

Thunder – July 5, 2000: And So, It Ends

Thunder

Date: July 5, 2000

Location: Civic Center, Columbus, Georgia

Attendance: 3,088

Commentators: Bobby Heenan, Mike Tenay, Tony Schiavone

It's the go home show for Bash at the Beach, meaning my moderate smile about WCW is about to go away. We're still in the "Can Jeff Jarrett build a whole main event by himself, even though it's a boring match in the first place?" phase which amazingly enough isn't working because Jeff Jarrett is one of the least interesting World Champions WCW has had in the last three months. Of the five guys to hold the title since early April, he's like the fourth most interesting at best. Let's get to it.

Standard Nitro recap to open things up. Enjoy this while it lasts.

Jarrett yells at the Cat about ratings and they keep insulting each other. Cat's decision is to put Jarrett on the show tonight. Why in the world is Jeff Jarrett vs. the Cat the main feud on this show?

Here's Jarrett to say THE EXACT SAME THINGS HE ALWAYS SAYS before talking about how he was told there was no time for him on the show this week. Tonight he's going to retire Hulk Hogan but here's Cat to interrupt. Cat is tired of hearing Jarrett go on and on (the Cat speaks for the people) so tonight he's putting him in the ring. Then he's going to put on a karate demonstration. Back to Jarrett, Cat is going to make Booker T./Buff Bagwell vs. Canyon/Shane Douglas with the person getting the fall earning a title shot tonight. I've heard worse ideas, even though this isn't very good.

Stasiak and Palumbo got into tanning beds earlier today and Woody turned them all the way up. What is up with this Woody guy? Is there no one else on the roster that could have used this to get somewhere? Maybe set up a challenger for the Tag Team Titles? No instead let's go with a production

guy who isn't going to have a match. The bits are entertaining but this isn't getting anyone anywhere.

Jarrett still wants Hogan. As he rants, Kanyon lays out a production guy with a Kanyon Cutter.

Rey Mysterio vs. Kidman vs. Lance Storm vs. Disco Inferno

One fall to a finish. Since this is WCW, the Animals' name plate says Tygress is accompanying them but they come out alone. Storm gets jumped during his entrance as we're waiting on Kidman to show up. Kidman finally hits the ring for the save and starts with Storm for a nice pinfall reversal sequence which is probably going to be the best thing on the show.

Mysterio elbows Kidman from behind though and Disco comes in to bring the quality down. Storm blocks a Bronco Buster with a raised boot, only to have Disco come in and try to steal a pin. Rey is fine with beating up his normal partner but Storm comes back in to break that up. A springboard legdrop gets two on Lance and everything breaks down. Disco piledrives Kidman for two but Storm grabs the half crab to make Disco tap.

Rating: C+. This was a lot more fun than I was expecting with all four guys (yes even Disco) moving around as much as they could in the four minutes they had. They're probably lucky to get that given how much time this show needs to dedicate to everything else they have going on.

Buff promises he'll go into Sunday as champion. The idea of Bagwell vs. Hogan as the main event of a pay per view makes me smile.

Buff is working on his own book called Positively Kanyon's Greatest Moments. Chapter One: Kanyon Sucks. Chapter Two: Kanyon Still Sucks. Chapter Three: Kanyon Sucks Again. This was funnier than it should have been.

Perfect Event is let out of their tanning beds and look like they fell in buckets of red paint. Palumbo wants his mommy as Stasiak is told Woody did this.

Here's the Cat for his karate demonstration with opponents....the Jung Dragons. They're Asian and therefore know martial arts you see. The Dragons jump Cat to start and take him down with a variety of kicks, setting up Jamie's middle rope legdrop. Well that lasted longer than I was expecting. Cat bails and says this isn't respectful enough. The Dragons are dumb enough to bow and all three get kicked in the face. Jamie's missile dropkick slows Cat down for a bit but he kicks them all again and throws Kaz over the top by the crotch. All three Dragons are sent to the floor and Cat says that's enough, meaning DANCE TIME!

Perfect Event goes after Woody in the production truck. Woody promises that he'll have an army. Gee I wonder who that's going to be.

Cat pays the Dragons and says he hasn't had that much fun in a long time. Ok then.

Hardcore Title: Big Vito vs. The Demon

Demon is challenging. Vito attacks the coffin in the back but gets jumped by Demon. Hardcore master Vito comes back by throwing Demon into a wall and bringing him out to the set for a ram into....whatever those metal things on the set are. Vito puts a trashcan lid between Demon's legs and stomps down on it before getting a piece of plywood. Was the table making union on strike this week?

As you might expect, Vito is thrown through the wood instead, followed by a middle rope elbow for two. This brings out Vampiro because this story is still going for some reason. Demon dropkicks a chair into Vito's face (close enough) but Vampiro breaks a shovel over Demon's back to give Vito the easy pin.

Rating: D. Vito's hardcore stuff isn't entertaining, anything Vampiro does is stupid at this point and no one ever cared about the Demon. This is the kind of stuff that could have been cut out to give the four way more time (maybe make it an elimination match) but WCW has a bad tendency to try and fit everything they can into one show. That's rarely a good idea because most of the stuff doesn't have the time to develop and we get stupid ideas like this.

Mike Awesome shows doctored footage that makes it look like he beat Rick Steiner on Monday. Gene calls him a mullock (trash) but Awesome hears him, scaring Gene half to death.

Shane and Kanyon argue over who is going to win tonight. Kanyon tries a Kanyon Cutter but Shane stares him down.

Here's the Perfect Event with Stasiak slapping his partner on the back to make Palumbo cringe. They DEMAND Woody come out here right now so here he is, removing his shirt to reveal that he is in fact not a wrestler. As you might expect, Woody has some backup.

Brian Adams/Woody vs. Perfect Event

Non-title. Adams fights out of a double team to start thanks to Woody slapping Palumbo on the back. A powerbomb sends Stasiak onto Palumbo and Adams kicks Shawn in the face for good measure. Woody offers a double back slap to break up another double team, allowing Adams to full nelson slam Palumbo. A chokeslam (called High Times thanks to Woody) lets Woody pin Stasiak. Yeah a production guy just pinned a Tag Team Champion and I'm supposed to want to see Kronik fight them on Sunday.

Vito beats up Funk and leaves the arena.

Buff Bagwell/Booker T. vs. Shane Douglas/Kanyon

Whoever gets the fall gets a title shot tonight. Kanyon shoves Booker from behind and gets double teamed for his efforts. This brings up the question of whether Douglas should help his partner or not, which actually merits some discussion. Granted it's not a discussion you're going to get here but it could be interesting. A double suplex drops Kanyon and Booker officially starts with him. The assorted kicks keep Kanyon in trouble but Shane won't tag in. That ends the interesting psychology discussion and goes right to stupid as you can't get the fall if you're not legal.

Buff comes in for a DDT but a Shane distraction (how hard can it be to distract Bagwell?) lets Kanyon get in a Russian legsweep. Shane still won't tag in so Kanyon gets two off a neckbreaker. Buff elbows him out of

the corner and drops a Vader Bomb (263 according to Tony. Huh?) followed by the Blockbuster but Shane makes the save. Booker comes in without a tag and Book Ends Canyon for the pin and the title shot. Ignore Booker's music playing at two.

Rating: D. Shane being stupid aside, it's cool to see them actually push someone new. Of course Horace got a title shot last week so this could mean absolutely nothing. The problem is this is the kind of thing that they needed to do two years ago because now it means nothing. The match was nothing to see because again, it didn't have enough time after Woody's match.

MIA is given their orders for the night.

Daffney, now with red hair, is wearing a shirt that says step child.

Mike Awesome sprays something on Rick Steiner's glasses.

Tygress/Juventud Guerrera vs. Major Gunns/Lieutenant Loco

The guys start with Juvy grabbing a headscissors but having to stop to pull his pants up. Heenan: "Juvy looks like he's wearing the seat cover from a '69 Pinto." Loco's tilt-a-whirl backbreakers send Juvy crawling over to Tygress so it's time for the girls. Tygress tags out as well so Gunns takes off the shirt as a distraction to kick Juvy low. The catfight is on and Gunns does one of the worst slams I've ever seen. Loco lays out Juvy but another catfight breaks out. In the melee, Juvy hits Loco with the belt for the pin.

Rating: F+. These women are bad. Like, they're Eva Marie kinds of bad. It's ridiculous to call them wrestlers because this has nothing to do with wrestling. We have two women out there because of how they look, trying to do moves to each other and failing miserably. Chavo vs. Juvy will be fine but this was another big waste of time with the women in there.

Juventud leaves with the title.

Steiner puts the glasses on and is almost blinded.

Booker says he'll win the title.

Video on Vampiro and the Demon.

Mike Tenay is at Jim Duggan's home for a sitdown interview. Duggan and his wife are glad that he's ok but he'll be back no matter what Russo does. Somehow this takes three minutes.

Crowbar jumps David Flair as Miss Hancock watches.

Jarrett insults Gene for general purposes.

Rick Steiner gets medical treatment.

We recap Crowbar/David/Hancock/Daffney.

Crowbar vs. David Flair

Impromptu match. Crowbar throws David down the aisle but gets crotched on top. A superplex drops Crowbar and it's already time for the Figure Four. Hancock comes out to help but gets caught to force the break. Crowbar yells at the referee and gets shoved into a rollup for two as Hancock comes in, allowing the low blow from David. Cue Daffney for a tug of war so Hancock can roll backwards with her skirt coming up. Daffney goes for Hancock's hair and they run off, leaving Crowbar to hit David with the pipe. The Mind Bender (sitout gordbuster) puts David away.

Crowbar chokes David and threatens violence until David admits that he shaved Daffney's hair. Again: IT WAS ALL ON TAPE! David also admits to cheating on Daffney, sending her leaving in tears. This is actually a good story no matter how goofy it's been.

After a break, Hancock is getting checked out for a leg injury. David comes in and thinks something is up so the trainer gets his head shaved.

Rick Steiner vs. Mike Awesome

Rick's eyes seem to be fine as Awesome pounds him down. Some belly to bellys get two for Steiner and they head outside for a table. Mike sets it up in the corner and is quickly shoved through it, only to have Awesome spray the stuff in Rick's eyes again for an easy three count. The

blinding stuff earlier in the night could have been completely omitted and nothing would have changed.

WCW World Title: Jeff Jarrett vs. Booker T.

Jarrett is defending. Heenan thinks winning the title might push Booker over the edge to being a big star. They trade shoulders to start until Booker clotheslines the champ to the floor. Jeff is sent into the announcers' table but comes right back with an early sleeper back inside. A quick knee crusher and the Figure Four have Booker in trouble.

That's way too early (and since it's the Figure Four it's not likely to win a big match) so Booker makes the rope and runs into a double clothesline. The ax kick sets up a spinebuster for two but here's Canyon with a Cutter on the floor to knock Booker silly. Jeff gets the pin but before he can even get in some good celebrating, Cat comes out to say not so fast. The champ is thrown back in and a rollup gives Booker two.

The missile dropkick gets the same with the foot going on the ropes (When Booker hooked the leg. I don't think I've ever seen that.). A side kick hits the referee by mistake so there's no one to count after the Book End. Cat is going to be referee and counts two off another kick. Jeff knocks Cat out with the guitar and walks out as another referee calls that a DQ to end the show.

Rating: C+. Good match marred by too much stuff going on at once. Cat vs. Jarrett is about as far down on the Austin vs. McMahon scale as you can get but you can see what's going on and the promos are adequate so it's still firmly above whatever Russo and Bischoff were doing. Booker felt right in this role for the simple reason of he's spent years being built up. That's something so many people don't understand today: it's really hard to throw someone with no resume into the main event and expect it to work. Booker has been built up for about seven years at this point and it feels right to see him moving forward.

Overall Rating: D+. They really are trying to make Hogan feel like he doesn't matter here. It was so strange to not have Hogan, Nash or Goldberg around for an entire show as it was almost all about the young (well younger) guys for a change. That allowed for much better

storytelling because you didn't have so much focus on the old guys wanting to be champion but putting in the least amount of effort possible. It's even more proof of what WCW could have been if they didn't have so much chaos going on backstage to screw the whole thing up.

Remember to follow me on Twitter @kbreviews and pick up my new book of the History of Wrestlemania at Amazon for just \$3.99 at:

<http://www.amazon.com/dp/B0188BJRGU>

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

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

Well That Didn't Last Long

So you might remember me mentioning a new record for ad revenue on Wednesday. That record didn't even make it until Saturday.

Thank you all again as I'm still not over Wednesday let alone today.

So Let Me Make Sure I Have This Straight

It's even more proof of how out there WWE is at the moment.

You have the Wyatts vs. the Brothers of Destruction in a two on two match at Survivor Series and THE NEXT NIGHT they start a Dudleyz vs. Wyatts program. I would ask if I have to draw you a picture here but anyone should be able to figure this out.

Starrcade 1986: I Miss Magnum

Starrcade 1986

Date: November 27, 1986

Location: Greensboro Coliseum, Greensboro, North Carolina/The Omni, Atlanta, Georgia

Attendance: 16,000/14,000

Commentators: Tony Schiavone, Rick Stewart, Bob Caudle, Johnny Weaver

Much like last year, this show had a subtitle: Night of the Skywalkers. In this case it was because of a tag team scaffold match, meaning a scaffold was hung up above the ring and the team to knock their opponents to the mat below would win. Also we have the Andersons challenging the Rock and Roll Express in a cage for the world tag team titles. Let's get to it.

Jimmy Garvin vs. Brad Armstrong

Garvin is billed as Gorgeous Jimmy here and comes out to Sharp Dressed Man by ZZ Top. He also has a good looking blonde named Precious with him. The first match here is in Atlanta and we'll be alternating back and

forth. Schiavone and Stewart are the commentators here in Atlanta as well. They fight up against the ropes to start before heading into the corner with neither guy being able to get an advantage.

They go to the mat with neither guy being able to get any extended advantage. Back up and they fight over a top wristlock until Brad finally takes over with an armbar. Off to a headlock instead but Jimmy rolls Brad up for two. Now Jimmy grabs an armbar of his own but they roll into the ropes. Garvin grabs a leg lock and bends the knee back, only to have Armstrong reach his arm around into a chinlock to escape.

Off to an armbar by Brad and Jimmy taps, but that wouldn't mean anything in American wrestling for about seven years. Garvin counters into a headscissors as the back and forth mat work continues. Armstrong nips out of it and puts on another headlock, only to be countered into another headscissors. By this point you should be able to figure out what happens next on your own: Armstrong counters into a headlock.

Garvin tries to pick Armstrong up to slam him down, only to be dragged into another headlock to keep the match at a very slow clip. Back up and Jimmy suplexes out of the hold but can't immediately follow up. Armstrong gets sent out to the floor where Precious talks trash as we have three minutes left in the time limit. Back in and Garvin gets two after dropping Armstrong throat first onto the top rope.

A backbreaker gets the same and Jimmy is getting frustrated. They start running the ropes, only to crack heads and put both guys down again. Back up and Brad charges into a knee in the corner but even that only gets two. They trade rollups but Garvin puts on a chinlock of all things with fifteen seconds to go. He releases the hold and goes up, only to miss a top rope splash as the bell rings for the time limit draw.

Rating: D+. This was one of those matches where you could see the time limit draw coming a mile away. As is the Starrcade custom, the good guy can't win the opener and the opener is pretty dull stuff. Why they're so afraid to allow a good match to open the show is beyond me, but this was nothing of note at all. Neither guy would ever do much of note either.

Post match Garvin tries to jump Armstrong, only to get knocked to the

floor by some right hands.

Hector Guerrero/Baron Von Raschke vs. Shaska Whatley/Barbarian

Whatley and Barbarian are members of Paul Jones' Army while Guerrero and Raschke are kind of an oddball tag team. It's a big brawl to start with the Baron pairing off with Whatley as Hector sends Barbarian out to the floor. Hector and Shaska start things off with Guerrero hitting some fast paced offense for early control. It's off to Barbarian though to drop Hector throat first across the top rope, stopping his momentum cold.

Barbarian misses a running boot into the corner though and falls to the floor, allowing Hector to hit a BIG dive, taking out both Barbarian and Baron. That was a very big deal back then and still looks good even today. Whatley comes out to beat on Hector before throwing him inside for a gorilla press slam by Barbarian. A double backdrop puts Hector down for two and Whatley breaks up a potential hot tag to Baron.

Back to Barbarian for another near fall off a big boot followed by a backbreaker. Whatley sends him into the ropes and Hector spits right in his face, which is somehow enough for the hot tag off to the Baron. Raschke puts his Claw Hold on Shaska as everything breaks down. Barbarian breaks up the hold but gets pummeled in the corner by Hector. In the melee, Shaska misses a charge into the corner and Baron drops an elbow for the pin.

Rating: C. Just a basic tag match here which was fine for the most part. There was talk of a grudge coming in but there was not actual explanation given of what the feud was over or how everyone was involved. Baron seemed much more angry than Hector but that's normal for the both of them. Nothing bad here but it's just a tag match.

Post match Baron gets beaten down until Hector makes the save.

US Tag Titles: Krusher Khrushchev/Ivan Koloff vs. Kansas Jayhawks

The Jayhawks are Bobby Jagers and Dutch Mantell, the latter of which would eventually join the WWE under a variety of names, including Zeb Colter. This is a rematch of a tournament final where the Russians won

the belts and there are no disqualifications. Dutch and Ivan start things off but it's quickly off to Jagers to pound away on the older Russian. Ivan actually busts out a rollup for two but it's quickly back to Dutch to work on the arm.

Krusher gets a tag in and it's time for some stalling. Mantell pounds away on the forehead and the Jayhawks choke away in the corner before it's off to Jagers again. That goes nowhere so here's Dutch again, but those sneaky Russians trick him into some double teaming. The power of AMERICA saves him from the Russians though and Dutch fights both guys off with relative ease. Ivan sends Dutch to the floor though and into the barricade to shift control.

Off to Krusher for some double teaming, but Dutch fights back with a double clothesline and there's the hot tag to Jagers. Some AMERICAN right hands have the Russians in trouble and a clothesline gets two on Ivan. Everything breaks down but there's nothing the referee can do because it's no disqualification. Ivan goes up top but gets hit by Dutch's whip to bring him down. Krusher is sent to the floor but sneaks back up onto the apron to hit Jagers in the back of the head with the chain, allowing Ivan to get the easy pin to retain the titles.

Rating: C. Another basic tag match here but it was at a slightly faster pace, making it a more entertaining match for the most part. The Russians continue to be a perfectly fine midcard heel act as the Cold War was still going on at this point. The Jayhawks never did much of anything as a team and would fade into obscurity pretty soon after the start of the new year.

Rick Rude vs. Wahoo McDaniel

Rude is a newcomer and not very polished in the ring but he would get WAY better. This is an Indian strap match, meaning they're tied at the wrist and you have to drag your opponent around the ring and touch all four buckles to win. If your opponent breaks your momentum though, you have to start again. Rude spends too much time posing so Wahoo whips him with the strap. Wahoo scares Rude's manager Paul Jones off and we're ready to go. This is the third of four Starrcades where a match featured people being

tied together. It's a popular idea for some reason.

Wahoo immediately takes him down by the rope and Rude runs to the floor. That gets him nowhere as Wahoo pulls him right back inside with a casual tug. Rude sends him into the corner and wraps the strap around his fist to pound away on Wahoo. With McDaniel down, Rude ties Wahoo's hands together with the rope and touches two buckles, only to have Wahoo grab the rope with his feet. Wahoo chokes away in the corner with the strap and now it's Rude in trouble.

In a smart move, Wahoo grabs both of Rude's hands and drags him around the ring while touching the buckles with his head. He gets three buckles but Rude kicks him down to break the streak. Rude goes up top for some reason, only to be pulled down with ease by the much stronger Wahoo. McDaniel crawls around and gets to the third buckle, only to have Rude knock him into the fourth for the surprising win.

Rating: D. Nothing to see here at all as is the case with most of the four corners variety of these matches. At the end of the day, the ending is almost always the same with only some mild alterations and this was no different. Wahoo wouldn't be around much longer while Rude would be in the WWF by July.

Post match Rude and Jones beat Wahoo down until Hector Guerrero and Von Raschke make the save.

Central States Title: Sam Houston vs. Bill Dundee

This is another regional title from Kansas/Missouri with Houston defending. Dundee is from Australia and was a Memphis mainstay for years. Houston only won the belt about two weeks before this, beating Dundee in a tournament final. Again, why not have the tournament final here? Sam takes over with an armbar to start, only to be thrown to the mat by Dundee. They trade headlocks and rollups on the mat with Dundee finally getting control.

Back up and Houston takes him down with a flying headscissors to over on the mat. Now a dropkick puts Dundee down but he comes back with a classic hair pull to take the champion to the mat. Sam grabs a headlock of his

own and a rollup out of the corner for two. In a scary sounding spot, Dundee pulls Sam out of the floor and onto the announce table to really take over for a change.

Scratch that again as Dundee goes out to get him, only to be dropped onto the barricade to keep Houston in control. Back in and Sam pounds away but charges into a boot in the corner. A top rope punch to Houston on the mat gets a close two for Bill and it's off to another chinlock. That gets Dundee nowhere so here's a Boston Crab instead. A top rope shot to Houston's head gets two and it's off to a front facelock.

Sam fights up and elbows Dundee down before dropping a pair of knees. Only the first one hits though so Bill goes after the knee. He puts on a spinning toe hold but Sam kicks out of it, losing his boot in the process. Dundee crashes into the referee and blasts Sam with his own boot, but gets caught and disqualified. For what? The boot is legal on Sam's foot but not when it's off of Sam's foot?

Rating: C-. Not a terrible match or anything here but it never went anywhere. Houston just wasn't that interesting to watch most of the time, primarily due to being such a small guy. Dundee was much better down in Memphis and never quite clicked on the big stage for some reason. Not a bad match but just kind of there for the most part.

Dundee beats on Houston with the boot post match. He would win the title in early January.

Jimmy Valiant vs. Paul Jones

Remember when these two were fighting at Starrcade 1984? This is a hair vs. hair match with Valiant putting up his female companion (that's the best way to describe her) Big Mama's hair against Jones'. This isn't their first hair match either as I think they wound up having three in total. Jones' main guy Manny Fernandez is going to be locked in a small cage above the ring to prevent interference. It takes a small army of wrestlers to get Fernandez inside the cage.

Valiant pounds away on a terrified Jones to start and Paul just tries to hide. Jones sticks his chest out to be scratched by Valiant, who is in

orange and black striped tights for some reason. Paul pulls out a foreign object to pound away at Valiant for two. Jimmy fights up and kicks Jones in the leg before being knocked back down again. Paul tries the Indian Deathlock but Valiant fights up and pounds Jones down before locking in the sleeper. Jones tries the foreign object again but Valiant takes it away and knocks Jones out for the pin.

Rating: D-. This was pretty terrible and I have no idea why this feud went on for so many years. Valiant was a popular guy but nothing more than a glorified comedy act while Jones might be the most worthless manager of all time. When you have two stipulation matches in three years with no break in the feud, that's way too much interaction between the same two people.

Post match Valiant cuts the hair but Manny Fernandez gets out of the cage, allowing he and Rick Rude to lay out Valiant. They hit a double DDT onto a chair and leave with their humiliated manager.

Ron Garvin vs. Big Bubba Rogers

Garvin is Mid-Atlantic Champion but this is non-title. It's also a street fight and Bubba, a 400lb monster who can move very quickly and is dressed as a gangster for lack of a better term, has Jim Cornette as his manager. You can only win by pinfall or knocking someone down for a ten count. Why not just cover them for three instead of waiting the extra seven seconds? Falls count anywhere also. Oh and this is a Louisville (Cornette's hometown) street fight in Atlanta.

Garvin gets in some quick right hands to stagger Bubba so the big man asks for a test of strength. Ron agrees but sucker punches Bubba down in a smart bit. Garvin is in street clothes here which works for a street fight. Back in and Bubba throws Garvin onto the announce table and out to the floor as we pause again. While out there, Garvin picks up a drink and throws it in Bubba's face to get an advantage. He goes NUTS on Bubba, pounding him out to the floor with rights and lefts.

Back in and Garvin chokes away but Cornette slipped Bubba something and a shot to Ron's head changes control again. Bubba punches him down a few times for a couple of four counts but Ron comes back with more punches.

Garvin pulls out a rope of some kind and ties Bubba's leg down with it before choking away. Bubba comes back with some right hands of his own and slaps on a bearhug like any good monster would.

Garvin doesn't appear to be in pain at all and headbutts his way out of the hold. A BIG right hand puts Rogers on the floor and he's almost out cold. Back in for, of course, more punching from Garvin. Bubba is knocked to the floor where he gains control by the power of fat, but as they go back in Ron slams him down off the top rope.

The referee is crushed (as has happened A LOT tonight) and Ron piledrives Bubba down, only to have Cornette blast him with the tennis racket. The referee gets up and counts both guys out to ten, but there has to be a winner. It's the first man to his feet gets the win apparently, and with Bubba distracting the referee, Cornette nails Ron in the knee with the racket to give Bubba the easy win.

Rating: D+. This didn't do it for me. Garvin throws a decent punch, but other than that there was nothing to see here from either guy. It wasn't terrible or anything but I need more than eleven minutes of punching and a screwy finish with Cornette hitting Ron in the knee with a tennis racket. Not much to see here.

TV Title: Tully Blanchard vs. Dusty Rhodes

This is a first blood match as the gimmicks continue. Tully is challenging and has JJ Dillon with him here. The referee stops JJ from putting either protective gear and Vaseline on Tully's head. Instead Dusty elbows Dillon in the head to bust him open. That's quite the message. Tully misses a knee in the corner to start and they circle each other a bit. Both guys go after the others' head but no contact is actually made.

They circle each other even more until Dusty hits a headbutt to put Tully down. As expected the referee checks both guys because using a headbutt in a first blood match is a stupid idea. Rhodes pounds at the ribs in the corner before hitting the Bionic Elbow to the head. Dusty lays down on the leg, because leaving your head exposed like that could NEVER backfire on him at all. Blanchard rolls to the floor and we stall again.

Back in and Tully drops an elbow and rakes at Dusty's head only to have Rhodes come back and drop a knee. The referee goes down (AGAIN) and JJ throws in his signature shoe. Rhodes throws it away and elbows Tully in the head. A bunch of right hands bust open Blanchard's head but there's no referee. Tully is knocked down, allowing JJ to rub Vaseline on the cut to stop the bleeding. He also hands Dusty a roll of coins to knock Dusty out cold and bust him open for the title.

Rating: D-. This was about seven minutes of stalling and covering heads before the overdone ending. The referee bumps are getting really old at this point as there have been what, five or six so far on this show? Dusty continues to not have much in the ring aside from one good match with Flair last year. This was very little to see due to all of the stalling.

Midnight Express vs. Road Warriors

This is the scaffold match, meaning there's a scaffold about fifteen feet above the ring and you have to knock your opponents off to win. The Express is Bobby Eaton and Dennis Condrey and they have Cornette and Bubba with them. On the other hand we have Hawk and Animal, the Road Warriors. These two were BEASTS who were basically indestructable and insanelly popular.

Condrey thinks about going up to face the Warriors but climbs back down because he's not that crazy. Cornette, who is legitimately terrified of heights, goes on a rant about how this isn't civilized. Dennis and Bobby finally get up top and the punishment begins. The scaffold is maybe three feet wide and there are no railings on it at all so they can barely move up there. There are some railings at either end so at least there's some safety up there.

The Express throws powder in the Warriors' eyes to blind them which is pretty terrifying this high up. Hawk's legs go over the edge but he crawls back up. Animal is laying down with one leg dangling over and Bobby winds up hanging from said leg. He manages to swing back over to the structure and climb back up as this continues. Condrey is cut open and tries to climb down the ladder but he gets rammed into the scaffold

for his efforts by Hawk.

Condrey and Hawk get under the scaffold and kick at each other with Condrey trying to monkey bar away. Animal and Bobby join them and a few moments later the Express get kicked down, giving the Road Warriors the win. As someone who is scared of heights, my stomach can now calm down.

Rating: D+. This is a hard one to grade as it's hard to criticize them for moving around so slowly given the fear of potential death involved. There's only so much you can do that high in the air with no safety rails and they did as much as they could have. The Road Warriors would move on to feuding with the Horsemen soon after this.

Post match we get the famous part of the match as Cornette goes up top and runs into Animal. Cornette tries to climb down and winds up hanging from the bottom of the scaffold. He drops down...and Bubba isn't there to catch him. Jim lands on his legs and basically destroys both of them, causing him problems for the rest of his life. Cornette tries to shout to Bubba to carry him to the back because his legs don't work but his legs are so destroyed that he can't get his point across. Animal later said in interviews that it was the funniest thing he's ever seen.

World Tag Titles: Arn Anderson/Ole Anderson vs. Rock N Roll Express

The Express is defending and this is inside a cage. You win by pinfall here and have to tag in and out so it's Robert Gibson vs. Ole to start, but everything breaks down in just a few seconds. Arn winds up in there with Robert and Gibson rams his head into the cage a few times to send Arn over for a tag. Off to Ricky vs. Ole but Ole gets kicked in the face, sending it back to Arn.

Things slow down a bit with Arn being afraid to go after Ricky again. Morton grabs the arm and it's off to Robert for some arm work. He misses a running knee in the corner though and Arn goes after the leg. Ole comes in to cannonball down onto the leg before it's back to Arn. Robert kicks him into the cage to counter a figure four, but Ole breaks up the hot tag to Ricky.

Back to Arn again as the leg work continues. It's odd to see the

Andersons working on a leg instead of an arm but it's a limb nonetheless. Robert FINALLY hits an enziguri for the hot tag off to Morton, but Ole immediately sends him into the cage to stop him cold. Now we get to the arm work and things instantly feel better. Arn comes in to stomp Morton down and it's back to Ole to whip Ricky shoulder first into the corner.

Off to an armbar as Ricky appears to be busted open. There's the hammerlock slam from Arn but he makes the eternal mistake of going up top. Much like Flair, Arn has almost never been able to hit his shot off the top and it's the same here. Morton punches him on the way down but Ole breaks up the tag yet again. A shoulder breaker gets two and Arn wraps the bar arm around the top rope. Ricky comes back with a clothesline and both guys are down.

Ole gets the tag and kicks Ricky in the arm to keep him down as the torment continues. Off to another armbar but Ricky gets in a shot to the ribs and several the head to come back. Arn takes Morton down yet again to prevent a tag before hitting the yet to be named spinebuster for two. Ole comes off the top for a knee into the arm and cranks on another armbar. Ricky is in big trouble here.

Back up and Ole collides with Ricky while running the ropes to put both guys down. Arn breaks up the tag (I'm having deja vu from typing that so many times) but Ricky headbutts him down and....gets jumped by Ole. Out of nowhere Ricky grabs a small package for two as everything breaks down. Ole picks up Ricky for a slam but Robert dropkicks Ricky's back and knocks him down onto Ole for the pin to retain out of nowhere.

Rating: B+. I really liked the curve ball they threw us in here by not having the hot tag which the standard tag team formula would suggest there would be. This was Playing Ricky Morton as I mentioned in last year's show and it was done to perfection. He could take a beating like no one else could and the fans totally bought into it every time. Really good old school tag team match here.

We get a highlight reel of Magnum TA who had to retire at age 27.

NWA World Title: Ric Flair vs. Nikita Koloff

Koloff is US Champion coming in. The problem here again is that there's no real reason for these two to be fighting but it's all the NWA could do given the circumstances. The referee explains the rules to both guys and with a WOO from Flair we're ready to go. Koloff easily shoves Flair down to start which doesn't seem to surprise him. Nikita flexes at him and the champion heads to the floor to think this over. Back in and Nikita twists Flair's hand around, sending Flair into chop move. Nikita just stares at Ric so the champ bails again.

Back in and Ric can't hiptoss him, but Nikita can throw Flair around with ease. Flair is LAUNCHED across the ring in a few slams and it's all Nikita so far. Off to a bearhug and Koloff leans forward with it for a few near falls. Flair pokes him in the eye to escape and hits a quick vertical suplex with no effect at all. Ric bails to the floor to think again before walking into a headlock. Flair goes to the eyes again and ducks the Russian Sickle, sending Nikita out to the floor, injuring his knee in the process.

They go back inside and Flair chop blocks the knee out as Ric is in his element. There's the Figure Four and Flair grabs the rope for good measure. Nikita turns the hold over into the ropes for the break so Flair starts chopping away in the corner. Since Koloff's upper body looks like he's carved out of granite, those have almost no effect whatsoever. Flair instead sends him to the floor as the match slows down a bit.

The champion throws him back inside for a belly to back suplex before just pounding away at Nikita's bald head. All the punches seem to do though is just wake Nikita up and he whips Flair into the corner and out to the floor. Flair is sent into the post and comes up bloody as is his custom. They head back in and Nikita hits a flying shoulder tackle and, say it with me, the referee gets knocked down.

The Russian Sickle hits but there's no referee. Flair knees Nikita in the back and a second referee comes in for a two count, only to get nailed by the Russian Sickle. Two referee bumps in one match? I think we get the point already people. The first referee comes back in but gets shoved down and that's finally the DQ.

Rating: B-. Eh that wasn't bad. Seriously that's about all there is to say here. Flair did this same match hundreds of times and here it happened to be against Nikita Koloff and end in a disqualification. At the end of the day, there was no feud here and they were doing the best they could. It's certainly a good match and not at all something you'll be bored out of your mind watching, but it pretty much comes and goes, like a lot of stuff tonight.

Post match a bunch of guys come out but no one can keep Nikita off Flair. They brawl for a good three minutes until Flair is dragged to the back to end the show.

Overall Rating: D+. Well they tried. At the end of the day though there was only one match that mattered on this show and it was ended as soon as Magnum wrapped his car around that tree. There was no way they were going to change the title here, even if it was likely the right move given the circumstances. It's not the worst show ever, but there's nothing on here that you might want to see aside from the cage match. Check out last year's show again instead.

Remember to follow me on Twitter @kbreviews and pick up my new book of the History of Wrestlemania at Amazon for just \$3.99 at:

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Smackdown – November 26, 2015: Thanks For Something No One Will See

Smackdown

Date: November 26, 2015

Location: Bankers Life Fieldhouse, Indianapolis, Indiana

Commentators: Booker T., Rich Brennan, Jerry Lawler

First of all, Happy Thanksgiving. We're in a strange period at the moment as we're waiting on TLC and the fans don't seem to be thrilled. Sheamus is World Champion again as Roman Reigns somehow managed to get screwed out of the title again. Those five minutes he held the title were the only five minutes a true good guy had held the title since Summerslam 2014. Let's get to it.

Here's Reigns to open things up with a table, a ladder and a chair in the ring. Reigns talks about wrestling with the Usos in the house, in the yard, at the beach and all over the streets. Their favorite spot was always on the trampoline though because they would always dream of winning the World Title. That actually happened this Sunday but it was a short dream because Sheamus crushed his face with a Brogue Kick.

This brings out Sheamus, which is probably best as they're keeping Reigns' talking short. Sheamus calls Reigns a walking Adele song and says he's been in elevators longer than Reigns was champion. You can't even heat up a frozen burrito in the time Reigns held the title. The fans (or at least the ones recorded and played back here) don't like these comments so Sheamus goes on about Reigns' success this past Sunday. All Reigns had to do was shake HHH's hand on Sunday but Reigns speared the boss instead. That was all Sheamus needed to see before he came down to the ring and snatched the title away.

Reigns says come down here and see what happens in five minutes. Sheamus comes down but of course stops and laughs. He'll see Reigns in his nightmares, fella. Reigns wants a preview of TLC, where he's going to

break Sheamus' jaw with a Superman Punch. Then he'll break his back with a chair and powerbomb him through a table. When Sheamus can't get up, Reigns is going to climb up and win the title all over again. This was good and would make for an awesome midcard title feud, but Sheamus just does not fit as the World Champion after how horribly he's been booked in recent months. You can't just erase that time.

Dudley Boyz vs. Erick Rowan/Braun Strowman

Sequel to Monday where Harper and Wyatt beat the Dudleyz. D-Von hammers on Rowan to start and clotheslines him into the corner for the tag off to Bubba. Strowman is requested though and Bubba grabs a headlock. That actually works for a few seconds before Strowman throws him into the corner and blasts Bubba with a clothesline. Rowan wraps Bubba's arm around the post and we take a break.

Back with Strowman staying on the arm. A guy his size working on an armbar really doesn't look right. Rowan kicks Bubba in the face but eats a clothesline, allowing for the tag off to D-Von. Some clotheslines put Rowan down and everything breaks down. It's table time but Harper comes in with a superkick for the DQ at 9:25.

Rating: C. Totally fine but I'm over the Wyatts at this point. There's no reason to believe that this is going anywhere but at least they're fighting a team they could conceivably beat. The long term solution for the Wyatts is to have them actually win something as they don't have any real accomplishments to make you believe they could pull off something bigger.

Post match Strowman chokes D-Von out and puts him through the table.

New Day skills merchandise better than anyone since DX.

Becky Lynch vs. Paige

Becky armdrags her around to start and a dropkick puts Paige on the floor. Back in and some legdrops get two each for Becky but a quick fall away slam gives Paige control as we take a break. Back with Paige cranking on both arms before missing a big kick to the head. Becky's t-

bone suplex gets two but she can't get the Disarm-Her. Instead Paige sends her throat first into the middle rope and grabs a rollup for the pin at 9:03. It sounds a bit lame but Paige couldn't get her feet onto the ropes to cheat, which would have made it a lot better.

Rating: C-. The ending hurt it as it Becky just got pinned off a lame move but at least they were trying. Paige probably should have grabbed some trunks or something to save the scene but it's Smackdown on a holiday so they'll be lucky to only set a new record for viewership futility. Not very good, though it's nice to see Becky getting ring time for a change.

The New Day is holding a potluck dinner and Big E. is in a chef's hat. The Divas seem more interested in his tricep meat and it's time to dance while they clap THANKS TO US. Heath Slater brings in Slater Slaw but Big E. finds a Band-Aid. Adam Rose offers some rabbit stew to freak Big E. out even more. The Ascension brings desolation and destruction so they're thrown out.

There's a disagreement over who was supposed to bring the turkey but here's Gobbledy Gooker, as played by Xavier Woods. It was the Gooker's anniversary this Sunday too and it's time to dance. Lawler: "Somewhere the real Gobbledy Gooker is rolling over in his gravy." Dang it Lawler stop making me chuckle at bad jokes.

Alberto Del Rio vs. Jack Swagger

Non-title of course. Before the match, Colter talks about not knowing Swagger anymore due to Jack's blind American loyalty. Del Rio says that Swagger is going to be thankful that he can walk out of the building. Alberto kicks him into the corner to start but a double leg takedown puts Del Rio on the mat.

Never mind though as he plants Jack with a DDT and stomps away even more. Then to really mix it up, he stomps away from the middle rope. A quick powerslam gets two for Jack and they head outside for a clothesline to put Alberto in the timekeeper's area. Swagger looks at Colter so Del Rio chairs him in the back for the DQ at 3:08.

Rating: D. Dang it this is going to continue. Swagger is such a lame duck challenger and has been for years but that won't stop them from pushing him as an American. I mean, it's a really important and valuable character to have and it's not like THEY COULD GIVE IT TO SOMEONE ELSE instead right? This was story advancement and likely a way to set up a chairs match for the title at the pay per view.

Post match Jack gets the chair and chases them off.

The Usos run into the Gobbledy Gooker and Jimmy has an idea.

Lucha Dragons vs. New Day

Non-title. The Gooker is accompanying Big E. and Kofi here. Kofi and Kalisto start things off as the fans seem to be behind New Day. Cara comes in and drops Kalisto into a backplash for two as the Dragons take over. Kofi's hurricanrana is countered into a sunset flip for two more but it's quickly off to Big E. to change momentum. The Gooker gets on the apron for some dancing (Lawler: "A turkey twerk?") and some interference by pulling Cara out to the floor as we take a break.

Back with Cara suffering the Unicorn Stampede (it's deadly you know) and the Warrior Splash for two. Another splash misses though and it's off to Kalisto to speed things up. The hurricanrana driver plants Kofi and a springboard kick to the head knocks E. to the floor. Kofi tries a rollup and puts his feet on the ropes but the Gooker shoves them away, setting up a springboard Salida Del Sol for the pin at 8:25.

Rating: C. I think you know what's coming after the match so I don't think it's a spoiler to suggest a triple threat tag match, preferably with ladders involved, at TLC. This is another match that didn't have enough time to go anywhere but it could be entertaining if they were allowed to go somewhere.

Of course the Gooker is revealed as an Uso. The other one brings out Woods in his underwear with his hands taped together. The Usos superkick and splash the helpless Woods. Dude that's evil.

Tyler Breeze is ready for his match against Dean Ug-brose and Dolph

Ziggler. They're just jealous of Breeze's style and tonight it's time to get gorgeous.

Undertaker anniversary video.

Renee Young (looking better than usual tonight) asks Dean Ambrose about his #1 contenders match for the Intercontinental Title tonight. Ambrose says the win over Owens on Sunday wasn't luck and neither was Reigns beating him because Reigns was the better man. He doesn't believe in luck though and tonight he's winning because he's the better man.

Tyler Breeze vs. Dean Ambrose vs. Dolph Ziggler

Winner gets an Intercontinental Title shot, likely at TLC. Champion Kevin Owens comes out to watch do commentary. Owens during Dolph's entrance: "Hang on. He's going to show the world." Ambrose throws his hoodie at Owens but Kevin says the joke's on Dean because now he gets a free hoodie. Breeze gets sent to the floor to start, leaving Dean to send Ziggler outside as well. Dean dives onto Breeze but gets superkicked down. Ziggler stares at Owens ("You want the hoodie?") as we take a break.

Back with Breeze shoving Ziggler off the apron before focusing on Ambrose. The rebound lariat is broken up as Ziggler superkicking Ambrose when he's bouncing off the ropes in a cool break. The Fameasser gets two on Ambrose and now the rebound lariat takes Ziggler down. Breeze throws Dean to the floor but gets taken down by Dean's top rope elbow.

All three are back up so Dean and Ziggler try cross bodies at the same time, only to crush Breeze in the middle instead. Why that puts Ziggler and Ambrose down when they just hit a regular move isn't clear. The Zig Zag gets two on Dean with Breeze making the save. There's the Beauty Shot to Ziggler but Dean hits a quick Dirty Deeds to Tyler for the pin at 10:52.

Rating: B. Since when is Ziggler not allowed to do jobs in matches like this? The entire point to having him out there should be to avoid having the newcomer take a fall, but I'm sure they have BIG plans for Dolph in the future. This was a really fun match though with some actually fresh

spots and Owens killing it on commentary. It's really cool to see the midcard title getting some focus here and they would be well served by having more #1 contenders matches.

Owens and Ambrose stare each other down to end the show.

Overall Rating: C+. This was exactly what you would expect from a holiday show that no one is going to watch. Ambrose winning was the only storyline advancement, which is probably more than you would expect out of most Smackdowns. The New Day stuff was funny of course and the whole thing felt like a big, easy week, which is all it needed to be.

Results

Dudley Boyz b. Erick Rowan/Braun Strowman via DQ when Luke Harper interfered

Paige b. Becky Lynch – Rollup

Jack Swagger b. Alberto Del Rio via DQ when Del Rio used a chair

Lucha Dragons b. New Day – Springboard Salida Del Sol to Kingston

Dean Ambrose b. Tyler Breeze and Dolph Ziggler – Dirty Deeds to Ambrose

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Ring of Honor TV – November 25, 2015: Destination Awesome

Ring of Honor

Date: November 25, 2015

Location: Wings Stadium Annex, Kalamazoo, Michigan

Commentators: Nigel McGuinness, Kevin Kelly

This is a big show with a big main event as we have Roderick Strong challenging Jay Lethal for the TV Title to continue their long and rather entertaining feud over the last year or so. We're getting closer and close to Final Battle and it's about time to have a build between AJ Styles and Lethal for the World Title so maybe they can tie it in here. Let's get to it.

As a side note, this is the final episode on Destination America, though the show will still air in syndication as it has for years now.

Opening sequence.

Moose vs. Dominic Carter

Spear ends Carter in five seconds.

Post match Moose's manager Stokely Carmichael says Jay Lethal will only be World Champion until Moose gets his hands on him. Carmichael thinks he heard this last week from Michael Elgin, who isn't as big or strong or talented as Moose. Therefore, Elgin needs to go to the back of the line where he belongs.

Instead Elgin comes out here to say that Moose did win his match faster than Elgin did last week, but there's a bit of a size difference. Big Mike is ready to give Moose some real competition any time he's ready. Moose says we can do it right now but here's the House of Truth (minus Jay Lethal but including Taeler Hendrix (good lord)) to laugh all this off and call them out for using Lethal's name to get over. Elgin says he'll be in a hotel with Hendrix later. Those are fighting words and a

tag match is on.

J. Diesel/Donovan Dijak vs. Michael Elgin/Moose

It's a big brawl to start until we take a break. Back with Elgin taking Dijak down with an enziguri and a dropkick for good measure. Moose comes in for his own dropkick and then a suplex, challenging Elgin to best that. Elgin's suplex is in fact longer but he stops to argue with Moose, allowing the House of Truth to make a comeback. Everything breaks down and Hendrix grabs Elgin for a distraction. Dijak grabs a good looking chokebreaker on Elgin as Kelly talks about Diesel wanting to go by Joey Diesel Daddiago or however that is spelled.

Moose makes his comeback on Diesel but Dijak jumps him from behind. Without a tag, Elgin sends both of them to the floor for an apron cannonball before teasing a kiss on Hendrix. That sexual assault goes nowhere so it's a German suplex for two on Diesel instead. Everything breaks down again and Elgin buckle bombs Diesel, followed by a spear from Moose after a blind tag for the pin at 11:33.

Rating: C. This was all storytelling instead of a good match and there's nothing wrong with that. Moose vs. Elgin has the potential to be two guys beating the heck out of each other for fifteen minutes at Final Battle and that's all it needs to be. Lethal vs. either one could be a fun match on a big stage so everyone wins. Well save for whichever of them loses.

Moose and Elgin stare each other down as Elgin didn't like that blind tag.

Long video on Strong wanting one more match to prove he can beat Lethal. It's not about either title but rather Strong's pride. They were smart to keep this taped as Strong live can be a disaster. He's downright listenable taped though.

Story Time with Adam Cole focuses on the Kingdom being great Tag Team Champions. War Machine will get their hopeless title shot at Final Battle and Cole will beat up Dalton Castle next week. Simple, to the point and natural here.

Here's the Decade so BJ Whitmer can rip on Steve Corino for lying about his neck surgery. Whitmer can't believe that Nigel McGuinness bought it because McGuinness lied about being hurt a few years back. Nigel isn't going to take this and gets in the ring to....say the Decade can't be at Final Battle either.

TV Title: Roderick Strong vs. Jay Lethal

Lethal is defending and this is their third match of the year with Lethal holding a 1-0-1 lead. There's no Truth Martini here but there are two referees to make sure it's a fair fight. They go to the mat to start with Lethal bailing outside when he can't keep up. An armbar frustrates the champion even more and he teases leaving, only to get dragged back in and chopped as a punishment.

We take a break with Roderick in control and come back with Jay firing off chops on the floor. Roderick tastes the barricade (needs some honey mustard) but is thrown back in at a thirteen count. Back in and they chop each other some more until Lethal takes over with a headlock. Well it's better than the standard chinlock. A quick enziguri gives Strong a breather and he fires off his running strikes before picking Jay up for a backbreaker.

Back from another break with Lethal missing a dropkick but grabbing the Lethal Combination for two. There's a Koji Clutch (which just looks cool) until Strong crawls over to the ropes and bails outside for a breather. Two straight suicide dives have Strong in trouble but he avoids a third. Well yeah he should after Lethal does the same thing three times. Back in and Lethal gets caught on the top for a kind of reverse belly to back suplex.

The Strong Hold is broken up and a Lethal Injection gets two. Strong comes right back with three straight knees to the face but a superplex is countered into a top rope bulldog. That only gets two more so Strong pops up for another knee to the head. The Sick Kick and a suplex into a backbreaker set up the Strong Hold to FINALLY end Lethal's eighteen month reign at 21:48.

Rating: B+. They really didn't have any other choice here and that's

often the best thing that can happen. Lethal had held the title for so long that it didn't mean anything anymore and now it's freed up for others to have their run with it instead. I've never been a fan of having one person as a double champion so it's a good move to let Lethal just be World Champion. The match itself was really solid stuff too with the ending being the best part as Strong just threw everything he had at Lethal until Jay couldn't stand up any longer.

The House of Truth pulls Lethal out as Strong poses to end the show.

Overall Rating: A-. When a third of your show is one really solid match and the other major story is building up to what should be a fun match at Final Battle, everyone wins here. Everyone is on point right now and it's making the build for Final Battle all the better. Good stuff here with another solid show, as it's been for a long time now.

Remember to follow me on Twitter @kbreviews and pick up my new book of the History of Wrestlemania at Amazon for just \$3.99 at:

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Happy Thanksgiving And Thank You Very Much

First of all, I hope you all have a safe and happy Thanksgiving. If you don't celebrate it, take a few minutes

and think about the people or things that you're lucky enough to have. It's a nice thing to do every now and then.

Second, thank you all so much for being around so much this week. It's been by far and away my best week ever for the ad revenue with a new record yesterday in a huge surprise. That and the book sales going way up are making things a lot easier on me and meaning I can switch around and do some more fun shows instead of the stuff I have to do to draw the biggest audiences. It's a very nice break and makes this a lot more fun than it already is.

Thank you all so much and I'm very grateful to everyone who sticks with me for reasons that I'll never fully comprehend. When I see the amount of people that show up as soon as Raw or a pay per view is over, it often makes me shake my head at the thought that so many people want to see what I have to say about it. Thank you for checking out what I have to say every day because it actually has changed my life for the much better.

KB

New Column: For Whom The Bell Tolls 25 Times

<http://www.wrestlingrumors.net/kbs-review-for-whom-the-bell-tolls-25-times/45760/>

I had to talk about Undertaker at some point.

Impact Wrestling – November 25, 2015: Thank Goodness

Impact Wrestling

Date: November 25, 2015

Location: Impact Zone, Orlando, Florida

Commentators: Josh Matthews, D'Angelo Dinero

It's the final night of group play as we're finally going to know the final sixteen people who could become the new World Champion. That means the matches almost all have meaning for a change, which should mix things up a good bit. There's no word on what happens after this but the finals should be coming soon. Let's get to it.

We open with the standard recap and preview.

Group X-Division: DJZ vs. Manik vs. Tigre Uno

This is a playoff after these three tied in points. It's a two fall match with the winner of the first fall getting to leave and then the second winner advancing as well. They all go after each other to start with Tigre sending both guys to the floor and hitting a huge moonsault off the top to take them both out. Back in and Manik and Uno trade arm holds until DJZ comes back in to break it up, only to be sent to the floor. Manik puts Tigre in a Gory Special and adds a reverse Boston crab to DJZ at the same time. Back up and DJZ grabs a quick double DDT to advance to the round of sixteen.

Tigre starts fast with a reverse suplex into a Stunner for two (cool move) but gets caught in a cross armbreaker. That sends Tigre to the ropes so Manik tries a belly to back superplex, only to get elbowed down.

A split legged corkscrew moonsault sends Tigre to the next round at 7:57.

Rating: C. This is becoming my standard rating for an X-Division match. It didn't have much time to go anywhere, the high spots were fun and the title meant nothing. I'm really not sure what they see in DJZ going forward after the changes to Manik but why bother with potential when you can go with comedy?

Drew Galloway was in Glasgow and talks about being married to this business because it's all you have time for as a wrestler. This is the longest time he's been home in ten years and he can't wait to come back here with his perfect partner: the World Heavyweight Championship.

Group UK: Rockstar Spud vs. Drew Galloway

Feeling out process to start until Drew unleashes the power with a gorilla press. They head outside with Drew sending him back first into the apron, only to miss a charge and go head first into the steps. Drew barely beats the count back in and misses a charge into the post to make things even worse. Some running dropkicks and an enziguri mean it's time for Spud to take off the bowtie. The Underdog is broken up but Drew can't bring himself to take a cheap shot, allowing Spud to grab a jumping DDT for two. Not that it matters as the Claymore (running boot, to the chest in this case) puts Spud away at 7:17.

Rating: B-. Better than I was expecting here as Spud has found that perfect formula to make you believe that he could pull off a huge upset like this without it being ridiculous. Galloway is going to make a deep run in this thing and it's cool to see him have to sweat a bit against someone who is fun to watch in Spud. Good match here and better than I was hoping for.

Group UK

Drew Galloway – 9 points (0 matches remaining)

Bram – 3 points (1 match remaining)

Rockstar Spud – 3 points (0 matches remaining)

Grado – 0 points (1 match remaining)

Group UK: Grado vs. Bram

If Bram wins, he advances to the round of sixteen. If Grado wins, there's a three way playoff with Spud, Bram and Grado later tonight. Grado dances a lot and gets rolled up in four seconds. They had to get seven matches in tonight so this almost had to happen at some point.

Group UK

Drew Galloway – 9 points (0 matches remaining)

Bram – 6 points (0 matches remaining)

Rockstar Spud – 3 points (0 matches remaining)

Grado – 0 points (0 matches remaining)

Group Future Four: Micah vs. Jesse Godderz

Winner advances. Micah gets sent to the floor to start as Pope talks about getting the job done no matter what he was doing. Well he certainly did a lot of jobs so he's got something there. Back in and Jesse slowly pounds away until Micah makes his comeback to indifference. A Samoan drop puts Jesse down but he avoids a top rope headbutt, setting up the Adonis Crab to advance Jesse at 4:29.

Rating: D. Is there a reason Micah has a job? He's generic in the ring, no one cares about him, and I don't remember a single thing about him. Jesse is starting to turn a very weak corner and it's always good to have a heel that you want to see get punched in the face. At least they kept this quick as this group has been death since it started.

Group Future Four

Eli Drake – 7 points (0 matches remaining)

Jesse Godderz – 6 points (0 matches remaining)

Micah – 4 points (0 matches remaining)

Crimson – 0 points (0 matches remaining)

Recap of Group Tag Team.

Kurt Angle has been in the UK to hype up the Maximum Impact tour. He officially announced his retirement tour and says his run is over, possibly after this tour.

Group Tag Team Specialists: Robbie E. vs. Davey Richards

Winner advances. They trade armdrags to start and it's an early standoff. Robbie's armbar doesn't work and Davey sends him to the floor, only to have Robbie switch places for a flip dives off the apron. Back in and Davey takes over with a clothesline and inverted Indian deathlock. Robbie fights up with some clotheslines to set up the Boom Drop for a close two, more or less sealing his fate. They trade rollups until Davey stomps onto Robbie's chest for two more. Creeping Death advances Davey at 7:15.

Rating: C+. Gah I can't stand Davey Richards. He's fun when he's out there with Edwards but when he gets into that martial arts and LET ME SHOW YOU NINETEEN DIFFERENT WAYS I CAN KICK YOU stuff, he's one of the most annoying guys I've ever seen. Robbie would have been a fun story but we'll go with dull and overrated instead.

Group Tag Team Specialists

Matt Hardy – 9 points (0 matches remaining)

Davey Richards – 4 point (0 matches remaining)

Robbie E. – 3 points (0 matches remaining)

Eddie Edwards – 1 point (0 matches remaining)

Group Wild Card: Crazy Steve vs. Kenny King

If Steve wins we have another playoff but if King wins, he advances. They start fast and trade armdrags to continue a popular trend tonight. Josh recaps the Menagerie until King elbows Steve in the face to take over. Steve goes up top and honks his horn before a springboard hurricanrana gets two. What appeared to be a Codebreaker is countered into the Royal

Flush to advance King, who I don't think is with the promotion anymore, at 4:29.

Rating: F. This is your weekly WHY AM I WATCHING THIS match as Steve is an unfunny comedy guy who is still around for reasons I'll never understand. The only good thing here is the lack of having to watch Aiden O'Shea and Steve again in a playoff. This was the worst division by about a mile and one of the few I actually dreaded.

Group Wild Card

Mahabali Shera – 9 points (0 matches remaining)

Kenny King – 6 points (0 matches remaining)

Aiden O'Shea – 3 points (0 matches remaining)

Crazy Steve – 0 points (0 matches remaining)

Aries says Lashley will have to be at his best to win.

Pope gives out more awards:

Move of the Tournament – Sky High to Kenny King

Upset of the Tournament – Brooke b. Gail Kim

Turkey of the Tournament – Grado vs. Rockstar Spud

Group Champions: Lashley vs. Austin Aries

Winner advances. Aries bounces off Lashley to start until a missile dropkick staggers Lashley a bit. That's fine with Lashley as he throws Aries away and starts driving shoulders in the corner. Aries knees his way out of a delayed vertical suplex by knocking Lashley down to a knee but Lashley stands back up and suplexes him anyway. That is SCARY power.

Back from a break with Aries elbowing out of Lashley's grip but getting caught in a belly to belly. The spear hits the post though and Aries follows up with a missile dropkick. Lashley slaps him out of the corner though and dead lifts him into a powerslam. I repeat my scary power line.

The Last Chancery doesn't get Aries anywhere so he goes with discus forearm. Lashley again powers out of the brainbuster and throws Aries over his head with a release German.

Aries avoids the spear but Lashley sidesteps the suicide dive. The match comes to a screeching halt as Aries is holding his arm with ninety seconds to go. Lashley finally clotheslines him down again as this thing JUST WON'T END. Aries grabs the Lash Chancery but Lashley makes the rope. Instead of standing around for the last thirty seconds, Aries tries a 450 but eats a spear to send Lashley on at 15:05.

Rating: B. At least it went out on a good match, even though Aries got stupid at the end after being smart most of the time. Lashley is the smart choice here since he actually works for TNA, but Aries was a nice surprise. I mean, I'm stupid for realizing he's a surprise according to Josh but he's a lot smarter than me after all.

Group Champions

Ethan Carter III – 7 points (0 matches remaining)

Lashley – 6 points (0 matches remaining)

Austin Aries – 4 points (0 matches remaining)

Mr. Anderson – 0 points (0 matches remaining)

We recap the night because just announcing the brackets isn't interesting enough.

Here are the official round of sixteen brackets:

Ethan Carter III

DJZ

Bram

Davey Richards

Lashley

Drew Galloway

Mahabali Shera

Eli Drake

Tigre Uno

Gail Kim

Eric Young

Kenny King

Jesse Godderz

Awesome Kong

Bobby Roode

Matt Hardy

That could be worse, but they've handed Carter a spot in the semifinals.

Ethan Carter III is thrilled with his draw.

DJZ is ready....for the three women he's brought home.

Davey Richards is of course respectful about Bram.

Eli Drake is a smarmy jerk and says he won't be dancing with Shera. I like him more and more every time I hear him talk.

Eric Young IS GOD.

Jesse Godderz isn't worried about any man, woman or Kong.

Bobby Roode says his toughest test is coming.

Matt Hardy thinks no one is stopping him.

Overall Rating: C-. THANK GOODNESS! I am so incredibly sick of this tournament and listening to Josh talk about how IT'S SUDDEN DEATH IN THIS

GROUP and having Pope call everyone daddy every ten seconds. I understand that there has been a lot of action in this and some of it has been really good. However, so much of it has been stuff like Jesse vs. Micah or King vs. Steve.

The good is indeed good but this concept going on for two straight months with NOTHING else would drive anyone crazy. If you want to have a tournament then fine, but don't drag it out this long. The good is completely overshadowed by the bad and uninteresting, leaving you with two months of watchable wrestling that is completely wasted because it's the same idea over and over and over. At least it's over now and we can get on to.....the actual tournament.

Results

Tigre Uno and DJZ b. Manik – Split legged corkscrew moonsault

Drew Galloway b. Rockstar Spud – Claymore

Bram b. Grado – Rollup

Jesse Godderz b. Micah – Adonis crab

Davey Richards b. Robbie E. – Creeping Death

Kenny King b. Crazy Steve – Royal Flush

Lashley b. Austin Aries – Spear

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NXT – November 25, 2015: Don't You Dare

NXT

Date: November 25, 2015

Location: Full Sail University, Winter Park, Florida

Commentators: Byron Saxton, Rich Brennan, Corey Graves

It's another title match week with Bayley defending against Eva Marie in a match that has the potential to burn the place to the ground. The Full Sail fans just do not like Eva no matter what she does and it's going to be quite the moment if she takes the title from the most popular act in NXT. Let's get to it.

Opening sequence.

Michael Cole of all people is in the ring to open the show, though unfortunately we don't get his sweet theme song about how awesome his life is. Cole says he's in charge while Regal is out recovering from neck surgery. First up tonight: a contract signing for Takeover: London (finally not the week before the match) between Finn Balor and Samoa Joe. Cole goes to introduce Joe but Balor comes out first and promises to take Joe out in London. This brings out Joe who walks into the ring, signs the contract and walks out without saying a word or even looking at Finn. The champ goes to leave but Joe attacks and chokes Finn out.

Tag Team Titles: Vaudevillains vs. Scott Dawson/Dash Wilder

Dawson and Wilder are defending and this is the Vaudevillains' rematch. Dawson starts on Gotch's leg to start but can't get very far, meaning it's off to English vs. Wilder. Aiden takes over for all of fifteen seconds before the champs go after his arm and take us to an early break. Back with Aiden in an armbar but he easily fights up and makes the hot tag to Gotch. Now it's the Vaudevillains taking over but Dawson trips up

Gotch to stop the Whirling Dervish. Everything breaks down and the Shatter Machine to English retains the titles at 8:05.

Rating: C. These teams really don't have great chemistry together and a lot of that is due to the champs being the kind of guys that like to slow a match down. The Vaudevillains are a unique team as they don't have a particular style and that makes it hard to find interesting matchups for them. It's not bad, but these are really forgettable matches so it's probably best that they're done here.

Post match Enzo and Big Cass come out to beat up the champs for hurting Cass' leg a few weeks back.

Eva has taken over Regal's office because she needed a bigger place to get ready. Bayley is a swell girl but it's time for a woman to become champion. She knows the fans have her back too and there are a bunch of gifts waiting for the celebration. Nia Jax comes in with a present of her own.

We recap Asuka dismantling Dana Brooke at Takeover.

Someone whose face we can't see sings a song about needing liberators. Elias Sampson had a guitar a few months back so maybe it was him.

Dana Brooke vs. Asuka

Maybe not as Dana talks from the stage and Emma jumps Asuka from behind and puts her in the Emma Lock. No match.

Bayley understands why WWE wants Eva Marie to be the Women's Champion but there's one difference between them: Bayley is a wrestler. I know it wasn't meant to be one, but that was one of the best insults I've heard in a long time.

Sami Zayn is coming back.

Apollo Crews vs. Jesse Sorensen

This would be the former TNA guy Jesse Sorensen, who left because they didn't want him to wrestle any more after breaking his neck and decided

to release him instead. Crews starts fast with a delayed vertical as the fans count the "time". Just to show off, Crews waves them on and holds Jesse up even longer. A big running clothesline sets up a throw into a powerbomb (called an Alley Oop into a powerbomb) to end Jesse at 2:06. Total squash.

Crews accepts Baron Corbin's challenge for London.

Corbin says Crews is going to be the answer to a trivia question for doing one thing once. He's going down in London.

Charles Robinson has been sent to referee the main event.

Women's Title: Eva Marie vs. Bayley

Eva is challenging so let the nuclear heat (and wolf whistles) begin. Nia Jax is here with Eva to make sure things aren't fair. Robinson is the outside referee here so something might be afoot. They trade headlocks to start and a suplex gets two on Bayley, who comes right back with the Bayley to Belly for two as Jax pulls the referee out. Robinson comes in to count two on Bayley off a rollup and Jax adds a headbutt to keep Bayley in trouble.

Eva covers several times for two but Bayley takes her down with a running clothesline. Robinson breaks up the running elbow in the corner and Sliced Red gets a very close two. Another try at Sliced Red results in a ref bump and Eva goes up. Bayley stops her again though and, after dealing with Nia, grabs a super Bayley to Belly with another referee coming in for the count at 6:38.

Rating: B. This was one of the best done segments that NXT has done in a long time. It's just a six minute match and nothing great in terms of wrestling, but sweet goodness they nailed the story here. The idea of the fix being in had the fans freaking out on every near fall and going nuts when Bayley survived. Bayley is the most over thing in NXT since Sami Zayn and it's awesome to watch her mature into this hero instead of just being an underdog.

Nia Jax lays out Bayley post match and holds up the belt to end the show.

Overall Rating: C+. This was a show that did a lot of good to set up the London show in three weeks while also throwing in two title matches with a really well done moment in the main event. Thankfully Cole wasn't the star of the show and felt like a regular NXT commissioner. That's the key to this whole promotion: find the formula that works and keep plugging people in and out when necessary. It's worked for years and it's working here, which makes this the most consistent show around.

Results

Scott Dawson'/Dash Wilder b. Vaudevillains – Shatter Machine to English

Apollo Crews b. Jesse Sorensen – Throw into a powerbomb

Bayley b. Eva Marie – Super Bayley to Belly

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