Liz is free. Granted she'll be kidnapped again next week.

Mona comes in to brawl with Madusa but Madusa slams her down and stands on her hair. The bell rings roughly 200 times as Madusa beats Mona down, only to have Liz blast Madusa with a chair. Russo and Bischoff's security kidnaps Liz again as they're in a hurry this week.

### Hulk Hogan/Kevin Nash vs Filthy Animals/Mike Awesome

Street fight. Tony says the previous match was thrown out but I'm the

kind of wrestling fan who believes that it's a DQ when someone comes out to attack a single wrestler so we'll say it's a bad continuity error. It's 4-2 (Konnan/Mysterio/Kidman/Awesome) to start but Juvy walks out a few seconds in. The old guys take over to start but Hogan gets lured to the back. Horace attacks Awesome but the Animals have attacked Hogan with ball bats (he didn't go off his feet) and thrown him in the trunk of a car. Back in the arena, Nash gives Juvy one heck of a Jackknife as the street fight is thrown out.

The Animals start driving Hogan away but get cut off by Goldberg's monster truck. Goldberg isn't seen and Hogan gets out of the trunk post break.

#### WCW World Title: Jeff Jarrett vs. Sting

Jarrett is defending of course. Sting starts fast with some Japanese armdrags of all things, followed by a clothesline to put the champ on the floor. A suplex from the floor puts Jeff on the ramp (that's a new one) but Sting misses a top rope splash. Jeff goes after the knee with a chair as Tony wonders why Jarrett didn't want this to be a title match. Sting gets a big running start down the ramp and dives over the top with a clothesline. So much for the chair shots to the knee.

Jeff didn't get the idea though and puts on the Figure Four until Sting rolls over to break it up. Sting makes his comeback and cleans house. The Scorpion comes on but Vampiro comes up through the ring with smoke coming out of the hole. Vampiro pulls Sting through the hole and the fans are LIVID. Vampiro pulls Sting, now covered with the red liquid, through the hole to give Jeff the pin. So Madusa coming after Liz is enough to throw a match out but someone pulling a wrestler THROUGH THE RING isn't?

**Rating:** D+. This was as good of a wrestling match as you were going to get before the screwy ending. Jarrett and Sting are a good example of a pair who doesn't need any kind of outside stuff to have a good match and the fans were right to be upset due to that ending. It was straight out of Kane's (as in what Kane did like a week before this was written fifteen years later. That's sad) playbook and that's not going to fly in an old school down like St. Louis.

New Blood comes out and goes after Sting but here are Hogan and Nash. We cut to the back to see the Goldberg truck destroying Tank Abbott and Rick Steiner's car to end the show.

**Overall Rating:** C-. Of course that's on an extremely sliding scale at this point. This was by far the best Russo and Bischoff show yet as it actually had some structure. It went from story to story and it didn't feel like I needed note cards to keep track of what was going on. Above all else though, Arquette was taking a backseat to the real wrestlers and not doing anything overly stupid. This flowed so much better as a show and you could tell what was going on, which is more than you can say for most of their shows.

Now that doesn't make it a good show of course. As usual, there's still WAY too much Russo and Bischoff, as well as way too much going on in a single show. I still feel like I just watched three weeks of stories in two hours, but the stories made better sense and had some structure instead of all the insanity.

Above all else though, the show isn't one major story. The show is built around the New Blood vs. Millionaire's Club, but it feels like a bunch of parts of that story instead of one big idea that keeps going all night long. Finally, it's also not a good sign that they couldn't make it a week without changing Flair's plan for the pay per view, but Heaven forbid we get a match built up for that long. The idea of Russo having to fill that much time is terrifying. Much better show this week, but I have no faith for them to keep it going.

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# What I Want To See On The Network

A special looking back at the buildup to Wrestlemania VIII. Why that show you ask?

BECAUSE IT HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH THE ATTITUDE ERA. I'm so sick and fed up with every special on the Network being about the Monday Night Wars and the Attitude Era. We recently had the top ten Eric Bischoff moments, the top ten Monday Nitro moments and a two hour interview with Eric Bischoff where he was given credit for inventing Steve Austin, D-Generation X and the Attitude Era itself. There's a long history to professional wrestling and that means stuff other than the Attitude Era. Find a new topic and air something other than an interview show (except Table For Three, which is a great idea).

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# Middle Kingdom Wrestling – September 5, 2015: It's Wrestling. But In China.

## Middle Kingdom Wrestling Episode 1

Date: September 5, 2015

Commentator: Eddie Strong

It's wrestling in China. I have no idea what to expect here and the show

is only nineteen minutes long. This is one of the major countries where wrestling hasn't spread yet and it should be very interesting to see where it goes. I'm hoping this is in English as otherwise, it could be a rather confusing show. Let's get to it.

So it seems that we'll be having a tournament to determine the first ever MKW Champion, though it says that the CWE Champion The Slam (I've heard worse names) defended his title twice this weekend. So did they just spoil the whole thing?

#### MKW Title Tournament First Round: Hoho Lun vs. The Selfie King

Selfie King is exactly what he sounds like. Lun has sunglasses on the back of his head. King is sent to the floor and it's time for a picture. Lun is apparently from Hong Kong and is one of the company's founders. The ring is really short as King is above the middle rope while standing on the floor.

Back in and King's kicks to the leg have almost no effect and Lun gets two off a running forearm in the corner. They hit the floor for a chase until Lun takes him back inside for a Boston crab. King makes the rope and tells the referee that he saw a bird, allowing for some selfie stick shots to the back. A standing moonsault (with the camera out of focus for some reason) is enough to pin Lun.

**Rating:** D. Yeah this was bad. Lun was a mile ahead of King, who might have been making his professional debut here. Above all else here, the commentary is killing it. The guy sounds like he's about 19 years old and trying too hard. He never stops talking and is more annoying than anything else, but it sounds a lot more like he's brand new at this and has no idea what he's doing.

#### MKW Title Tournament First Round: Len Bai vs. Tangguo Ge

Ge is a masked man in a full body suit and what looks like CM Punk trunks. He gives candy to some kids and comes out to Christina Aguilera's Candyman. So he's the reincarnation of Brad Armstrong? Bai has his face painted and looks like a cocky heel. Ge (whose name means Candy Brother) tries a quick cross body but gets caught in a fall away slam. Back up and

Bai is Irish whipped but doesn't seem to know what to do so he just stops. Ge gets whipped into the buckle, followed by a backbreaker for two.

We hit the chinlock on Ge for a bit before he tries.....something like a Canadian Destroyer. That's pretty high up on a list of moves I never thought I would see here, even if it was more of a roll into the piledriver than a jump. A big clothesline gets two for Bai but Ge grabs the Black Widow of all things. This match continues to surprise me. Bai drops him down in a side slam to break it up before a pair of fisherman's busters are enough for the pin (with the three in slow motion).

**Rating:** C. WAY better here as both guys looked like they knew what they were doing, at least for the most part. They definitely had some issues out there that can be helped a lot with more experience and some coaching, but both of them looked a lot more polished. It also helps that they were wrestling instead of being obsessed with the gimmick like King was. Far better match here and it even had a story with Bai working on the head to set up the fisherman's buster.

The credits, including thanking the wrestlers, take us out.

**Overall Rating:** D+. That's on a very strong curve. It's very clear that this is their first show and it looks like they had a budget of about \$18. That being said, I can't imagine there's a very deep talent pool to pick from and they were doing the best with what they had. I'll check out the second episode which might be an improvement, but they have a lot of stuff to fix, some of which might be out of their control.

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# Monday Night Raw – September 28, 2015: The Really Old Try

## Monday Night Raw

Date: September 28, 2015

Location: First Niagara Center, Buffalo, New York

Commentators: Byron Saxton, John Bradshaw Layfield, Michael Cole

Tonight is a packed show, headlined by the return of the US Open Challenge for John Cena's United States Title. It's always fun to see who is going to be accepting the challenge and probably having the best match of the night with Cena. In addition to that we'll have Becky Lynch and Paige on MizTV and fallout from Kane pulling Seth Rollins through the mat last week. Let's get to it.

We open with a recap of Seth Rollins' issues over the last week. His loss to Ambrose on Smackdown isn't mentioned because that show doesn't exist in the mainstream WWE universe. It's almost like that loss to Ambrose really didn't need to happen, at least not by pinfall.

Opening sequence.

Here's John Cena for the US Title open challenge. The fans aren't all that thrilled to see him though. Cena: "Have no fear because THE CHAMP IS HERE!" The challenge is on now. Instead of just one challenger though, all three members of New Day are here. They sing a little song about winning the US Title before Kofi says they might as well be called Team Scrooge McDuck because they're about to be swimming in gold. The concert isn't over yet because they sing NEW US CHAMPS to the tune of Cena's theme song. Cena wants one of them right now and it's time to be serious.



## US Title: John Cena vs. Xavier Woods

Cena gets right in Woods' face in the corner during the big match intros. The bell rings and Cena takes his head off with a clothesline two seconds in, sending Woods to the floor. Woods: "I WASN'T READY!" Big E. gets knocked off the apron and Kofi grabs Cena's foot to break up an early Shuffle attempt. That earns both Kofi and Big E. an ejection and we take a break after 80 seconds and two moves.

Back with Cena hitting the Shuffle but Woods slips out of the AA and getting two off an enziguri. A middle rope DDT gets two on the champ but the flipping clothesline is countered with a sitout powerbomb to give Cena two. Woods comes right back with a reverse suplex and Lost in the Woods (Eat Defeat) for two each. Xavier misses a missile dropkick and Cena slaps on the STF, drawing Kofi and Big E. in for the DQ at 9:22.

**Rating:** C+. It's not a classic or anything close to one really, but this was all it needed to be. Woods was in way over his head here but came out looking fine. There was almost no chance of a new champion here but the there didn't need to be. This was about the segment that set up the match and a fun performance, which is all this needs to be about a lot of the time. Good stuff here.

Post match here are the Dudleyz a few seconds later for the save. It looks like a six man after the break.

## John Cena/Dudley Boyz vs. New Day

That's exactly what we have and it's joined in progress with Kofi getting pounded down in the corner by D-Von and then Bubba. Cena requests and receives a tag and it's time for Kofi to get some rotating stomps of his own. The Shuffle sends Kofi over for the tag to Big E. and it's power vs. power. Big E. shoulders Cena into the corner and it's time for some dancing, followed by the real rotating stomps.

Kofi slaps on a chinlock as Woods plays the trombone and shouts that he should be US Champion. For some reason this results in Cole bringing up that he's undefeated at Wrestlemania and Byron saying that's like him being Tupac. E.'s splash gets two but Cena rolls over and tags in D-Von

as everything breaks down. D-Von launches E. into the ropes but knocks Cena off the apron in a big crash. What's Up hits Kofi but Bubba is sent out for not being legal, allowing Kofi to hit Trouble in Paradise for the pin at 6:45.

**Rating:** C-. This started good and hit a brick wall in the middle. Cena getting knocked off the apron was a turning point and it makes sense to have New Day beat the Dudleyz when it's 3-2. I'm not sure what happens in the tag match on Saturday in MSG and I rather like that feeling.

The Authority and an unknown woman are in the back when Kane comes in. The woman is from human resources due to a complaint against Kane for creating an unsafe working environment. Rollins comes in and hints very strongly that he made the complaint. Kane promises to take this seriously before glaring at Rollins. A sip of coffee brings him back to reality and he's off for his evaluation. This continues to intrigue me a bit but these performance evaluations are almost never any good.

Ambrose suggests that Reigns fighting Bray one on one might not be the best idea. Dean will stay in the back unless Strowman and Harper get involved. Reigns says that Orton will have his back too and Dean gets a bit annoyed. Orton comes in and Dean says he doesn't want any outsiders trying to come in and save the day. Roman calms things down.

### Big Show vs. Mark Henry

I'll be shocked if this breaks two minutes. Show spears him down and plants Henry with some slow slams and a kick to the face. The KO punch ends this at 2:36. I get what they're doing with Big Show and I appreciated them using Henry instead of someone with value, but can they really think that the exact same formula for building someone up is going to work again?

It's time for MizTV and Miz starts us off with a recap of Paige's heel turn promo last week against the rest of the division. Miz's guests are Becky Lynch and Charlotte, the former of whom calls Miz a chauvinist jackass. Miz: "First One Direction breaks up and now PCB?" Charlotte tells Paige to get out here for a talk or a fight but here are the Bellas instead. Nikki says this is high school drama and she knows she's getting

the title back.

Charlotte invites her in to tap out one more time but Nikki brags about breaking the record. Nikki talks about Paige saying she started the Divas Revolution (Stephanie being dropped is the right call all the way around) but Charlotte goes off about how the Divas Revolution is about the fans and the action in the ring. Alicia brings up the 3-2 advantage but Becky is ready to fight anyway.

Cue Paige to say she put the NXT women on the map by being their first champion. Nikki asks about the drama again but Paige asks who needs ambition when the Bellas have boyfriends like theirs. I believe that's the first reference to Cena and Nikki's relationship on Raw, or at least one of the first. A big brawl clears the ring.

#### Team PCB vs. Team Bella

So PCB is working together against a common enemy a week after breaking up. Brie comes in but gets double teamed by Charlotte and Becky but the Bellas drag Becky into the corner. Nikki gets in some stomps and Brie gets two off a suplex. A double clothesline puts Becky and Nikki down as the announcers plug Total Divas.

Charlotte comes in to no reaction and everything breaks down. Nikki kicks Charlotte off the Figure Eight and right into Paige, sending her walking to the back. Natalya comes out to replace Paige, who pulls her off the apron for a crash. Nikki uses the distraction to hit the Rack Attack for the pin on Charlotte at 6:26.

**Rating:** D. So to recap, here's Charlotte's reign: wins the title after hitting two moves in a long match, gets beaten up by Brie until she hits one move, then gets pinned in a six person tag. They're really not trying to hide the fact that they want it back on Nikki and that's not a good thing after all those months of her as champion.

WWE2K16 video.

Video on the history of Big Show vs. Brock Lesnar.

Rollins is badmouthing Kane to the human resources woman when Kane comes

in. Seth changes his tune and Kane gives him a present: the head of his statue. Kane dug it up from the landfill after searching all night and Seth is shaken as you might expect him to be. Kane thinks it's funny and the woman is equally freaked out.

### Wyatt Family vs. Prime Time Players

Harper runs over Young to start and I don't see this going well. Darren gets knocked to the floor and Braun takes the mask off. The beating continues and Darren keeps getting destroyed inside. Young finally gets in a shot and makes the tag off to Titus for some house cleaning. A powerslam and big boot drop Harper but Strowman offers a distraction so Harper can get in the superkick. Braun grabs Darren and Titus' save attempt completely fails. The discus lariat from Harper sets up the choke from Braun to knock Titus cold at 4:18.

**Rating:** D+. Total and complete squash here which is all it needed to be. Strowman is one heck of a monster and this is the kind of stuff that reinforces that perception. The Players are looking less and less important every week, but then again this is the company where you're a jobber one week and pushed strong the next so they might be in line for a title shot.

### Neville vs. Stardust

Neville flips across the ring to start but is quickly caught in the Tree of Woe. Stardust charges into a boot though and Stardust slides to the floor. He springboards into a dropkick from Neville and it's time for the Red Arrow but cue King Barrett for the DQ at 2:33.

Barrett stares at Stardust but gives him a Bullhammer. Barrett says all hail the return of the king.

Here are Kane and the woman for his evaluation. She's already come to a conclusion after about an hour and twenty five minutes, but here's Rollins to interrupt. He shows us a quick recap of Kane's demonic side (or at least the last few years of it) and says he's going to Heaven instead. The Pope told him so and Rollins believes him because of how good he's been feeling lately. Kane shows us a video of Rollins

tormenting Kane and calling for him to lose his authority.

The report says that Kane is sound of mind and can keep doing his job. Rollins deserves the evaluation because he's cruel, paranoid, and the most unprofessional person she has ever seen in WWE. Seth comes to the ring and gets in Kane's face. Rollins drops the belt so Kane goes to pick it up, only to have Rollins give him a Pedigree. He adds in some chair shots for good measure and even Pillmanizes the ankle.

Rollins laughs and says Kane looks very human to him right now. Kane is loaded onto a stretcher and into an ambulance...but the windows start glowing red. The door opens and Kane comes out in the demon attire. He starts limping but stomps his foot and is suddenly walking just fine. Seth tries a chair shot to no avail and a chokeslam leaves him laying. The threat of a tombstone sends Seth tumbling up the steps and Kane holds up the title. So the evaluation thing was really just a waste of time wasn't it?

Bray asks if we saw what they did earlier. The Family makes him so proud and they would love nothing more than to come out there tonight and tear Roman to pieces. However, Bray is going to grant Roman's request to face off one on one. They are the alpha and the omega because it starts and ends with the two of them. Only a fool believes he can look into the dragon's eyes and believe he won't be burned. Run.

Bo Dallas comes out for a match but first he says the Buffalo Bills just have to Bo-Lieve to win the Super Bowl.

### Bo Dallas vs. Randy Orton

Orton quickly takes it to the floor and drops Dallas across the barricade right in front of some of the Bills. Back in and the RKO ends Bo at 2:00.

We look at Kevin Owens walking out on a tag match on Monday.

### Rusev vs. Kevin Owens

Non-title and Ryback is on commentary. This is fallout from Owens walking out on Rusev on Thursday. Owens is knocked to the floor but he throws Rusev into Ryback for the DQ at 46 seconds.

Dolph Ziggler runs out for the save.

We recap the Dancing for Pediatric Awareness challenges between members of the roster.

Here's Paul Heyman to talk about the MSG match with Big Show. Heyman knows Big Show better than everyone else and he sees Show as a 6<sup>th</sup> grade math genius who gets a C+ because he's bored. There's no competition for Big Show right now, but there will be this Saturday. Brock Lesnar is going to destroy Big Show like never before and take him to Suplex City.

Cue Big Show to say he knows Brock is worried. Heyman didn't finish talking about Brock's tour because he knows it could end this Saturday night. Paul leaves and Show tells him to imagine a world without Brock. I appreciate them trying to build something but dude. It's Lesnar vs. Big Show. Let it go.

#### Roman Reigns vs. Bray Wyatt

Wyatt brings Harper and Strowman with him but a single insult is enough to make Bray send them back. Roman starts fast with a throw and the apron boot as we take an early break. Back with Bray holding a chinlock, followed by a big slam to set up another chinlock. Reigns fights up and hits the corner clotheslines but the Superman Punch is countered with a standing Rock Bottom attempt.

Some elbows break Roman free but Bray takes his head off with a clothesline for two. Bray loads up a superplex but Reigns slips through the legs and powerbombs him down. Reigns no sells a kick to the face (stop watching puro dude) and Superman Punches Bray to the floor, only to have the spear hit the steps. Bray picks up the steps but Roman knocks them away and keeps fighting to the double countout at 13:04.

**Rating:** C. This was fine but the ending was pretty obvious. I'm glad neither guy got a win as there was no way this ended here, though I'm not sure where this feud actually does end. You have to assume that Rollins is the right third man one day, but does a six man finally blow this off? Wyatt not losing is a big plus and almost a rare sight, which is a nice surprise.

They keep fighting into the crowd with neither being able to take over. Bray knocks Roman into the barricade and charges Roman through it and back to ringside. Wyatt poses on the announcers' table but Reigns pops back up and spears him through the table to end the show.

**Overall Rating:** C-. This is a hard one to grade as the show had some good things as well as some bad things. I like that they're keeping some stuff short. I remember days where they would have had Orton vs. Dallas go for seven or eight minutes but there's really no need to do so. Keep the thing short like it should be and give the time to something else.

Unfortunately those somethings else were Kane and Big Show, who are being used as the big stories before we get to the Undertaker match inside the Cell. Now to be fair, these stories could have been FAR worse. It also helps that Big Show vs. Lesnar is this Saturday instead of in another month. The match isn't something I want to see, but it's on a free show and now in the main event of a pay per view so this could be a much bigger issue.

Overall, this is your Raw special to the letter: a good enough show that would have been so much better minus an hour. It was clear that they were filling in time, but at least it wasn't horribly dull filler this time. There's definitely a better energy lately and you can see a lot more effort in the midcard stories, which has been one of Raw's biggest problems in the last year or two. The effort changes everything though and has made these last few shows so much easier to sit through. If they can find a way to cut down on the show's length, they'd have a FAR better show overnight but that's not happening anytime soon.

## Results

John Cena b. Xavier Woods via DQ when Kofi Kingston and Big E. interfered

New Day b. John Cena/Dudley Boyz – Trouble in Paradise to D-Von

Big Show b. Mark Henry – KO Punch

Team Bella b. Team PCB – Rack Attack to Charlotte

Wyatt Family b. Prime Time Players – Standing choke to O'Neil

Neville b. Stardust via DQ when King Barrett interfered

Randy Orton b. Bo Dallas – RK0

Rusev b. Kevin Owens via DQ when Ryback interfered

Roman Reigns vs. Bray Wyatt went to a double countout

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