

Reviewing the Review – Monday Night Raw: July 27, 2015

Uh....I really don't have much of an intro here. We're coming up on Summerslam and this is one of the Raw's on the way there. Let's get to it.

The big opening talking segment was, of course, the Authority and Seth Rollins. The idea of this one was to make Raw a night of first, including Big Show vs. Dean Ambrose. In the words of Jon Stewart, let me stop you right there. Much like a lot of these first time EVER matches, just because it's never happened before doesn't mean that it's a good idea. I mean, we could have Blake from NXT come up and fight Hornswoggle. IT'S NEVER BEEN DONE BEFORE so that makes it cool right? I don't know of anyone who would go out of their way to see Big Show vs. Ambrose, nor do I see a lot of fans being happy with the outcome.

Other than that, we're also getting, FOR THE FIRST TIME EVER SO YOU KNOW IT'S AWESOME: Kevin Owens vs. Randy Orton, Paige vs. Sasha Banks (well for the first time on Raw at least) and Alicia Fox/Nikki Bella vs. Becky Lynch/Charlotte. In other words we have "man Owens gets to lose again?", "that could be good" and "well at least we have something to look at." This is their big solution for the ratings being so far down?

Finally, Rollins ran his mouth for a long time until Cena came down and thought he should get a title shot against Rollins for the first time ever on Raw. HHH thought it was a great idea but made it a US Title shot instead, which pretty much sealed the winner, or at least who was walking out with the title, as soon as the words were out of his mouth. We'll come back to the match later for a change, but the talking segment took too long to get to the point.

Big Show beat Dean Ambrose via countout, with the idea being that Ambrose kept fighting but couldn't put Big Show down. I like the plan, but Big Show has lost to people like Miz recently. So Miz is tougher/smarter than Ambrose? I don't know of anyone who would buy that but it's what we're

supposed to believe now?

In theory they're building up Big Show for someone, but they could have given anyone a rub with the same ending. Ambrose looks weaker than usual by comparison but we're supposed to cheer him anyway because Dean is bulletproof, which WWE interprets as loss proof. Dean sidestepping a post match spear was supposed to make up for it or something but as is so typically the case, it doesn't work like WWE thinks it does.

Neville beat Fandango and listened to Stardust rant about saving the WWE Universe from false hope. The more I see of this feud the more I like it, but I have a bad feeling they won't get enough time at Summerslam. You know, the FOUR HOUR show.

Paige and Sasha traded some insults before Sasha made Paige tap clean. This was a solid, long match with some arm work for a story, but more important than anything else, the match felt important. I wanted to see where it was going instead of having two girls out there to waste everyone's time. That's a major step forward and a completely new way to look at the division.

Rusev gave Summer Rae a dog named Ziggler and a fish with no head. Lana came out, beat Summer up and shoved her face into the fish. I really don't think this needs any further explanation.

The Lucha Dragons beat Los Matadores as the Prime Time Players were on commentary. This was little more than an excuse to have the New Day come out, though it seems to set up a multi-team title match at Summerslam. The idea is fine, but again it makes last week's loss look like a waste of time.

Bray Wyatt and Luke Harper did a long in ring promo where they talked about Harper coming home. Since this was Wyatt though, it took him five minutes to get to the point, even though we knew the point in the first place. It was still effective though and you can feel the old Wyatt vibes coming back. Now, that being said, none of it matters if the Wyatts are treated like jobbers all over the place, especially Bray himself.

Becky Lynch/Charlotte beat Nikki Bella/Alicia Fox in a match taking place

FOR THE FIRST TIME EVER when Lynch made Fox tap. As usual, there was nothing of note involving Nikki because she isn't the longest reigning Divas Champion yet and therefore nothing can happen, at least not until there's roughly a week before the record is broken.

Kevin Owens and Randy Orton had a pretty lame match until Sheamus came in for the DQ. Owens is pretty firmly in that transitional period between main eventer and midcard but you can see him trending down. Cesaro came in for a save but ate a powerbomb, likely setting up a tag match at some point in the near future. There's nothing wrong with combining two feuds into one.

The big main event was a good fight between Cena and Rollins where Cena retained the US Title. They beat each other up and put on an entertaining match as you would expect, but of course the story here is John Cena's nose, which pretty much erupted due to a knee to the face.

The big question now is whether Cena is going to be back for Summerslam. They never actually announced Cena vs. Rollins for the pay per view, but at least there's an easy reason why Cena isn't fighting. Everyone say the nose and it was hardly something you could hide. Keep Cena off TV until Summerslam if you can, but if you can't.....I'm really not sure what you do. Make Undertaker vs. Lesnar a triple threat with Rollins for the title I guess, because there aren't a lot of other options, unless you throw Orton out there again. I mean, it's not like you can give someone new a shot right?

This show was a copy of last week's but with Cena and Rollins in Lesnar and Undertaker's places. They're both one idea shows with some midcard stuff thrown in, and that's all these shows should have been. The main event and what should be the other main event assuming Cena can breathe by then are both set and you can build the rest of the card from here. It's one of those shows where you knew what was going to happen from the opening bell but there's nothing wrong with that. Good, effective show this week.

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Monday Night Raw – July 27, 2015: On The Middle Of The Road To Summerslam

Monday Night Raw

Date: July 27, 2015

Location: Chesapeake Energy Arena, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

Commentators: Michael Cole, Byron Saxton, John Bradshaw Layfield

Summerslam is still coming and tonight's big question is what is going to co-headline the show alongside the showdown between Brock Lesnar and Undertaker. Seth Rollins vs. John Cena in a champion vs. champion match has been teased, but it would be interesting to see if Cena holds onto the title until Summerslam. Let's get to it.

We open with a recap of last week's big brawl between Undertaker and Lesnar with the entire roster trying to keep them apart.

Here's the Authority and Seth Rollins to open the show. HHH says this is a night of firsts and we're going to start with a major announcements. For the first time ever, Summerslam is going to be a special four hour event, of course with Undertaker vs. Brock Lesnar as the main event. Tonight is going to be something special tonight as well as Big Show goes

one on one with Dean Ambrose. That's uh, quite the announcement there Trips.

On top of that we have Paige vs. Sasha Banks and Kevin Owens vs. Randy Orton. Stephanie brings up the Divas Revolution with Alicia Fox/Nikki Bella vs. Becky Lynch/Charlotte. Rollins takes the mic and brags about how amazing he is, calling himself one of the greatest WWE Champions of all time, but here's John Cena to disagree. Cena doesn't like the idea of Rollins calling himself the greatest of all time because Rollins is a joke. On a night like tonight, we need to find out which one of them is right.

If tonight is a night of firsts, we need to find out if Seth Rollins really is a man, so how about Cena vs. Rollins for the World Title tonight? Seth says Cena needs to earn a shot but Stephanie wants to put it up to the people because she can't remember if she's a face or a heel. The fans love the idea and even start a YES chant so Stephanie says NO, complete with a little dance. HHH thinks the idea has merit though so instead it's going to be a US Title match with Rollins having the chance to be a dual champion.

The Austin Podcast returns next week with.....Paige? That's not quite Taker or Sting but at least they look better in leather shorts.

Dean Ambrose vs. Big Show

This is actually fallout from two weeks ago on Smackdown where Ambrose countered Big Show's chokeslam through a table with a DDT. Miz is on commentary, almost guaranteeing Ambrose loses because WWE doesn't think stuff through. Show takes him into the corner to start and rips Dean's shirt open before running him over with a shoulder. The fans aren't pleased and it's nice to see that last week's promo wasn't meant to be yet another face turn.

Dean low bridges him to the floor and a baseball slide sets up a suicide dive but dives into a chop as we take a WAY too early break. Back with Show working on the leg but has to stop to tie his boot. Miz rants about Ryback missing time, because he could beat up a staph infection. Ambrose's sleeper has as much effect as anyone's sleeper has on Big Show

(we need the tranquilizer dart that Angle used) and Show goes old school with the Alley Oop for two. Another chokeslam is countered with another DDT but the rebound lariat is countered with the chokeslam for two.

Show does the smart thing by just chokeslamming him again but Dean rolls to the floor to lay in the light of the video screen because THE RING SKIRT IS A VIDEO SCREEN. Yes I know it has been for a long time but it looks stupid. Dean gets back in but a superkick puts him on the floor again, setting up a spear to flatten Dean one more time. Ambrose dives in at nine, only to be thrown outside for a third time in two minutes. This time Show throws him inside but Dean kicks him away for a suicide dive. Show is waiting for him with the KO Punch though and it's a countout at 10:30.

Rating: D+. WHAT??? Did we really just watch Dean Ambrose get beaten up by Big Show for ten minutes before they finally just let Big Show knock him out? Are we really back to the annual Big Show push that no one but WWE wants to see? I mean, at least it's not a pin but my goodness WWE: stop doing this. The guy is 43 years old and going over Dean Ambrose on Raw.

Dean still won't stay down so Show loads up a spear, which goes right through the barricade instead. Ah so he's a smart loser.

Neville vs. Fandango

Fandango tries a powerbomb but opts for a clothesline instead. JBL: "When in doubt, hit your opponent really hard." A Gory Stretch of all things has Neville in trouble but he comes back with his series of quick strikes. Having never watched a Neville match, Fandango heads outside in front of the ramp, setting up the big flip dive. Back inside and the Red Arrow is good for the pin on Fandango at 1:54.

Post match, Stardust comes on screen and rips up a comic book while talking about wining and dining with kings and queens. No one wants to talk about the strange but don't worry because he'll rescue the WWE Universe and there is nothing Neville can do to stop him.

Paige gives Charlotte and Becky Lynch a pep talk when Team Bad comes in

to trade insults. Paige wins by saying she was the first NXT Women's Champion.

Sasha Banks vs. Paige

Non-title. Sasha's Sky's The Limit theme makes its Raw debut here. Their lockup goes to the mat and then out to the floor without a break. Back in and Paige fires off her elbows in the corner, followed by a fall away slam for two. We hit the hammerlock (nice little change of pace) before Paige drives Banks down into a Fujiwara armbar. Sasha tries to fight up but eats a superkick to put her on the floor with Paige diving on all of Team Bad as we take a break.

Back with Sasha holding a chinlock as everyone else has been ejected from ringside. The double knees to the chest in the corner get two and it's back to the chinlock with Paige in trouble. That doesn't last long though as Paige fights up and fires off a series of knees in the corner and the trio of clotheslines. A superkick looks to set up the PTO but instead it's another knee to Sasha's chest for two. Sasha hits a charge in the corner for two of her own, followed by a sloppy Bank Statement for the clean tap at 13:57.

Rating: B-. It's not a classic or anything, but this was the first time in a LONG time that a women's match on Raw actually felt serious instead of WWE trying to make it feel serious. This felt like a wrestling match between two very talented women and that's not something you get from the Divas. This is a positive sign going forward and a huge win for Banks.

Rollins says he'll win tonight because he beats the best that WWE throws at him every single time. Tonight, the future passes Cena by.

The Terminator (yes that Terminator) is in WWE 2K16.

Here are Rusev and Lana for a chat. Rusev says he's smitten with her and wants to give Summer a present. First up: a puppy, who is so ugly that they have to name him Dog Ziggler. The second present is....a headless fish. It's a cold fish, so let's name it Lana. Cue the real Lana who rants about Rusev trying to humiliate her. She should be ranting about how her accent slips a bit as she talks faster.

Lana goes on about Summer being a Lana ripoff and how Rusev is just trying to replace the real thing. Lana kicks Summer in the leg and put on an armbar while ripping at Summer's hair. Summer goes face first into the fish and Lana leaves. This was, in a word, really stupid.

We see the same recap the opened the show. Saxton says Lesnar is back next week in the city that hosted last year's Wrestlemania: San Jose, California.

Lucha Dragons vs. Los Matadores

The Prime Time Players are on commentary and this match is to move up the tag team rankings. Cara and Diego flip around to start before the Dragons double team Diego down for two. Kalisto slaps on an armbar as Titus makes fun of Darren's shyness on commentary. It's Diego coming back with a running clothesline to take over but Kalisto grabs the arm again to stop the comeback.

Cara's springboard cross body is caught in midair and they drop him face first onto the post. Even Torito gets in some cheap shots (Titus: "THAT'S BULL!") as Titus and JBL argue over Puerto Rican bullfighters. Fernando's chinlock has Cara in more trouble and the slow offense continues with a front facelock. Who thought it was a good idea for a lucha team to wrestle a slow paced mat style?

Cara gets in a belly to back for a breather and the hot tag brings in Kalisto for a springboard tornado DDT. Cara swantons onto Diego on the floor but we've got New Day, with a sign saying Kofi is the REAL Mega Dad of the Year. Kalisto grabs a huricanrana for the pin on Diego at 8:05.

Rating: D+. So not only was it slow, but they're basically saying that match last week where the champions lost means nothing because they just lost clean to another team. New Day vs. the Players isn't much of a feud but it's finally feeling like a story instead of just two teams having matches because the script says they should be.

Here are Wyatt and Harper with something to say. Well one of them with something to say at least. Bray thinks everyone here has a family and thinks most people here love their family. There's this idea that if a

family stays together, they can survive anything. That's a lie though man. It's a shame that people won't tell their family the truth.

It's in your house, your government and your places of worship: those that trust you the most are the ones you should fear the most. The truth shall set you free, but freedom comes at a very hefty price. A long time ago, Bray had a pet. It wasn't the most charming one but Bray loved him all the same. That pet wanted to know what was over the hills and across the train tracks, so one day Bray loosened his chains and the pet ran away.

One day he came back, but the pet was different, partially because of a scar alongside his eye. The pet never left his side, but it would never be the same. That brings him to Harper, who was a damaged man that Bray picked up from the dirt and fixed him like a broken toy. One day, Bray knew he would have to set Harper free, but now Harper has come home. Harper says he didn't know why he existed or why he was here, but his family found him.

Bray showed him the truth: this is all the people's fault. They made him what he is when they shunned him but Bray saved him. When you pray for the rain, you best be prepared for the mud. Harper is ready to give his life for Bray, and Bray says he knows Harper would go through anything for him. That brings Wyatt back to Roman Reigns, who was told that this was just the beginning. If Reigns really cared for Dean Ambrose, he would tell Dean that he was in danger. This is Reigns' hill to die on and Bray himself will seal Reigns' fate. We're here. Follow the buzzards.

Alicia Fox/Nikki Bella vs. Becky Lynch/Charlotte

Becky runs Nikki over to start before it's off to Charlotte for a twisting rollup (Charlotte's Web) for two. Off to Fox who has similar success as Charlotte drops a knee to the head. Nikki offers a distraction so Fox can get two off a northern lights suplex. Nikki comes back in for her pushups and some laughter before it's off to Fox for a double arm crank with her feet in Charlotte's back. She pulls on it so hard that Charlotte flips over onto her for two, allowing for the tag off to Becky. A t-bone suplex sends Fox flying as everything breaks down. Lynch's

Disarm-Her armbar makes Fox tap at 6:10.

Rating: C. Totally fine match here with no one really standing out. Again, the problem here is the lack of any reason for these matches to be taking place as no one can challenge for the title until AJ's record comes down. The problem is we don't really have a reason for the title to be a non-factor, but that's life in WWE for you.

Look back at last week's Tough Enough elimination and a list of the remaining competitors.

Randy Orton vs. Kevin Owens

Sheamus is on commentary. Owens jaws a lot to start and they slug it out with Randy knocking him outside early on. Back in and Orton rakes his boot over Kevin's face but Owens rolls right back to the floor. It's Orton being sent face first into the post and a fall away slam to launch him into the barricade as we take a break. Back with Owens getting two off the backplash but walking into Orton's backbreaker to even things up.

It's Owens staying in control though and slugging away in the corner, setting up the Cannonball but Orton rolls away. The powerslam plants Owens and the t-bone suplex does the same (Orton must have been watching the Divas tag). They fight to the floor again and it's a Brogue Kick to Orton for the DQ at 11:06.

Rating: C. I wasn't really feeling this one but at least Owens looked like someone who could go toe to toe with a guy on Orton's level. I don't think he's going to be back to the level he reached when he debuted for a good while, but there's a big difference between being forgotten/buried and what we're seeing here.

Post match Sheamus goes after Orton but Cesaro runs in to get his hands on Owens. Sheamus offers a distraction though and Owens powerbombs Cesaro and spits on him.

Cena says he's been defending this title for months now but tonight he's up against the golden boy and the WWE World Heavyweight Champion. If

Rollins is as good as he says he is, then he can shock the world.

US Title: John Cena vs. Seth Rollins

Cena is defending and for the sake of simplicity, I'll only refer to Cena as the champion. A quick shoulder puts Rollins on the floor and things slow right back down. Back in and an AA attempt is countered, allowing Rollins to kick him down to take over. Rollins slaps on a chinlock and we take a break. Back with Cena fighting out of the chinlock (dang that must have been a dull commercial break) but missing a charge in the corner.

Cena comes back and tries his finishing sequence, only to have Rollins kick him in the head/shoulder for two. The Shuffle is broken up by another kick to the head but Cena avoids a corner dive of his own, setting up a tornado DDT for two on Seth. The top rope knee to the head gets two on the champ but Cena catches him in an electric chair for two. Another knee to the nose puts Cena in the corner but we stop to check for blood (which is flowing from his nose. It could be broken).

Thankfully Cena will have none of that but Rollins kicks him in the head, setting up the buckle bomb for two. The doctor comes in to look at the nose but Cena is right back up with the springboard Stunner. Rollins flips out of the AA though and the low superkick gets a very close two. Fans: "THIS IS AWESOME." Not really guys.

An AA gets two (that should be a drinking game) and Cena gets his nose looked at again. A closeup shows that the nose is definitely broken as it's off to one side. Cena gets superplexed off the top and Rollins floats over into a falcon's arrow for two. The fans are getting way into these kickouts. Rollins misses the Phoenix Splash and it's off to the STF for the tap at 17:05.

Rating: B. Well there's the Summerslam co-main event. I'm guessing they'll go with Rollins saying he had nothing to lose which is about as acceptable as you can get but I'm never a fan of these endings. Cena vs. Rollins for the World Title at Summerslam is fine as there isn't really anyone else to go for the belt, but I'm hoping Cena drops the US Title before the show. Good but not great main event here.

Overall Rating: C+. I'm kind of split on this one. The wrestling isn't bad and the show flew by, but there's really nothing worth talking about. This really was a show that didn't do anything bad (Big Show beating Ambrose aside) and started setting up stuff for Summerslam. We've already got Brock vs. Taker set so you really don't need to focus on it all that much. It's a pretty middle of the road show but it went by quickly and got some things done so we'll say it's a good week.

Results

Big Show b. Dean Ambrose via countout

Neville b. Fandango – Red Arrow

Sasha Banks b. Paige – Bank Statement

Lucha Dragons b. Los Matadores – Hurricanrana to Diego

Becky Lynch/Charlotte b. Nikki Bella/Alicia Fox – Disarm-Her to Fox

Randy Orton b. Kevin Owens via DQ when Sheamus interfered

John Cena b. Seth Rollins – STF

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Reviewing the Review: Monday Night Raw – July 20, 2015

This one could be interesting as I barely remember the show as I was falling asleep due to a long day of traveling. This is the fallout show from Battleground where Undertaker returned (again. There's probably a three disc set of Undertaker returns ready to be made) to go after Brock Lesnar and set up the main event of Summerslam. We're on the road to the second biggest show of the year so let's get to it.

They opened as they should have, with Undertaker coming out and saying streaks are made to be broken. The gist of this was Undertaker being annoyed at Heyman and Lesnar for bragging about breaking the Streak over and over for the last fifteen months. To be fair, it is getting a bit old. The big story later in the night would be Heyman coming out to brag even more when Undertaker appeared, triggering a massive brawl, broken up by the locker room.

There isn't much to say here because the whole thing was awesome, but more importantly, they let it feel awesome. They let this thing feel like a brawl between two monsters, but I'm not sure how the match is going to go. Do you really want Undertaker to get suplexed all over the place? Undertaker isn't going to be a heel in this match no matter what they do, and thankfully they didn't seem to be trying to make him one. Anyway, the segments really worked and the match should be good, though I emphasize should.

Oh and there was something about the Authority wanting to prevent the match from being broken up. I stop caring when they're talking most of the time so I'm not sure what their issue was.

Charlotte beat Brie Bella in a totally watchable match. Brie still isn't great in the ring and probably never will be, but she's to the point where she can have a watchable match with someone talented like Charlotte. Also, nice touch on not having Charlotte get beaten yet, though I have a feeling she will when she comes up against Nikki because

All Hail The Bellas.

Los Matadores beat the Prime Time Players in a non-title match because there was nothing better to do than to have New Day distract the champions so the low level team can beat them in a match that isn't going to lead anywhere.

Big Show beat Miz in a quick match that I think was supposed to make us care about the giant again. He then challenged Ryback to a fight on Tough Enough to try to make people watch it. It says a lot when Big Show is considered a draw.

Roman Reigns beat Luke Harper via DQ when Bray Wyatt interfered. This seems to be setting up a tag match at Summerslam with Ambrose coming in to help out his brother. I'd be interested in seeing them bring in a third man each, but bringing in Sting would be one of the lamest ideas they could have as it would overshadow the story they're shooting for with Reigns vs. Wyatt, as well as making people clamor for Wyatt vs. Sting because they're both supernatural or something and that instantly means you would want to see them fight.

Rollins bragged about keeping the title, Cena came out and said Rollins needed to take the title more seriously, and nothing else happened. I'm really hoping they're not setting up champion vs. champion, but given how the ratings have been going, it seems like we're getting back towards Cena on top as he's the only one that can really move things these days. And since the idea of ever pushing anyone as a big star is foreign to WWE, this is what we're stuck with for now.

Sasha Banks and Naomi beat Paige and Becky Lynch in another pretty good match. This actually got thirteen minutes and didn't feel long, which is more than you would ever expect out of a Divas match. The division has gotten the big boost that it needs, but they really need to go somewhere with it in the next few weeks. There's more than enough time to have it be the big blow away story they need and thankfully Stephanie hasn't been a thing for the most part.

The main event was a six man tag with Cena/Orton/Cesaro beating Sheamus/Owens/Rusev in a match that actually tied things up in a nice

package to end the show. That's not something you often see but it worked well enough one time. Other than that though, the big story was Owens and Sheamus walking out on their partner, leaving Rusev to take a big beating. Combine this with Rusev being the default face in his match with Owens on Smackdown and.....no I don't think they're turning Rusev.

Owens leaving makes sense as he lives to fight another day and I guess the same is true for Sheamus, though it's still not the best result in the world. Based on what happened on Smackdown we're going to get Cesaro vs. Owens at Summerslam and since we just NEED the Ziggler vs. Rusev showdown, there's no turning it into a triple threat. It would be nice to have a title for them to fight over, but we need champion vs. champion for reasons that aren't entirely clear.

Overall Raw was just kind of there with almost all of the focus being on Undertaker vs. Lesnar. Rollins will have his day soon enough and a win over Cena at one of the biggest show of the year would help him a lot, though I have a feeling Cena would get the title to make things all better again.

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Monday Night Raw – July 20, 2015: The Old and the Beautiful

Monday Night Raw

Date: July 20, 2015

Location: Sprint Center, Kansas City, Missouri

Commentators: Michael Cole, Byron Saxton, John Bradshaw Layfield

As uneventful as Battleground seemed going into last night, a lot changed in the final moments. The Undertaker of all people returned to end the World Title match by attacking Brock Lesnar. The interesting point was that Rollins just disappeared after basically being squashed by Lesnar for the entire match. It should be interesting to see what happens as we head towards Summerslam. Let's get to it.

The opening recap looks at the end of the main event.

Here's Undertaker to open things up with the announcers listing off all of his accomplishments and making the entire moment feel like anything else. The fans don't seem to mind Undertaker's rather heelish actions last night, as anyone with a functioning brain could have predicted. Undertaker starts with a big line: streaks are made to be broken.

However, Lesnar has gone on for months about his greatest accomplishment. Ever since he broke the Streak, Lesnar has bragged about it. You can't kill what won't die, and Undertaker will conquer what has yet to be conquered. Just like everyone else, be they man or beast, Brock Lesnar will rest in peace. This definitely wasn't a heel promo and it didn't need to be.

Since we haven't talked about them enough yet, we cut to the Authority who brags about how big a main event they have. Stephanie is ready to market things, but HHH thinks Brock should take the night off.

Cena/Orton/Cesaro vs. Rusev/Owens/Sheamus for the main event. Cesaro and

Rusev getting those spots is a great sign.

Charlotte vs. Brie Bella

Team Bad is on commentary but before the match we have to get a quick recap of how Stephanie saved us all. Feeling out process to start with Charlotte knocking Brie to the floor but misses a dive. Back from a break with Brie working on the arm and kicking Charlotte square in the jaw. We get the YES Kicks to fire up the crowd, followed by a low dropkick for two. Brie hooks a chinlock for a good while before Charlotte starts firing off chops and a big boot to the face. Nikki's distraction doesn't work and a spear sets up the Figure Eight for the submission for Charlotte at 9:02.

Rating: C. Brie is fine if you keep things simple but Charlotte winning is definitely the right idea. It's starting to feel like the new girls are becoming a thing and that's a very good sign this early in their run. It's going to get annoying just sitting around waiting on the title match though, which seems to be what we're going to be doing until Nikki breaks the record.

HHH is on the phone with Heyman and tells Lesnar to take the night off. Heyman needs to grow a set and tell Lesnar to not show up tonight. Miz tries to interrupt and gets Big Show as a result.

Prime Time Players vs. Los Matadores

Non-title. Darren takes Diego into the corner to start and blasts him with a spinning forearm. The masked men take over, despite the fans not sounding all that interested. Young snaps off a belly to belly suplex and it's off to Titus to clean house. Cue New Day for a distraction though, allowing Diego to hit a Backstabber on Titus for the pin at 4:04.

Rating: D. So not only is the feud continuing, but now we're getting the old distraction into a pin finish again? Also, can we please stop giving people wins over champions when it's not going to lead anywhere? This happened a few years back when Kofi pinned WWE Champion Randy Orton and then it went nowhere. If that's what you're going for, just have the champs win and then let it be a post match attack. Finally, if you want

to build a team up, STOP HAVING THEM LOSE TO A NOTHING TEAM LIKE LOS MATADORES! That's not how you build up a match, especially when they're not even in the feud.

Big Show vs. Miz

Show chops Miz in the corner to start, as only Big Show can do. A slam sets up the middle rope elbow for the pin on Miz at 1:27. And he was supposed to get a title shot last night?

Show rants about how he's still around and tells Ryback to show up on Tough Enough tomorrow night for a brawl.

HHH and Stephanie want artwork made up for Lesnar vs. Undertaker when Heyman arrives. He's here to give Lesnar's response and nothing more, but the Authority isn't interested.

Back from a break with the roster meeting with the Authority. They want the entire locker room to keep Lesnar and Undertaker apart because they have to protect the Summerslam main event. There is WAY too much Authority tonight.

Here's Heyman to address the Summerslam main event. Brock isn't the World Champion right now, but why isn't he? It's not because Rollins out wrestled or out fought him or because Rollins survived a trip to Suplex City. It was all because of a yet again resurrected Undertaker, who can't get over losing the Streak to Brock Lesnar. Of course Heyman has hyped up the Streak being broken because why wouldn't he?

It's the biggest accomplishment of his career because no one else could ever do it. The Undertaker wants to face Brock Lesnar again at Summerslam, so let's make this personal. Heyman goes into full on promoter voice to rant about the Streak being broken. Undertaker may have sold his soul to the devil to get revenge but he belongs to Brock Lesnar. There goes the gong and the look on Heyman's face is priceless.

Brock hits the ring and the fight is on with the fans being behind a ticked off Brock. Security has as much success as you would expect so HHH sends a bunch of midcarders out until there must be twenty five guys

trying to break this up. The announcers bail so it's up to the audience to tell us how awesome this is (and they're right for a change). Undertaker gets to him on the floor again as even main eventers are out there to break it up now.

We come back from a break and they're fighting in the back again with the entire roster not being able to hold them back. Brock finally steps back and says he's done, allowing the police to tie his hands.

Rollins comes in to laugh at what just happened but promises the Authority that he'll be in the arena later.

Bray Wyatt says he's never alone because his family stands by his side. They know that he is the revolution and the fans need to learn it. The people have annointed Roman Reigns and it's time for them to burn for it. Harper says this is just the beginning and they will take Reigns apart brick by brick. Anyone but you.

Luke Harper vs. Roman Reigns

The fans sound like they're chanting for Wyatt so Byron says it's for Reigns. Roman shrugs off a clothesline and fires off chops, only to have Harper go after Roman's left arm. That earns him a suplex though and we take a quick break. Back with Roman stuck in a chinlock before Harper wisely goes back to the arm. A charge doesn't work for Reigns as Harper tosses him outside, injuring the arm again.

The match keeps going as Harper cranks on the arm while also working on a chinlock. That's dedication to your craft. Harper misses a big boot and crashes to the floor, allowing Reigns to start his comeback. Roman and Bray get into it with both Wyatts taking apron kicks. Wyatt pulls Reigns outside though and that's a DQ at 13:00.

Rating: C-. Harper trying some psychology was a good idea but it's pretty clear that we're headed for a tag match at Summerslam. I like the idea of Ambrose and Reigns as the best friends/brothers who will fight back to back until the end and anything with Wyatts vs. Shield vibes is a good thing.

Everyone brawls post match and the Wyatts run.

We get the same recap from the opening.

Here's Rollins to brag about surviving with the title. He's sorry to announce this to the people but Lesnar didn't get the job done. Being champion is so much harder than people think it is because Rollins has to put so much effort into it. After last night, he's still exactly where he promised he would be, but he never got to hear his name announced last night. Therefore, Lillian Garcia is invited in for the official announcement.

That's exactly what we get...and here's Cena to interrupt. Rollins cuts him off by saying this isn't about him because no one cares about what he does, but Cena talks about how a champion is supposed to be ready to fight no matter what. The brawl is about to be on but, as you would expect, Rollins bails. That might be the co-main event at Summerslam.

Hey! Remember when Stephanie TOTALLY saved the Divas' division? Well here it is again.

Paige/Becky Lynch vs. Naomi/Sasha Banks

The Bellas/Alicia are on commentary this time. Sasha and Becky get things going, which is almost guaranteed to be awesome. Some armdrags and an armbar have Sasha in early trouble so it's off to Naomi. That's fine with Becky who drops a leg (where's Xavier Woods to rate it though?) as the heroes stay in control.

Sasha gets kicked in the head a few times and we take a break. Back with Naomi cranking on a front facelock as JBL brings up WCW and the NWO because it's just so fun to make fun eighteen years later. Back from a break with Naomi kicking Becky in the face for two. Sasha comes back in to yell at Paige, allowing Naomi to get in some shots from the apron.

Becky rolls away and DIVES for a tag but Sasha makes a save, only to have the hot tag bring in Paige a second later. Paige cleans house but the PTO on Naomi is broken up at the last second. Everything breaks down as the Bellas just keep chattering like they do in everything they say. The Bank

Statement makes Paige tag at 13:05.

Rating: C+. Less Bella means a better match. It's so adorable hearing them talk about themselves like that and imagining that people care for them. I'm sure they'll still be around because that's the nature of the beast, but at least there's some fresh blood to change things up around here.

Southpaw preview, which is tied into a Tough Enough plug.

Long Undertaker vs. Lesnar recap.

We look back at Rusev's ankle being fine and the ensuing Ziggler beatdown.

Lana says Ziggler will be fine when Summer Rae comes up in a Lana outfit. Rusev comes in to kiss Summer, who then slaps Lana in the face.

Randy Orton/John Cena/Cesaro vs. Kevin Owens/Rusev/Sheamus

After the entrances take their sweet time, we start things off with Cena vs. Owens. Why? The feud (should have at least) ended last night and it's off to Rusev before any contact. An early fall away slam gets two and Rusev opts for the stomping away in the corner. That goes badly for the Russian so it's back to Owens, who has to dive to the ropes to break up an STF attempt. A DDT plants Cena but he rolls away from the Cannonball for the hot tag.

Everything breaks down and Cesaro loads up the Swing, only to eat a jumping superkick to send the match to a break. Back with Owens holding Cesaro down until Cesaro powers up with a nice suplex. Cesaro gets to play face in peril for a bit as all the heels get in their shots. Sheamus and Owens wind up hitting each other though and the fight is on with Sheamus getting the worse of it.

Sheamus walks out on the match and Owens does the same a few moments later, leaving Rusev down 3-1. This goes about as you would expect it to with the parade of finishers putting Rusev down. Cue Lana to spear Summer down, leaving Cesaro to catapult Rusev into an RK0 for the pin at 14:21.

Rating: C. Totally Smackdown six man until the cool ending move. I'm not sure what the point of this was as it just came and went without having much going on, but at least Rusev doesn't look bad in defeat and the other two looked fine as well. This was such a strange ending to Raw as everything was wrapped up and none of these guys seem to have a match set for Summerslam.

Overall Rating: C+. This is about as much of a two idea show as you can have as they set up the main event of Summerslam and pushed the heck out of the Divas revolution. How amazing is it that the Divas could arguably be the more interesting story of the two? You can see that they've turned it on for Summerslam and that's one of the best things you can get in WWE.

Results

Charlotte b. Brie Bella – Figure Eight

Los Matadores b. Prime Time Players – Backstabber to O'Neil

Big Show b. Miz – Middle rope elbow

Roman Reigns b. Luke Harper via DQ when Bray Wyatt interfered

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

John Cena/Randy Orton/Cesaro b. Rusev/Kevin Owens/Sheamus – RKO to Rusev

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Monday Night Raw – July 13, 2015: Viva Las Divas (And Stephanie Just Because)

Monday Night Raw

Date: July 13, 2015

Location: Phillips Arena, Atlanta, Georgia

Commentators: Michael Cole, John Bradshaw Layfield, Byron Saxton

It's the go home show for Battleground and thankfully Brock is here, hopefully to beat up a pair of cars in a handicap match this week. Other than that we have the rest of the build towards Wyatt vs. Reigns, possibly even including why they're fighting and what it has to do with Reigns' daughter, and more stuff including whatever Ambrose might be doing on Sunday. Let's get to it.

We open with a recap of last week's Lesnar beatdown, complete with Heyman reusing the Dudleys' commandment of don't screw with Brock. It's fair to erase the Dudleys from history at this point so it's not that big a deal. Heyman might have written that line in the first place.

Here are Brock and Heyman to get things going, drawing a SUPLEX CITY chant. For some reason the crushed car is brought out as Heyman proclaims Brock's impending dominance over Rollins this coming Sunday. Paul lists off Brock's accomplishments and the various people he's conquered before promising to have Lesnar suplex Rollins all over the place, put his foot on Seth's chest and be proclaimed the champion once again.

Cue Rollins and Kane because YAY KANE IS BACK FROM HAWAII OR WHATEVER THAT STUPID STORY WAS! Rollins talks about how Brock is frustrated over his inability to be champion and stumbles over trying to say "an inanimate object" in a funny goof. Brock has been carrying the car around the country (in a truck or on his back?) like a symbol and that's just

fine, because Suplex City is burned to the ground tonight.

Brock offers to take Rollins to Suplex City tonight but Kane intervenes with the threat of a contract signing. Kane threatens Lesnar if he messes up the contract signing but Heyman laughs off the threats from "Undertaker's baby brother." Kane is of course annoyed as Heyman goes on about Brock smashing stuff with one final promise of pain to Rollins if he provokes the Beast tonight.

Ryback/Randy Orton vs. Sheamus/Big Show

Miz is on commentary and this is billed as an All-Star match. I'd prefer we go play that over the top video game instead but have it your way. This is the old standard idea of taking two feuds and combining them into a tag match, which is an idea that stays around because it still works. Ryback knocks Sheamus to the floor to start and we're in a very early break.

Back with Sheamus bailing into the floor to hide from Orton. Apparently Randy is really bad at hide and seek so it's back to Ryback vs. Big Show with the latter stomping Ryback down onto the mat to take over. Sheamus tries a bearhug and is easily driven into the corner for the tag to Orton. Remember the days when Sheamus was like, really really strong? What happened to that?

Back from a second break with an Irish Curse (backbreaker. OH THE SCANDAL!) for two on Orton but he counters Big Show's chokeslam into a DDT for a breather. Miz gets off of commentary and shouts on a mic as Ryback comes in and cleans house. Big Show has enough of Miz though and chases him up the ramp, leaving Sheamus to take an RKO and top rope splash from Ryback for the pin at 15:21.

Rating: C+. Nice long tag match here and again, a good way to set up both matches at once. I would have liked a countout or DQ finish instead of having Sheamus take a pin, but it's a plus that he took two finishers for a pin so it's hardly clean. Sheamus vs. Orton does nothing for me and the triple threat isn't much better, but at least there's something on the line and Ryback has started looking good again.

Network ad.

Rollins doesn't like the idea of the contract signing but Kane has a plan.

Dean Ambrose vs. Bray Wyatt

Good grief people build a midcard already. Wyatt's name graphic is just letters on a screen now instead of in a box like everyone else. During the entrance though, Reigns appears and lays out Wyatt as Ambrose is just kind of forgotten. Bray finally gets in a lantern shot to escape. No match.

The Bellas have been nominated for Choice Female Athletes in the Teen Choice Awards. Dear goodness I don't want to know who else they are.

Here are the Bellas and Alicia Fox with something to say. Nikki brags about holding the title forever because AJ Lee MUST be eliminated from history. She's defended against every single Diva there is and has given them all a chance. A quick search shows that, at least in TV matches, Nikki has defended against AJ, Naomi and Tamina (whose one shot came at Beast in the East) and that's it. She calls the three of them Team Bella, because all you have to do these days is put the word Team in front of a name. Come up with something more interesting, please.

Nikki goes on about how awesome she is and how dominant they are...and here's Stephanie McMahon because she hasn't laid waste to the Divas yet. Stephanie is a face tonight too because there's something cool coming and therefore she just MUST be there to get a piece of the action. The legacy of the WWE rests on her shoulders (yes, Stephanie says this company's history is on HER shoulders) and there's a revolution going on right now in women's sports, ranging from women's soccer to UFC to tennis. These are supposed to be applause lines if that's not clear.

Stephanie introduces Paige, because of ALL DIVAS IN WWE, Paige is the one that would be thrilled to be associated with Stephanie. I mean Paige is clearly a corporate loyalist right? Nikki talks about how Paige doesn't deserve another shot, but STEPHANIE runs WWE and this division instead of her.

Stephanie, the WWE and Paige want this revolution (what is she even talking about?) but courage can't do it alone. Therefore, Paige needs backup. Instead of bringing this person out though, Stephanie goes on about how amazing they are and FINALLY introduces Becky Lynch. Now, does Becky get to say anything and introduce herself? Of course not, because that would cut away from Stephanie's mic time, meaning the boss gets to introduce Charlotte, in that voice that only Stephanie can deliver.

Cole: "STEPHANIE HAS SHAKEN THINGS UP!" I hate this company at times.
Stephanie: "WOO!" Oh shut up. Cue Naomi and Tamina with a mic because we haven't heard enough horrible voices yet. Naomi says the two of them are all the competition the Bellas need. That's all the mic time she needs too, because Stephanie needs to bring out Sasha Banks. Sasha stands with Naomi and Tamina, but STEPHANIE WON'T SHUT HER FREAKING MOUTH and talks about setting the table for opportunity.

We get a THIS IS AWESOME chant to a legitimately cool moment and the fight is on. Charlotte cleans house until Naomi dropkicks her down, only to have Paige and Sasha get into it. Tamina breaks up the PTO on Naomi but Brie Bella interrupts as the announcers line up to kiss Stephanie's feet for these new arrivals. Alicia gets caught in the Figure Eight, Becky puts Brie in the armbar and Nikki gets the Bank Statement as a big NXT chant breaks out. The Bellas and Fox are cleared out and the other six yell at each other as the freaking Total Divas theme plays this out.

I'm not going to bother ranting about how Stephanie made this all about her. It's Stephanie McMahon, she's the biggest hound for a spotlight that has ever lived in WWE and you know that if there's a big moment there that people are going to erupt over, she's going to shoehorn her way in despite the fact that there is absolutely no logical reason for her to be involved.

This story has been about Paige finding help but that's thrown out the window because Stephanie has basically just decided to turn this story into a chess game for her own amusement. The big sign here: none of them got to talk and then Stephanie just left after she was the only voice you heard for the big moment. The main part here was all about Stephanie look cool and how thankful we should be for her big gift to us and that's all

there is to it.

Aside from all that, this is EXACTLY what the Divas have been needing for so long. All of a sudden, there is some brand new blood in the Divas' division and the fans buy into it. They know these three are amazingly talented and can tear the house down....but the Bellas are still around. As long as they're the focus of the division (and they will be as long as Total Divas is around), the newcomers are going to have to tone it WAY down so Nikki, Brie and Alicia can handle it and that takes away from the NXT crew's magic. This is going to be interesting, but they could drag things way down for the sake of breaking AJ's record.

New Day vs. Prime Time Players/Mark Henry

The hometown boy Xavier Woods says this is the greatest town in the world because they stay positive. Even though they shut down the city due to an inch of snow last year and the Atlanta Hawks choked in the NBA Playoffs, they stayed positive. Kofi is 100% that they're getting the titles back on Sunday because Prime Time is out of time at Battleground because NEW DAY ROCKS.

Titus shrugs off a Kofi kick to start so it's off to Darren, who clotheslines E. out to the floor. The Players and Henry throw everyone out to the floor (JBL: "FLYING PH.D!") as we take an early break. Back with Titus taking the rotating stomps in the corner as the announcers talk about how awesome the Divas were. For once, they're actually right. E. gets two off a splash but Titus is quickly up and tagging in Henry to clean house. Everything breaks down and a World's Strongest Slam ends Woods at 8:29.

Rating: D+. Good night do they really not know how to set up a tag match anymore? When is the last time New Day won a match? My guess is they get the belts back anyway because that's how WWE works these days. The match was nothing interesting and Henry is just thrown out there but gets the pin over a #1 contender anyway. Well sure why not.

The winners dance.

Long recap of Lesnar b. Cadillac via TKO last week.

King Barrett vs. R-Truth

No King entrance for Truth and Cole tells us he rapped to the ring during the commercial. Truth gyrates a lot to start and gets kicked in his face. A backbreaker and middle rope elbow get two each on Truth and a boot knocks him onto the apron. Truth fights out of a chinlock as the announcers talk about Tough Enough to kill time. Barrett misses a charge and eats a Lie Detector for the pin at 3:12.

Rating: D-. Good grief it's going to get a rubber match on Sunday isn't it? This whole thing is such a waste of whatever they had with the King of the Ring because Barrett hasn't been embarrassed enough over the years. Bad match, horrible feud, disgusting waste of someone like Barrett for a comedy act.

Truth puts on his king attire.

We recap Rusev destroying Ziggler last week, finally making Rusev feel like a monster (and a wrestler) again.

It's Open Challenge time and Rusev is here to renew a rivalry that doesn't need to be renewed. He blames Lana for losing the title in the first place and says he broke Ziggler because of the USA. Before the match though, here's Kevin Owens with something to say. Rusev says no because he was here first and that Owens needs to pick a single first name. They argue a bit but here's Cesaro to interrupt as well. Cena heads outside as the three brawl, setting up a triple threat match with the winner getting a title shot immediately after because WHO NEEDS PSYCHOLOGY???

Rusev vs. Cesaro vs. Kevin Owens

Cena is on commentary as Cesaro gets beaten down in the corner. Rusev gets beaten down and Cannonballed, only to have Cesaro hit the running uppercut to Owens' jaw. Swiss Death gets two on Rusev as Cena puts over the Divas' segment. Owens has to escape two pinfall attempts, followed by Cesaro doing the same off a Saito Suplex from Rusev. Cena continues to be as good of a commentator as you'll see in this company, only to have to stop for Cesaro turning Owens' superplex into a Tower of Doom for two

each.

The Russian takes over again as these guys are just hammering each other. Owens blocks Rusev's German suplex attempt so Cesaro Germans both of them AT ONCE. I know I say this every week but DANG that guy is strong. Since that's not enough, Cesaro busts out a corkscrew dive over the top to take out both guys. Back in and Cesaro gets two off a high cross body on Rusev but Owens breaks up the Swing with a superkick.

Kevin drops both guys but stops to shout at Cena, allowing Rusev's Alabama Slam to set up the Accolade. Cesaro saves this time and delays a vertical suplex on the Russian. Well ex-Russian but whatever. Cena keeps making some rather heelish yet totally fair comments about how he's the lucky one here as these guys are all brawling but he gets to come in fresh. Rusev sends Kevin outside and Owens bails, saying he'll see Cena Sunday.

Back from a break with Rusev chinlocking Cesaro, only to have the bald one pop up and hit a springboard spinning uppercut to drop Rusev. The apron superplex is countered with Rusev suplexing Cesaro onto the apron to put both guys down onto the floor. Back in again and Cesaro dropkicks Rusev on the top, only to have his superplex countered. The Russian's top rope splash misses and Cesaro crossfaces Rusev, only to have Rusev power up into something like a spinning Rock Bottom for two more.

Back up again and Cesaro can't get a Sharpshooter, allowing Rusev to hit a spinwheel kick for two. The Accolade is countered into the Swing which sets up the Sharpshooter, drawing a loud TAP chant. Rusev makes the rope but since this is still officially a triple threat, he has to crawl outside to break the hold. Nice touch of continuity there. Cesaro hasn't done something cool in all of 14 seconds now so he comes back with a suicide dive. Back in and Cesaro gets tripped off the top, setting up a superkick from Rusev for the pin at 24:02.

Rating: B+. Why not make Cesaro the Intercontinental Champion? Like, just let him go out there and have awesome matches with anyone because Cesaro is pure gold at this point. It's the simple concept of "hey, this guy is awesome right now so LET'S PUSH HIM!" Unfortunately he'll probably be

forgotten again in three weeks while someone like Barrett or Truth get pushed because they're funny or something. Like, is Cesaro even going to be on the pay per view?

US Title: Rusev vs. John Cena

The psychology is all over the place here as Cena, the face champion, comes in with a huge advantage since Rusev is spent. Cena starts fast and hits a release fisherman's suplex followed by a headlock. Rusev bails to the ropes but Cena nails the shoulders. In a nice touch, Rusev can't get up due to the exhaustion, making the finishing sequence look really awkward. The AA is countered into the Accolade out of nowhere and Cena hangs on for about 45 seconds (fair since Rusev is weakened) until Owens comes back in for the DQ at 4:57.

Rating: D. This was more awkward and weird than bad as Cena was basically wrestling a squash match against a big name until the end where he got caught in a big move. Like I said, this was just strange and would have been FAR better served as a single, four way elimination with Cena involved. It was different, but the execution of the second match didn't work for me.

Owens gives Rusev a Pop-Up Powerbomb and tells Cena that he's taking the title on Sunday.

Rollins tells Kane that it's on him if tonight goes bad.

The Tough Enough cast is on stage when Lita (a coach on the show) comes out with something to say. She officially introduces us to the cast and this is a big waste of time because Tough Enough just isn't all that interesting this season. It was so uninteresting that I haven't watched it yet and don't plan to.

We recap Reigns and Wyatt from earlier.

Stardust (hey he's back) talks about how the world needs heroes because the world is made up of heroes and villains. "From where I stand, the view never changes." Neville has been claiming that the forces of evil have forsaken him, but those forces will bring him down. Embrace the

strange. Or embrace Cody Rhodes for a change.

Barrett vs. Truth for the crown on Sunday. If Rusev and/or Cesaro aren't on that show, I lose so much of my faith in this company, meaning I fully expect it to happen.

Stardust vs. Neville

Neville is no longer the New Sensation, which is one of the best things that could happen to him. A loud CODY chant starts up but let's just keep him as Stardust because it's done wonders for his career. Stardust isn't interested in a handshake and kicks Neville down, only to have to get up before the Red Arrow can launch. There's a cartwheel from Star and we hit the chinlock.

As has been the trend tonight, this match is bizarre as the fans are cheering Stardust instead of the guy they're pushing as an actual superhero. It's funny how such shortsightedness works. Neville fights back to silence (I'm stunned too) but Stardust rolls him up and grabs the trunks for the pin at 4:09. JBL: "Go to the pay window young man!"

Rating: D. So let's see. They've (so far) wasted any potential for Cody coming off his father's passing, Neville looks lame because no one wants to boo the son of a legend whose father recently passed away, and then Stardust cheats instead of getting to make this an important and cool moment. Oh and the match wasn't any good either. What a mess as psychology means nothing around here.

It's time for the contract signing to close things up this week. Rollins and Kane are out first and the champ talks about watching the footage of the car being destroyed again. After this Sunday, Suplex City will be a memory and he'll still be champion, but here's a Beast to disagree. Well, likely to stand there while Heyman disagrees. Paul says Rollins wants to burn Suplex City down, but the fans want to see him get taken apart for his breaking of the eleventh commandment.

People want to see Rollins get beaten up and that's what they're going to see this Sunday when he gets kicked, slapped, punched, suplexed, F5'd and dethroned. Rollins signs anyway, as does Brock, and there goes the table.

Kane comes at Brock but Lesnar pulls out an ax handle and actually flips the table back up. The fight is on again and Rollins goes flying. Kane breaks up an F5 on the floor and Rollins hits him with the ax handle.

Some steps to the head have Brock in more trouble but Beast Mode prevails with Kane taking an F5 on the floor. There goes Rollins into the crowd, leaving Brock to crush Kane's ankle on the steps, likely making this Sunday one on one. Brock poses with the title but we're not done yet as Rollins comes back to ringside and yells about being the man to slay the Beast on Sunday. Medics tend to Kane so Rollins yells at him too, calling Kane's career one big disappointment. This is on Kane and Rollins kicks him in the ankle to end the show.

Overall Rating: D+. This is a great example of a show where the good was good but the bad was really bad. Some of these matches and stories are disasters and I really don't think I need to explain which is which. The show wasn't terrible and had some VERY good stuff going on, but between Stephanie throwing herself into a feud she has nothing to do with and the battle of the kings that no one wants to see and a few other big misses, I wanted this show to end instead of wanting to like it. Not the worst by any means and the Divas segment (once it was about them) was great, but WAY too much bad to hold it back.

Results

Ryback/Randy Orton b. Sheamus/Big Show – Top rope splash to Sheamus

Mark Henry/Prime Time Players b. New Day – World's Strongest Slam to Woods

R-Truth b. King Barrett – Lie Detector

Rusev b. Kevin Owens and Cesaro – Superkick to Cesaro

Rusev b. John Cena via DQ when Kevin Owens interfered

Stardust b. Neville – Rollup with a handful of trunks

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Monday Night Raw – July 13, 2015: The KB Is On His Honeymoon So The Show Will Be Up Later Edition

Monday Night Raw

Date: July 13, 2015

Location: Phillips Arena, Atlanta, Georgia

Commentators: Michael Cole, John Bradshaw Layfield, Byron Saxton

It's the go home show for Battleground and thankfully Brock is here, hopefully to beat up a pair of cars in a handicap match this week. Other than that we have the rest of the build towards Wyatt vs. Reigns, possibly even including why they're fighting and what it has to do with Reigns' daughter, and more stuff including whatever Ambrose might be doing on Sunday. Let's get to it.

Monday Night Raw – July 6, 2015: Well Of Course Brock Smash

Monday Night Raw

Date: July 6, 2015

Location: Allstate Arena, Chicago, Illinois

Commentators: Byron Saxton, Michael Cole, John Bradshaw Layfield

The big story coming out of last week: product placement and lame action. The shows really aren't lighting the world on fire right now, but a lot of that has to do with a lack of the Authority and Brock, because without the two of them, the show comes off as a glorified Smackdown. Get to the point already or get rid of the Authority as the main focus of the show because otherwise, a show without them on it isn't going to go anywhere. Let's get to it.

The opening recap covers last week's product placement and Rollins reuniting the team.

We open with Heyman and Lesnar coming out to the exact reaction you would expect for them in a smark paradise like Chicago. Heyman talks about how the Authority thinks Brock is still in Tokyo, because they allowed him to show up tonight. Lesnar is a god and hallowed by his name, but he isn't a god of love or charity or kindness. No, Lesnar is a god of violent retribution and the sword that will pierce Seth Rollins' shield.

Heyman brings up the Streak but points out that it wasn't because of any malice towards Undertaker. Heyman: "This one you'll cheer." When Brock took John Cena to Suplex City, it was just because Lesnar wanted the title and not out of disrespect. The same was true for Reigns at Wrestlemania, but it's not the case for Seth Rollins.

No, Rollins has broken the 11th commandment by cashing in Money in the Bank, running away from a rematch and having his Authority buddies attack him two weeks ago. Heyman's job is to sell us on Battleground in St.

Louis, but the beatings and the suplexes begin tonight in Chicago. The Beast of Battleground is waiting for the champ tonight, so Rollins better be ready.

Kane is in Hawaii and we have badly photoshopped and unfunny photos to prove it.

The Stooges have taken a road trip and we're going to get pictures later. That....could work?

Big Show vs. Ryback

Non-title and Miz is at ringside in director's chair with a microphone. In an inset interview, Ryback says he is one of the few who can manhandle Big Show and Big Show doesn't like that. Well not many people would but Ryback never was very insightful. Miz starts shouting into the mic but only tells the big guys to hit each other.

The fans really don't seem pleased with this one and Show chops Ryback in the corner. Miz: "ONE MORE TIME! ONE MORE TIME!" Ryback kicks him in the face a few times but Show knees Ryback into the corner. This is a very slow and lumbering match so far which isn't a great choice for the opening match. Miz distracts Ryback so Show can slam him down as we take a break.

Back with Show holding a leg lock and Miz telling Show that he should never retire (WOO!). Ryback powers out and takes out the knee as well before dropping Show with three straight shoulders. The Meat Hook and a splash get two but the top rope version misses. Show hits a chokeslam and middle rope elbow, drawing in Miz for the double DQ (he was smart enough to hit them both at once) at 9:24.

Rating: D-. I have tried and tried to defend this three way feud but my goodness Big Show is dragging it down. Ryback is trying to become a more interesting character but there's only so much you can do with Big Show as the power moves against him look cool, but once you've seen them a few times (over the last fifteen years or so) they lose a lot of their impact. Let him do comedy again or something, because Show as the big, strong monster is WAY past its expiration date.

Miz attacks both guys and then begs both guys to wait for Battleground. Ignore the large gap behind him where he could run at any time of course. Miz takes a Shell Shock and chokeslam and another Meat Hook drops Show again. At least the champ stood tall.

More Kane hysterics.

The Stooges went to Wrigley Field and weren't impressed. They could at least take the price sticker off the window. That car better bite the dust before the end of the night.

Brie Bella vs. Paige

Paige gets backdropped to the apron to start and the announcers are already on the amount of days Nikki has held the title. So we're just stuck with nothing interesting until we get to AJ because Nikki is interesting or something. Nikki: "BRIE MODE!" You can hear the crowd dying for this one, which could be because this story hasn't changed in weeks now. Fox gets in a cheap shot but Brie knees down her sister/friend at the same time by mistake. Paige sidesteps the middle rope dropkick ala Samoa Joe but the other girls get involved, setting up the Bella Buster for the pin at 3:12.

Rating: D. This story needs to go somewhere already, and by somewhere I don't mean having Naomi and Tamina come in to help Paige. This story has been set up for something major and the same Divas being rotated in one more time certainly isn't it. The Bellas are long past interesting at this point and while Nikki is better than she was, this story needs a rest but we're pretty much confirmed for the next few months because AJ MUST DIE or something.

Paige gets beaten up post match.

Recap of Wyatt vs. Reigns from last week.

Sheamus vs. Roman Reigns

Get your countouts ready now. Reigns shoves the briefcase out of Sheamus' hands before we start and the brawl is on with a devastating headlock. Sheamus knees him in the ribs to take over but Reigns pulls him off the

middle rope and knocks Sheamus outside. They're still firmly in first power gear at this point.

Sheamus actually wins a slugout on the apron and sends Reigns face first into the post as we go to a break. That looked (and sounded) good at least. Back with Sheamus holding a chinlock and a nice loud CM PUNK chant keeping the crowd from being bored. Reigns' best way around this is a bunch of clotheslines, followed by a BIG clothesline in the corner. Feel the intensity!

The Irish Curse is countered and a Samoan drop connects. The Superman Punch is countered into another Irish Curse for two but Reigns Superman Punches him out of the air...and here's Bray. Roman charges up the ramp and Superman Punches...somebody, as Bray pops up on the screen and says anyone but you. Sheamus wins by countout at 11:20.

Rating: C. Decent enough power brawl here but like I said, it was no secret that we were going to get a countout or some kind of wonky finish. It wasn't anything of note, but there's only so much you can do with power brawls, especially when we just had one about forty minutes ago. WWE REALLY needs to work on alternating their styles because you keep getting the same styles of matches over and over and they get old fast.

Post match Randy Orton comes out for an RKO. I had been wondering where he was.

The WWE Network is in Italy. Uh...yay.

Rollins comes in to see HHH, who wants to know what Seth is going to do about Brock Lesnar. The champ thinks he has Battleground in the bag, but HHH is worried about tonight. Rollins needs to do the unthinkable tonight: have him laid out by the Authority like they did two weeks ago. To be fair, that is pretty unthinkable. Imagine the Stooges and Rollins being a real threat to Brock.

Here are Rusev and Summer Rae to keep this mess going. Rusev loves having a submissive Summer around but gets annoyed at the fans wanting Lana. He rambles on about being better than Dolph Ziggler until Summer tells the fans to give Rusev the respect he deserves. Rusev: "Thank you hot

Summer." Is she a radio chick now?

Cue Ziggler and Lana with the former saying Rusev achieved everything he has in WWE because of Lana. Dolph says Lana is his now and it's time for kisses. The girls tease a fight but Rusev blasts Ziggler with the crutch before taking off the boot. This goes on for nearly five minutes with the only highlight being Summer attacking Lana. Ziggler's comeback didn't work and the beating just kept going.

This was WAY too long and my goodness Ziggler sucks in this role. After all the years of being with whatever girl can get him somewhere he's all gaga over yet another good looking blonde because....she likes him? Is there any other reason for these two to be together? Rusev needs to murder Ziggler and then do something bad to Lana and then never speak of this whole mess again.

Post break they actually do the big serious talk about Ziggler being attacked. Ziggler even did a stretcher job. This story SUCKS and there is no need to ever talk about it again. Figure out how your characters work and then don't screw with them because going against established characters is one of the worst things you can do in wrestling or any other form of entertainment.

Bo Dallas vs. Dean Ambrose

Before the match, Dallas talks about how that was a bad thing happening to a bad person. Good things happen to people like him though, as long as you BOLIEVE! The dueling WE BOLIEVE/LET'S GO AMBROSE chants start up as Bo gets two off a clothesline before hitting the chinlock. Bo misses a knee drop and gets bulldogged down, setting up Dirty Deeds for the pin at 2:59. This was WWE saying "yeah Ambrose is still a thing after losing Thursday. Oh you didn't know he lost Thursday? Well then never mind."

The Stooges got stuck in traffic. Seriously.

R-Truth vs. King Barrett

No entrance for either guy as this feud just keeps going. Barrett stomps him down in the corner to start and a clothesline takes them out to the

floor. Truth is sent into the post a few times and we hit the chinlock. A big boot gets two for Barrett and we take a break. Oh freaking joy we get to see more of this match. Barrett hammers away but runs into a series of clotheslines (WAY too popular tonight and in general). Winds of Change is countered into a crucifix for two but a low blow drops Truth. Truth goes up and dives into the Bull Hammer for the pin at 9:37.

Rating: D. So? Barrett has knocked Truth out a few times already, so what difference does it make if he does it again? Why should this horribly uninteresting feud that has made Barrett look even less important than he was when he was Intercontinental Champion? Barrett could be doing ANYTHING else and it would be better but we're stuck with this. The match was boring too, just like everything else they've done.

Back from a break with another look at Zigler being beaten down. This is treated as way too big of a deal after the mess they've made of this feud.

Here's Rollins with an ax handle and the Stooges with their car and their own ax handles. Oh come on man. No one could possibly be that stupid. Rollins is going to burn Suplex City to the ground before going on about how awesome he is a bit longer. He finally asks if Lesnar is just Heyman's...uh...I think you can figure this out, so here's Brock. All three are ready for him so Brock thinks better of it and tells Heyman to bring him something. Heyman brings over an anvil case containing a pair of axes. Oh this is going to be good.

Brock smashes the ax into the car door and can't even get it out, so he breaks a few windows and tears off a door. The door goes flying into the crowd (apparently hitting a fan, who was ok) and now it's time for the Stooges to come save their car. Noble winds up with a broken arm and Mercury gets suplexed onto the hood, much to the delight of the crowd. Brock chases Rollins out of the ring and holds up the title to wrap things up.

THIS is what Brock should have been doing for the last six months. Just have him break stuff and be a freak of nature. Don't have him get beaten down by Kane and the Stooges like EVERY OTHER FACE EVER. That was the

problem with the HHH feud: anyone could have played Lesnar's role. Here, there isn't anyone else that Rollins hasn't already beaten or has any real reason to be afraid of anymore so only Brock really fits.

Lucha Dragons vs. New Day

Woods is the odd man out here and the Players are on commentary, with a shirt for Cole. The Dragons speed things up to start but Kofi comes back with a kick to the ribs (devastating!) before it's off to Big E. Titus goes on about some kind of fungus that Big E. has (maybe he could use a washcloth to clean it up. It didn't make sense when they said it for weeks on end (and yes I know what it is) so why not say it again here?) before the Dragons clean house and dive on all three New Day guys as we take a break.

Back with Kofi getting two on Kalisto before it's off to Big E. for more clubbing forearms. The abdominal stretch with the slaps set up a chinlock from Kofi as we hear about where everyone went to college. The hot tag brings in Cara and Titus takes over on commentary, doing a pretty awesome old school play by play, including a quick rant about how he should have JBL's salary. Everything breaks down and the Midnight Hour ends Cara at 10:16.

Rating: C. This was fine and a nice way to set up the title match at Battleground. Neither of these teams are exactly lighting the world on fire at the moment but it's nice to see something other than the team fighting over and over again. Titus continues to be WAY more charismatic than half the roster and deserves the success he's having.

Steve Austin is on the cover of WWE2K16.

It's Open Challenge time but first we get a package on Owens losing the NXT Title in Tokyo over the weekend. Cena says have no fear because the champ is here, meaning there will be a title match right here on Raw. Again Owens interrupts and says this is the worst part of the show every week because the people have to listen to Cena saying the same garbage over and over again. The bell is about to ring but here's Cesaro one more time. Cesaro says he deserves another shot because he had Cena ready to tap out but Owens cost him the title shot. Owens walks away from the

threat of violence and it's time for a rematch.

US Title: Cesaro vs. John Cena

Cena is defending of course. A quick uppercut puts Cena down on the floor and we take a very early break. Stop doing that nonsense and just have the bell after the break. We got maybe 40 seconds of "action" and then miss three and a half minutes. I hate that way of thinking. Back with Cesaro stomping away as he almost has to play the heel here, even though he's turned face for all intents and purposes.

A one arm delayed vertical suplex with a squat gets two but Cena shrugs it off (because it's a suplex) and drops Cesaro with a front face electric chair drop. The AA is countered into a DDT for two and it's off to the chinlock. That's good for a second commercial in about five minutes of actual match time because they're really trying to fill in time. Back with Cesaro catching Cena's shoulder in a backbreaker and countering the Shuffle with a crossface.

That's countered into an AA attempt but Cena has to settle for the STF instead. A rope is grabbed so Cesaro rolls some gutwrench suplexes for two of his own. That was a cool looking spot, as always. Cena blocks the Swing by doing a big situp into a DDT for two of his own and the fans are starting to buy into this. Cena rolls through a cross body into the AA but Cesaro lands on his feet.

Swiss Death is countered into a hurricanrana for two and both guys are down. The fans officially think this is awesome so they've won over one of the tougher crowd. Cesaro makes it even more awesome with a spinning springboard uppercut for an even closer two. They fall to the floor with Cena backdropping him into the timekeeper's area but the referee takes his time counting. Well to be fair that's not really a main event level finish so you can't go there again.

Cena shoves Cesaro off the top for two off the Fameasser and then tells him to hold the ropes, which Cesaro does to counter another AA. A HUGE Swiss Death connects for two more but a quick AA gets the same. Both guys are spent so Cesaro is able to grab the Swing, setting up the Sharpshooter which he transitions into another crossface, but Cena slips

out and puts on the STF.

Cesaro powers out of THAT and lifts Cena up into the air for a snap suplex. That is just scary, scary power. The Springboard Stunner misses so badly that Cesaro just Neutralizes Cena for two instead of going down. Cena's tornado DDT is stopped in midair and Cesaro slaps him down into another crossface, sending Cena into the ropes for a chorus of boos.

The apron superplex (with EASE) gets two but Cena pops back up and floats over into a Batista Bomb (the sign of Cena being desperate) for a sloppy two, as called out by the announcers. Cena takes him to the corner but almost gets caught in a super Neutralizer, only to be countered into a super AA to retain the title at a mind blowing 30:10.

Rating: A-. Yo Vince, I think the guy can connect to the fans. Cesaro is basically where Dolph Ziggler was a few years ago: having really entertaining matches but never being able to show what else he can do because he's never given the chance. Cesaro is one of the rare cases where he nails every single thing he's asked to do and almost everyone is begging for him to move up to the next level, but something about a superhuman freak with a good look who can speak five languages fluently and has nearly fifteen years experience doesn't click with Vince and for some reason the guy never gets the push he deserves.

At least there was this though, which is somehow better than last week's near classic. Cena and Cesaro are guys with incredible chemistry and yet another example of someone going out there and having maybe the match of their lives against Cena. I'm hoping that when Cena retires, people look back at him in awe because this is a once in a generation kind of talent and we take him for granted.

Owens runs in and eats an AA to close the show.

Overall Rating: C. It took a lot to bail this show out but thankfully the main event is awesome and eats up well over half an hour to close things out. Other than that and the awesome BROCK SMASH segment, there really wasn't much to see here. The wrestling in the first hour was horribly lame and the Rusev vs. Ziggler stuff has to end with Ziggler getting eaten like a Russian stew or the whole thing is an even bigger disaster

than I was expecting. The main event leaves this on a very positive note, but there's a lot for it to overcome here.

Results

Big Show vs. Ryback went to a double DQ when Miz interfered

Brie Bella b. Paige – Bella Buster

Sheamus b. Roman Reigns via countout

Dean Ambrose b. Bo Dallas – Dirty Deeds

John Cena b. Cesaro – Middle rope Attitude Adjustment

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Monday Night Raw – July 6, 2015

I'm still in England so Raw should be up tomorrow. Use this thread to discuss whatever happens and come up with your own ways to blame the Authority for Raw sucking.

Monday Night Raw

Date: July 6, 2015

Location: Allstate Arena, Chicago, Illinois

Commentators: Byron Saxton, Michael Cole, John Bradshaw Layfield

The big story coming out of last week: product placement and lame action. The shows really aren't lighting the world on fire right now, but a lot of that has to do with a lack of the Authority and Brock, because without the two of them, the show comes off as a glorified Smackdown. Get to the point already or get rid of the Authority as the main focus of the show because otherwise, a show without them on it isn't going to go anywhere. Let's get to it.

Thought of the Day: The Mice Won't Play

And that's not good.

Something I didn't get around to reporting last week was that the ratings for Raw were a disaster (come on guys you can watch even though your boss is gone). Here's the thing though: it really isn't hard to figure out why. The problem is, and I hate to admit it, the Authority wasn't around. WWE has pretty much made it clear that if they're not around then Raw is basically a glorified Smackdown.

Yeah stuff might happen, but it's either wrapped up later in the night and barely mentioned again, or completely erased by the Authority. The show has turned into everyone dancing around to entertain HHH and Stephanie as they get to ignore almost all character motivation and logic for the sake of keeping themselves looking good.

The fans know that if the Authority isn't around, big stuff isn't happening and they're much better off going to bed or doing something else and checking the results later, because three hours of mediocre

wrestling (and a John Cena match), uninteresting stories and Rollins trying to figure out if he's his own man or needs to buy the rest of the team presents to save him from some big bad isn't enough to hook you in all night. WWE can change this line of thinking pretty easily, but it's been proven before that they're not very interested in getting Stephanie and HHH off TV that easily and I can't imagine it happens anytime soon.

Monday Night Raw – June 29, 2015: What A Shock

Monday Night Raw

Date: June 29, 2015

Location: Verizon Center, Washington, D.C.

Commentators: Michael Cole, John Bradshaw Layfield, Byron Saxton

Battleground is on the horizon and the Authority seems to be reunited to help Seth Rollins defend his World Title against Brock Lesnar. This means Kane and Joey Mercury at the moment, as Lesnar injured Jamie Noble last week, meaning there aren't many obstacles for Lesnar to overcome to get to Rollins. Let's get to it.

The opening recap shows the ending of last week's show with Lesnar being laid out by the devastating forces of Kane, Mercury and Rollins. I'm so glad they had Lesnar get beaten up as he was getting way too close to feeling like something special and they needed to cut his legs out from underneath him. Well, maybe just the toes or so as Lesnar is going to be fine.

Here's the Authority, complete with the secret weapon of Noble, to open things up. This is officially Monday Night Rollins, because Rollins has been watching some old Nitro matches. Perhaps on the WWE Network for \$9.99? He talks about the power in this city, which you attain by doing things no one else could do. Rollins did something that Cena and even the

Undertaker couldn't do, as he conquered the conqueror last week. Suplex City was burned to the ground and Lesnar is now on his way to Japan.

That's what he deserves after what Lesnar did to Noble last week. We even get a quick Jamie Noble chant because these fans are that intelligent. They're quickly tossed aside though as Rollins demands that the fans show Noble the respect that he deserves. However, it's time for presents! Rollins has Apple Watches for everyone, likely fulfilling a product placement agreement. Kane is getting a bonus though. He debuted back in 1997 (that really shouldn't be brought up) and a lot of things have changed since then.

Bill Clinton was in charge, the internet was dial-up and Paul Heyman was fat and disgusting...so not everything has changed. In all that time, Kane hasn't asked for a thing, so Rollins is sending him to.....Hawaii, complete with a picture saying Hawaii, thereby making this a complete copy of the segment where Rocky Maivia took over the Nation, giving the members watches and Faarooq a picture of Rocky himself.

As a hula dancer and ukelele player come out to complete the mood, Kane is looking forward to deciding which animal to throw into a volcano, but Rollins thinks they should team up to destroy Ambrose and Reigns in a No DQ tag match tonight. Rollins still isn't done though as he has a 2015 Cadillac for the Stooges to travel in. The guys celebrate as Rollins lists off the price and features. I was right about that product placement it seems. This goes on until Big Show comes out for his match.

The tag match later is presented by the new Terminator movie. I'm sure some people will get annoyed by this but it's money for the company in like 30 seconds. It's not the worst thing in the world.

Big Show vs. Mark Henry

Oh...yay. Miz is on commentary to cheer for Henry but Show pounds Mark into the corner with right hands (which are the size of typewriters according to JR), only to have Henry knock him down and hit a splash for two. Not that it matters as two big right hands knock Henry silly for the pin at 1:24.

Ryback (sans belt) hits the ring to take Show down with a shoulder to the leg. Miz runs in to kick Ryback in the jaw, so Ryback wants their match to happen right now.

Miz vs. Ryback

Non-title., but now Ryback has the belt. I know it doesn't mean as much today but it disappears? Miz tries to stomp him down but gets his head slammed into the mat for his efforts. Ryback whips him across the ring with authority (not THE Authority of course. Like they'd be involved with the Intercontinental Title), followed by a totally ridiculous FORTY SECOND delayed vertical suplex.

Miz bails to the floor but comes back with a short DDT for two, setting up a nice face pull. A chinlock goes nowhere but the Reality Check gets two more. That's it for Ryback as he comes back with a spinebuster but the threat of a Meat Hook sends Miz running for the countout (the rare three count countout before the referee just says screw it and ends the match) at 5:11.

Rating: D. I would say this is what you would expect, but what you would actually expect is for Miz to beat him off a rollup when Big Show distracted Ryback. The triple threat match really isn't doing anything for me, but at least there's an actual feud over the title instead of just a one off match for a change.

Alicia Fox vs. Paige

Alicia comes out to the Bellas' music and has them at ringside. Paige takes her down into an armbar to start and drives a knee into the face for two. Some kicks in the corner don't bother Paige much as she hits a Thesz press, only to have the Bellas offer a distraction so Alicia can take over again as we go to a break. Back with Fox standing on the hair before we hit the chinlock.

As the fans start falling asleep due to the rest hold, the Bellas are right there with the COME ON (insert name here) shouting. A tilt-a-whirl backbreaker gets two on Paige and it's back to the chinlock. Two chinlocks in a match this show tells me that Fox has no idea where to go

on offense. Paige comes back with her three clotheslines and a kick to the face for two. Nikki tries a distraction so Fox can roll her up, only to have Paige roll through (with nothing on Fox's arms, meaning there's no reason she didn't kick out) for the pin at 9:43.

Rating: D. The idea was fine here but it's very clear that Fox had no business controlling most of a match this long. Paige vs. Nikki could be good, but I don't buy for a second that Paige is going to win as Nikki just MUST get the Divas Title record so we never think of AJ Lee again. I mean, that would just change so many things right?

Here's John Cena for the US Title Open Challenge (with the promo during the entrance instead of in the ring)....and here's Kevin Owens! I'll ignore Cole calling this a budding rivalry because Cole is that big of a schnook when he stops thinking.

US Title: Kevin Owens vs. John Cena

Owens drops to the floor after the Big Match Intros and says he'll just wait for Battleground. He'll take the US Title there, but maybe this man can do it instead.

US Title: Cesaro vs. John Cena

Owens joins commentary, which should be entertaining stuff. Thankfully they're immediately talking about the Balor vs. Owens NXT Title match this coming Saturday. Cena starts with a headlock and monkey flip to send Cesaro into the corner, meaning it's time for a standoff. This time it's Cesaro putting on a headlock before planting Cena with a powerslam, followed by a crucifix of all things for two.

The AA is countered and Cesaro drops Cena with a right hand for another near fall. As usual, why make things more complicated than they need to be? Off to an abdominal stretch on the mat as Owens talks about having what it takes to be a real champion. A dropkick staggers Cesaro but he casually slugs Cena down and gets two off a crossface punch to the head.

Back from a break with Cesaro trying a Sharpshooter of all things but Cena kicks him away, only to take a big clothesline for two. Cesaro loads

up the Swing but opts for a catapult instead, only to have Cena bounce back into something similar to a springboard Stunner (it barely connected) for two of his own. Cesaro flips out of the AA and hits a massive Swiss Death for two more.

There's the STF but Cesaro rolls out, adjusts his legs and turns the hold over into the Sharpshooter. That was Hart vs. Perfect-esque. Cena makes a rope though and Cesaro's frustration is setting in. Owens: "Cena is in trouble. Not as much trouble as he'll be in at Battleground but close enough."

The apron superplex puts Cena down again as Cole thinks this is going to be a match of the year candidate. It kind of loses its appeal if you keep saying it over and over again, which is why a lot of Cole's commentary gets old. And yes, I'm aware it's mainly him being fed lines. Cena gets two more off a tornado DDT and they slug it out until Cesaro tries a high cross body, only to have Cena roll through into...actually not the AA as he spins Cesaro forward into a faceplant for another near fall.

Owens gets up and swings at Cole for praising Cena, who is dropkicked off the top rope and out to the floor. Back in and Cena tries a sunset flip but has to settle for a sunset bomb for yet another two. There's a Neutralizer out of nowhere but Cena kicks out again. A spinebuster sets up the Swing (good idea to have a power move set it up. It's weird when he just grabs the legs) which sets up the Sharpshooter but Owens comes in for the DQ at 20:20.

Rating: B+. Can Cena have a bad match at the moment? The guy is on one heck of a roll, which says a lot given how good he normally is. Cesaro using the Sharpshooter is fine but debuting it against Cena isn't the best idea as Cena hasn't tapped out in about thirteen years. Very good match here, but did you really expect anything else?

Kevin powerbombs both guys and says if anyone is taking the title off Cena, it's going to be him. Owens comes off as such a jerk on commentary and I love it very much.

Tonight, Dolph Ziggler and Lana are going public. Oh man this is going to be bad isn't it?

We get what I think is the same recap that opened the show. That's quite the use of another three minutes.

Bray Wyatt pops up on screen with the ANYONE BUT YOU picture of Reigns. He wants Reigns to open his eyes to see the truth and close his mouth so no more lies can be spread. Wyatt wasn't his father's favorite because his father threw him away like a piece of trash. I wonder if IRS wrote that off his taxes. Wyatt has his wings back now though and Reigns knows everything Bray stands for. There will be no distractions at Battlegrounds because the insects that watch them every week are inconsequential. They're the yin to each others yang and Bray will be Roman's crown of suffering. Anyone but you Roman. Run.

Lucha Dragons/Prime Time Players vs. New Day/Bo Dallas

JBL: "We lucha on Monday nights!" We get a clip of Rock's big surprise appearance at a house show over the weekend where he laid out Dallas, which is a GREAT advertisement for the house show circuit. It's the same thing as when they would occasionally have a title change and then turn it right back soon after. No it's not going to happen all the time, but make the people think it could and you can sell some more tickets.

Woods and Kalisto get things going with the masked one flipping off the top rope into a wristdrag as JBL says the Dragons remind him of the APA days. Off to Cara vs. Dallas with Sin cranking on the arm, only to have Darren come in for his standing Earthquake splash for two. Titus comes in to throw Dallas around with ease, which is a really simple yet effective power move. Kalisto doesn't have the same luck as Bo knees him in the head to finally take over.

Back to Young for a chinlock as the match slows down. The belly to back suplex onto the apron plants Dallas again and the threat of a huge brawl sends us to a break. We come back with Woods holding Kalisto in a cobra clutch (that's a move that has gotten a lot more popular recently) but it's quickly off to Cara to flip around and kick Big E. in the head.

E. isn't in enough trouble to get caught in the Gut Check though as he shoves Young to the floor to take over. We get the rotating stomps before it's back to Bo for the chinlock. That goes nowhere and the hot tag

brings in Titus and everything breaks down. The Dragons hit big stereo dives, allowing Titus to hit a sitout spinebuster for the pin on Kofi at 14:35.

Rating: D+ Longer match than they needed to have here and I'm not wild on New Day losing again before their big rematch. That's why you bring in someone like Dallas: to take the fall and keep the New Day looking as strong as possible, but since WWE never actually thinks these things through, this is what we get. At least the champions didn't lose though.

Here are Dolph and Lana for their big moment. Originally they weren't on the best of terms because Lana was just trying to get back at Rusev. Then things changed, Ziggler is a real man, and Lana cares for him. Rusev finally hobbles out with Summer Rae by his side. He never cared about Lana because kissing her was like kissing the ring post.

Ziggler cuts him off and calls Lana his girlfriend and violence is teased, but Summer grabs the mic and calls Lana a gold digger. She was with Rusev when he won the US Title, but as soon as that was gone, so was Lana. That's enough for Lana and the fight is on, with the fans seemingly very pleased when Lana's skirt comes up. The match could be a disaster but the moment wasn't bad.

Ambrose talks to some Terminators when Reigns comes in and assures Dean that he's ready. Dean is the only family Reigns has around here and they're ready to rage.

Neville vs. Sheamus

Before the match we get a cool video of Neville being turned into a comic book superhero. I actually said he wrestled like a superhero when I saw him at a house show a few months back so they really nailed the idea here. Sheamus takes him down to the mat with a headlock as the announcers debate Neville beating him in the King of the Ring. JBL: "Nobody remembers who came second to Usain Bolt." Cole: "We did." JBL: "Well you're nobody."

Neville kicks him to the floor and Sheamus grabs the briefcase for comfort as we take a break. Back with Sheamus hitting the Regal Roll and

a release suplex for no cover. Instead Sheamus just smiles like a bully is supposed to do. The fans think this is boring, so Sheamus puts his hand to his ear and slaps on a chinlock. Now THAT is a great heel move. No sarcasm there if it's not clear.

Neville kicks him in the face for a breather but Sheamus calmly hits three straight Irish Curses to regain control. Sheamus gets low bridged to the floor though, setting up a great looking Asai moonsault. Back in and Sheamus gets kicked in the head again but is still able to kick the ropes for a huge crash to break up the Red Arrow. The Brogue Kick ends Neville at 12:41.

Rating: C. This was fine and again I like that they're pushing Sheamus instead of having him go on the stupid, stupid losing streak that has become the trend for Money in the Bank winners. I'm hoping Neville can bounce back from this as it felt like a downgrade for him, but there's a very good chance that it's a one off loss and nothing else. The superhero video was a very nice touch and gives me hope.

Jack Swagger vs. King Barrett

Before the match, Barrett demands that all of his opponents must bow down to him. Swagger will have none of that so Barrett bails to the floor to start. Back in and Swagger throws him down with ease and gets the Patriot Lock with Barrett already in the ropes. Well he's a hoss you see so you can't expect that much intelligence. Jack runs into a knee in the corner and the Bull Hammer ends this at 1:47.

Roman Reigns/Dean Ambrose vs. Kane/Seth Rollins

No DQ. The Stooges come out in the Cadillac. It's a brawl to start as it should be with Rollins quickly being knocked out to the floor. Kane gets double teamed but Rollins gets back in to shove Ambrose off the top rope. Back from an early break with Rollins holding Reigns in a chinlock and the partners on the apron, because WWE doesn't get what NO DISQUALIFICATION means. Reigns fights away from Kane and it's a double tag to bring in Ambrose and Rollins.

Dean quickly cleans house and knocks Rollins to the floor. It's weapons

time with a table getting things started. As if the fans didn't love Dean enough already. The Stooges pull it away so Reigns comes back with a bunch of kendo stick shots to Mercury, followed by three straight Superman Punches to various evildoers. Speaking of evil, cue Bray Wyatt to take out Reigns, including a Rock Bottom onto the announcers' table. Dean can't fight them off alone though and it's a chokeslam and Pedigree for the pin at 11:45.

Rating: C. Again, this was totally fine and they covered all the bases they needed to cover here. Wyatt costing Reigns the match makes perfect sense and at least the pin on Ambrose took two people. It's a pretty standard main event tag, but I'm glad they made it no DQ to avoid the same tired ending we always get.

Post match Reigns saves Dean from a TripleBomb through the table but Kane chokeslams him down too. Reigns fights back again but is finally thrown through the table in the corner. Another Pedigree puts Reigns down, leaving Wyatt to come back in (where was he for the last eight minutes?) and hit Sister Abigail to end the show.

Overall Rating: C+. Well it took me three days and....eh. I'm not at all surprised as it wasn't the best looking show in the world but at least it had the awesome Cena vs. Cesaro match (I'm as shocked as you are) and a few other good things in there as well. The Ziggler/Lana segment started off looking bad but Lana getting physical was long overdue. The show wasn't too bad and had more than enough moments to make it work. Good enough stuff here, but the car actually survived. That's quite the shock.

Results

Big Show b. Mark Henry – KO Punch

Ryback b. Miz via countout

Paige b. Alicia Fox – Rollup

Cesaro b. John Cena via DQ when Kevin Owens interfered

Prime Time Players/Lucha Dragons b. New Day/Bo Dallas – Sitout

spinebuster to Kingston

Sheamus b. Neville – Brogue Kick

King Barrett b. Jack Swagger – Bull Hammer

Kane/Seth Rollins b. Dean Ambrose/Roman Reigns – Pedigree to Ambrose

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