

Monday Night Raw – July 18, 2016: The Lame Duck Go Home Game Changing Show (Updated)

Monday Night Raw

Date: July 18, 2016

Location: Dunkin' Donuts Center, Providence, Rhode Island

Commentators: Michael Cole, Byron Saxton, John Bradshaw Layfield

This is a unique show as it's kind of a big night but also kind of a lame duck show while also being the go home show for a pay per view. The Draft is tomorrow night but there's also a World Title match as champion Dean Ambrose defends against Seth Rollins. The show is also going to open with the announcement of the new General Managers for both shows. Let's get to it.

Opening sequence.

Here are Shane and Stephanie to open things up. They have their standard bickering that makes award show presenters seem like Bogart and Bergman before arguing over testicles vs. lady balls. Stephanie's big announcement: there's going to be a new Cruiserweight division on Raw. Shane mentions his General Manager and the YES chants begin. That's cut off just as quickly though as Stephanie Raw's General Manager: Mick Foley. I wouldn't have bet on that one but I'd be shocked if he's still around by TLC.

After Stephanie awkwardly dances to his music. Foley compares the feeling here to the Attitude Era because IT'S THE GREATEST THING EVER and feels like the MONDAY NIGHT WARS ALL OVER AGAIN BABY! Stephanie calling him made the little embers turned into a fire. He's ready to bring Raw to new heights and all that jazz.

Shane brings out his own General Manager with the worst kept secret in wrestling this year: Daniel Bryan. Daniel won't shake Stephanie's hand before he talks about how much he missed the people. Naturally Stephanie

cuts him off to suggest he pander to the fans. See she doesn't get it because they've never cheered for her. Stephanie: "They did once!"

Bryan talks about how he heard Shane's ideas for a show where wrestlers are put first and he wanted to come back. When he beat HHH at Wrestlemania XXX (Stephanie: "Technicality.") and won the WWE World Title, he and the fans did that together. Stephanie gets in her B+ jokes and Shane says Stephanie can only stay relevant by marrying a WWE superstar. One last YES chant takes us out.

Chris Jericho/Kevin Owens vs. Sami Zayn/Cesaro

Cesaro gutwrenches Jericho to start before it's off to Sami so things can speed up a bit. An Owens distraction lets Jericho get in a shot though and we take a break. Back with Jericho still in control over Sami and sending him out to the floor. Sami gets in a few shots of his own though and the hot tag brings in Cesaro.

That means it's time for the uppercut train and the springboard spinning uppercut for two on Jericho. Owens and Sami come in off the double tags but Jericho breaks up the Helluva Kick. Cesaro's high cross body gets two on Chris and the Swing makes it even worse. Everything breaks down and Sami tornado DDTs Owens before small packaging Jericho for the pin at 12:02.

Rating: C. In case you didn't get enough of these guys during the Money in the Bank build. I love Sami getting a pin here though it should be interesting to see what happens with all four of these guys tomorrow night. Jericho and Cesaro not having matches on Sunday doesn't say much for either of them but that's their norm all around.

Golden Truth, Titus O'Neil and Jack Swagger try to get on Daniel Bryan's good side until Stephanie interrupts. They insult each other (with jabs about Daniel and Brie planting peaches) for a bit until Daniel says she ruined Raw.

Alberto Del Rio vs. Darren Young

Miz is on commentary. Del Rio sends him into the corner to start and

works on the arm as Miz gets in his second plug for Bob Backlund's book. Young comes back with a backdrop and atomic drop as we flash back to the 70s. A Miz distraction earns himself a forearm to the face, allowing Darren to roll up Del Rio (with a Backlund style bridge) for the pin at 2:33.

It's time for a twelve man tag but Cena comes out first and says it's an interesting time in WWE with Battleground being the icing on the cake. The Club is going to try to beat up Cena on Sunday but he has the Certified G's. Enzo says the term "don't take this the wrong way" has a 0% success rate so don't take this the wrong way but the Club is like a bunch of herbs.

Without ugliness in the world there can be no beauty so thanks for your sacrifice Gallows. AJ has a haircut like a soccer mom and Anderson is as generic as Times New Roman. Cena thinks Enzo is just a catchphrase machine but Cass says that's what he does. That's what makes them the best trio in the world like Nirvana, Destiny's Child or the Wu Tang Clan.

Enzo: "How you doin?" Cena: "I don't know how I'm doing!" He thinks they need to get serious but the Club cuts off the S-A-W-F-T line. AJ accuses them of meeting a few weeks ago over a bowl of candy at catering and thinks they can beat up everyone on the team tonight. Cue New Day to talk about going to the Wyatts' compound but AJ makes fun of Woods for being scared.

That goes nowhere so New Day explains How You Doin to Cena. Naturally this turns into a Pokemon Go reference with Woods listing off the ones he's captured but Cena cuts him off, only to be cut off with a NEW DAY ROCKS chant. This brings out the Wyatts as it turns out we actually have a match to get to.

John Cena/Enzo Amore/Big Cass/New Day vs. The Club/Wyatt Family

This is joined in progress after a break with Gallows coming in to shoulder Cena down. That brings in Big E. for a power showdown, only to have a little gyrating first. Now we get Strowman coming in to run Big E. over but Enzo tags himself in. Woods plays some trombone and Enzo bounces off Strowman so it's time for Cass to try his luck. A shove to Cena

triggers a huge brawl until it's back to Strowman and Cass with the big boot staggering Braun. Kofi tries to dive in but gets slammed down by Braun as we take a break.

While we're on commercial, it deserves to be pointed out how good of a job they've done with Cass. Him staring down Strowman felt more like a big deal than anytime Lesnar did it and I actually bought Cass as a threat to hurt him. That's very impressive and a great sign for him to come.

Back with Bray charging into Kofi's pendulum kick and a diving tag to bring in Cena. The finishing sequence is initiated but Bray brings the spider walk out of mothballs to shut him down. Rowan grabs a chinlock and the heels start taking turns on Cena. Gallows misses a splash and we take another break.

We come back again with Bray missing his backplash to Cena, allowing the hot tag to Cass. Everything breaks down again and New Day cleans house on the Wyatts. Woods hits a big flip dive to take them all out but Gallows breaks up Bada Book Shakalacka. New Day and the Wyatts fight up the ramp, leaving Enzo to clothesline Cena by mistake. The Styles Clash ends Amore at 18:58.

Rating: B+. This is even more impressive when you consider how many people had to be incorporated here. The ending really pushes the idea that Cena/Enzo/Cass don't know each other well enough to fight off a well oiled machine like the Club which is a really logical point to make. New Day vs. Wyatts could be a lot of fun and this was a nice preview. Really good stuff here with the pre-match promo being just as great.

Earlier today, Seth Rollins was in the empty arena (well save for the cameramen) to talk about how they came through so many stands to fight. He was the brilliant mind and kept Ambrose around to take the beatings and Reigns around to dish them out. After Sunday, Reigns will never be the same again. Ambrose on the other hand is a coward who is running out of places to hide. This Sunday, Rollins will prove he was always the man.

We recap the opening segment.

Shane comes up to Foley in the back and suggests that Stephanie just hired him because he'll connect with the fans while being manipulated. Foley appreciates the caring but thinks Stephanie has fire and drive. This would be another beloved face trying to put Stephanie over.

Baron Corbin vs. Sin Cara

This is Cara's first match after the Lucha Dragons officially split. Corbin sends him into the corner to start but gets kicked away. A springboard elbow to the jaw staggers him but End of Days gives Baron the pin at 1:15.

Kalisto comes out for the post match save but gets beaten down as well.

Charlotte/Dana Brooke vs. Becky Lynch/Sasha Banks

Dana gets taken into the corner to start and it's time for Becky's early armbar. The spinning legdrop gets two on Dana but here's Natalya to attack Lynch for the DQ at 2:22.

Sasha gets beaten down post match.

Rusev/Sheamus vs. Dolph Ziggler/Zack Ryder

Sheamus headlocks Ryder down to start and cuts off his comeback by hitting him in the face a few times. Rusev sends him into the barricade and it's back to Sheamus for the slow beating. Sheamus won't tag for some reason though and we hit the chinlock. Ryder dropkicks him down and makes the hot tag off to Ziggler as everything breaks down. Rusev kicks Ziggler in the back and it's the Accolade for the submission at 3:45.

Rating: D+. Just a quick way to show off the idea that Rusev is awesome because we didn't know that yet. Ryder needed a win here after that mess last week against Sheamus. Ryder is going to get destroyed on Sunday and I'm not sure where things go after that. Sheamus on the other hand continues to float, just like Ziggler. And no WWE, that's not a hint about a bonus match for Sunday.

Video on Randy Orton.

Video on Cena hosting the ESPYs.

Daniel suggests a peace treaty with Mick Foley because they're so much alike. Foley has no issue with Bryan but the battle is on.

Raw World Title: Dean Ambrose vs. Seth Rollins

Rollins is challenging and all the bosses are at ringside. Dean headlocks him to start and Seth bails out to the floor. The champ sends him into the barricade and we take a break. Back with Seth in control and putting on a chinlock. A hard right hand gives Seth some near falls before both try cross bodies at the same time. Dean fights up first and hammers on Seth a bit, including a forearm to put him on the floor.

There's a big suicide dive but Rollins powerbombs him into the barricade. Back in and a frog splash gets two as we take another break. Back with Seth still in control and hitting his springboard knee to the head. Another frog splash misses though and Dean has an opening. It sounds like the fans are cheering for Rollins here.

Dirty Deeds gets two with Rollins putting his foot on the ropes. Seth rolls outside but comes right back in and counters the top rope clothesline into the Pedigree for two. With nothing else working, Seth loads up a superplex but Dean ties up the legs and it's a double pin at 24:18.

Rating: B+. More really good stuff from these two but the ending comes off as a cheap way to have Sunday's title match be for the vacant title. You knew they weren't sticking with Ambrose on top for long because he's not the "star" kind of guy and that's the excuse they're sticking with. I mean, Rollins may be a ratings disaster but he's a STAR ratings disaster. Really good match here though and a big feeling title match.

Stephanie (of course) declares Rollins the new champion and Shane doesn't say anything to close the show. You know you'll see more of this on Sunday.

Overall Rating: A-. Like I said at the beginning, this was a very odd show without anything actually mattering until the ending but even that

was odd. I'm sure there's going to be an update tomorrow night but this comes off as a way to either set up a new World Title or to just give the belt back to Reigns like nothing ever happened. There are two great wrestling matches on here though and they were more than enough to make this show awesome, questionable ending aside.

So apparently after the show went off the air, a bonus clip aired on the Network where Ambrose was declared champion because it was a screwy finish. You know, because THREE HOURS AND EIGHT MINUTES isn't enough content.

Results

Sami Zayn/Cesaro b. Kevin Owens/Chris Jericho – Small package to Jericho

Darren Young b. Alberto Del Rio – Rollup

Wyatt Family/The Club b. Enzo Amore/Big Cass/John Cena/New Day – Styles Clash to Amore

Baron Corbin b. Sin Cara – End of Days

Sasha Banks/Becky Lynch b. Charlotte/Dana Brooke via DQ when Natalya interfered

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Monday Night Raw – July 11, 2016: This Close To Interesting

Monday Night Raw

Date: July 11, 2016

Location: Joe Louis Arena, Detroit, Michigan

Commentators: John Bradshaw Layfield, Michael Cole, Byron Saxton

Things are back to normal this week, or at least as back to normal as they're going to be with just one more Raw after this before the Draft takes place. The only major event announced for tonight is Zack Ryder challenging Rusev for the United States Title after beating Sheamus twice last week. Let's get to it.

First of all, on a personal note, Happy Anniversary Becca. Thanks for an amazing year and I love you.

Opening sequence.

Battle Royal

Goldust, Darren Young, Apollo Crews, Viktor, Konnor, Bubba Ray Dudley, D-Von Dudley, Dolph Ziggler, Bo Dallas, Simon Gotch, Aiden English, R-Truth, Baron Corbin, Jimmy Uso, Jey Uso, Jack Swagger, Alberto Del Rio, Curtis Axel

Winner gets an Intercontinental Title shot at Battleground so Miz and Maryse are on commentary. English is put out early and he lands near Bob Backlund, who is managing Young. R-Truth puts out Viktor and Bubba (Not D-Von, Cole.) gets rid of Axel. There goes Truth and Konnor follows him out. One Uso tries to eliminate the other but they settle with a double superkick to get rid of D-Von as we go to a break.

Back with Gotch and Jey having been eliminated during the break. Del Rio gets rid of Goldust and Crews eliminates Dallas as the ring is emptying out. Jimmy and Swagger are thrown out so we're down to Crews, Bubba,

Young, Del Rio, Corbin and Ziggler. Crews low bridges Bubba out and Del Rio is the only one left standing. Ziggler drops him with a Fameasser and goes for a cover out of instinct. That's not enough to eliminate him though as Alberto comes back with a tilt-a-whirl gutbuster.

Alberto misses a charge and goes through the ropes, allowing Ziggler to superkick him to the floor which isn't an elimination. Corbin sends Dolph to the apron but can't get him out. Del Rio comes back in and gets backdropped out by Crews to put us down to four. Corbin gets rid of Ziggler but Crews gets rid of himself and Corbin, leaving Young to win the thing at 13:20.

Rating: D. You know what, why not? That's certainly a unique way to win the match and it's a nice way to have Young go somewhere after all those vignettes. I would have gone with Crews here but this could have been a lot worse. I mean, at least it's not another battle of Cleveland with Ziggler vs. Miz. It was a pretty standard battle royal though, which is only going to be so entertaining.

Backlund picks Young up to celebrate.

Shane and Stephanie McMahon are talking about why Vince McMahon is going to be here tonight. Maybe it's to give one of them a promotion. Seth Rollins comes in and thinks Vince is here to see about him as the face of the WWE. Rollins has footage for tonight and Shane thinks it should be on the Ambrose Asylum. Stephanie says no because she hates Dean (Have we ever gotten a reason other than he's apparently an embarrassment to the company?) so Seth will get to debut the Rollins Report. Great. EVEN MORE talking.

Quick look at Brock Lesnar winning his return to the UFC on Saturday before he faces Randy Orton at Summerslam. Orton will be on the Highlight Reel at Battleground.

Zack Ryder comes up to challenge Rusev again but Sheamus jumps him from behind. Apparently there's no title match tonight because Ryder will be facing Sheamus next. Three WOO's for false advertising!

Sheamus vs. Zack Ryder

Ryder goes right after him to start and knocks Sheamus to the floor for a dropkick off the apron. Back in and a running boot to the face gets two for Zack as the announcers ignore the match to play fantasy draft. Not that it matters as the Brogue Kick ends Ryder at 2:22. I knew this was coming because this is how WWE works but thanks for YET ANOTHER waste of potential for the sake of a nothing match on Smackdown.

Rusev comes out and beats up Ryder as well while shouting that he accepts Ryder's challenge. Wait, so Ryder is getting the title shot after Sheamus just beat him clean? SERIOUSLY? This is the kind of stuff you suggest in sarcasm because it's the dumbest thing you could possibly do, not what you actually do on Raw.

Breezango vs. Lucha Dragons

This is due to the Dragons messing up Breeze's vest on the pre-show. Fandango and Cara start things off and it's time for more Draft talk. Cara headscissors him down but gets caught in the wrong corner to put him in trouble. Fandango is sent into the corner as well and the hot tag brings in Kalisto, who almost immediately botches a springboard. A few kicks to Breeze go better and the hurricanrana driver makes it worse. The numbers get the better of him though and Breeze gets in a superkick for the pin on Kalisto at 4:20.

Rating: D+. I can't help it but I like Breezango. They're just a goofy little midcard heel team but it's not like there's anything better for either of them to do. If nothing else it means we're getting something out of that Golden Truth story, which went on forever and deserves to actually go somewhere. Also it's not like the Dragons mean anything at this point anyway so them losing doesn't exactly matter.

Here's Seth Rollins for the Rollins Report. Tonight he has something special for us: footage from a special sitdown interview with Roman Reigns. Please tell me this isn't going to be one of those things where he asks questions and Reigns' answers are to completely different questions and edited to sound embarrassing.

We see the footage and it's....one of those things where he asks questions and Reigns' answers are to completely different questions and edited to

sound embarrassing. Basically Reigns "admits" he did it and says he should be out of the triple threat because he's no role model. Oh and he hates Dean being champion.

Back in the arena, Rollins says Ambrose should be out of the triple threat because he deserves his rematch for the title, one on one. Cue Ambrose but Rollins yells at him for being a coward and stealing the title from him at Money in the Bank. Dean says he loves to come out here and have a good time but he's the top man in this industry. He's more than just a joke and a utility player because he's the only one still standing and the king of this company. Dean goes on about Rollins wanting another shot and offers a title shot anywhere any place. Rollins is ready right now but nah, not tonight. He'll see Dean next week.

We get a quick preview of New Day fighting the Wyatt Family at their compound. This DEFINITELY looks like the Final Deletion.

Ambrose vs. Rollins for the title is confirmed for next week.

Kevin Owens vs. ???

Sami Zayn is on commentary but Kevin won't come out until he's gone. Stephanie comes in to say get rid of Sami because she's all about solutions. Sami starts to leave but gets in a fight with Owens on the ramp. No match.

Vince arrives and says he's here to name the Commissioner of Smackdown.

Kevin Owens vs. Cesaro

Time for more Draft talk! I know it's a big deal but could you please talk about the actual match for more than two seconds first? Cesaro gutwrenches him over for two to start before they trade headlocks. A hurricanrana puts Owens down but he makes the ropes to break up the Swing. Owens takes over with a whip into the barricade as the announcers talk about where John Cena will be drafted. Cesaro's suplex doesn't break their focus but Owens knocks him into the barricade as we take a break.

Back with Cesaro fighting out of a chinlock and avoiding the Cannonball in the corner. The Pop Up Powerbomb is blocked and the springboard

spinning uppercut gets two for Cesaro. Another running uppercut on the floor (with Cesaro wearing JBL's hat) but Cesaro gets crotched on top to slow him down. Owens busts out a torture rack neckbreaker for the clean pin at 12:24.

Rating: C+. I like the finisher but I could go without Cesaro losing all over again. I mean to be fair he had that awesome run against Miz and came up short, which is his standard operating procedure. It's still working, but at some point you're just wasting a lot of potential and acting like Cesaro isn't being hurt by all the losses.

Post match Owens grabs a headset to brag about how awesome he is until Sami Zayn jumps him from behind. Cesaro swings Owens in a meaningless gesture. Maybe he should, I don't know, be upset about the loss?

The Club thinks John Cena is abandoning Enzo and Big Cass by hosting the ESPYs and not being here tonight. Maybe after the win they could hop on a plane and crash the awards so they can beat up John Cena.

Heath Slater vs. Titus O'Neil

We actually get a Slater Gator reference for a name I never thought (or hoped to) I'd hear again. Titus throws him around to start but runs into a raised boot in the corner. That means it's time for a quick Bo-Train, followed by Slater getting two off a DDT. Titus starts powering back and catches a diving Heath in three straight backbreakers. The Clash of the Titus puts Heath away at 3:12.

Rating: D. Well that happened and I'm not sure what else there is to say about it. This is another short match that doesn't seem to mean much but maybe that's going to be the norm going forward. Titus winning is fine but I'm not sure where he's going after losing to Rusev so decisively.

Sasha has been waiting to shut Dana Brooke up all weekend now and wants the title after that. Tonight, she gets real.

We look back at the Wyatt Family challenging the New Day to come to their compound last week.

Now we go to the compound, where a bunch of cars turn their lights on and

try to crush New Day as they get out of their truck. The editing makes this look like it's being played in fast motion so it's almost impossible to keep track of. The Wyatts arrive in a car and the brawl is on with New Day being beaten down with a variety of weapons. Woods hides behind a tree until Bray swings an ax at him and rams him into the tree trunk.

Kofi is shoved into some mud until Big E. suplexes Rowan. Strowman (who looks even more frightening with his shirt off) and Big E. hit each other a few times until Bray comes back and drops the unconscious Woods by the car. Kofi and Big E. are beaten down again as the editing gets even faster. Woods gets back up with a trashcan lid for a save but Bray beats everyone down and asks where the power of positivity is now.

New Day is sent into a car which is quickly beaten down but they escaped somewhere in there. Bray is left alone but smiles at New Day, who are freaked out by his laughter. Rowan and Strowman come back but a bunch of people in sheep masks appear, all holding lanterns. That's enough for New Day as they bail, leaving Bray to say follow the buzzards.

Yes it's clearly a takeoff from the Final Deletion and I'm sure I'll hear about how much better TNA's version was, though this was the serious version and exactly the kind of thing that made the Wyatts creepy in the first place. This really is something that has to be seen though as words really don't do it justice. It worked though.

Enzo Amore/Big Cass vs. The Club

Enzo and Cass say they want Cena's spot but they're willing to earn it. The Club on the other hand think they can take it by beating Cena up 3-1. AJ tells them to walk away but Enzo says the only place they're walking is into that ring right now. This is joined in progress after a break with Enzo trying to hold Anderson with a headlock. It's quickly off to Gallows who headbutts Enzo back into the corner as the beatdown begins.

Karl comes back in for a headlock but Cass comes in and slams Enzo onto Anderson for two. To be fair Enzo might as well just be a projectile as I don't think he's entirely human. Gallows kicks Enzo in the face and sends him shoulder first into the post as we take a break. Back with Anderson and Gallows taking turns on Enzo. Anderson finally lets Enzo get away for

the hot tag to Cass (Enzo's signature) and a fall away slam sets up the Bada Boom Shakalacka. AJ low bridges Gallows to the floor though and it's a DQ at 10:48.

Rating: C. This was just a long beating on Enzo and to be fair that's almost all he's good for in a situation like this one. I like how much they're protecting Cass though as I don't think he's been pinned yet and the Club actually lost here. The match was fine, albeit pretty basic for the most part. It's acceptable though as you don't want to burn the fans out on this match like they did with the Club vs. the Usos.

Post match the beating is almost on but here's Cena, who was in Los Angeles earlier today, for the save. Well at least he's not live via satellite. That earns him a big CENA chant which you really don't hear that often.

Dana Brooke vs. Sasha Banks

Sasha shoves her outside to start and things instantly slow down. Back in and Dana talks a lot of trash before kneeing Sasha in the ribs. Banks is sent outside so Charlotte can brag us to a break. Back with Sasha in a chinlock (Charlotte: "Very good Dana.") before stomping away in the corner. The announcers continue to talk about ANYTHING other than this match as Dana grabs another chinlock to keep things slow. Sasha fights out again and hits the double knees in the corner. Dana crotches her on top but Sasha pops right back up and grabs the Bank Statement for the win at 12:00.

Rating: C-. This was fine and another win for Sasha as that Natalya feud looks more and more pointless every single week. Dana is getting better in the ring as she's not botching everything she tries but she still is on the main roster far sooner than she probably should have been.

Post match Charlotte says that's not good enough so Sasha has to beat Dana again on Smackdown.

Here are Shane, Stephanie and Vince for the Smackdown Commissioner announcement. Vince thinks they've been doing a fair job but wonders how they could be his kids. Where's the violence and anger? How could they

not have stabbed each other in the back yet? What's up with Stephanie being all passive aggressive and Shane having no ruthless aggression?

The kids are given a chance to convince their dad that they should be in charge of Smackdown and Stephanie goes first. Stephanie goes on a rant about what Shane said on the Mick Foley podcast about how he left when he wasn't congratulated enough. That's nothing compared to what he says behind Vince's back because he's all crazy and needing to be praised.

Shane says he came back in this arena five months ago and he's eternally thankful. He's ready to change everything about Smackdown and shatter the glass ceilings that Vince and Stephanie have set up. We get a quick fan poll with Shane easily winning which Stephanie attributes to crowd manipulation.

Vince doesn't care what the people think but one of them has to run Smackdown. That will be.....Shane, while Stephanie runs Raw. Ah that's better. For a second there I thought they might actually do something interesting. Vince wants them to compete for who gets the keys to the kingdom but they'll both be naming General Managers. Great. MORE power struggles and double bosses for each show.

Vince leaves and Stephanie tells Shane she's going to make him wish he was never born. Shane thinks Stephanie is hiding something and it's fear. It's game on, but Stephanie says she's married to the only game in this business. She slaps him in the face so he kisses her on the cheek, only to have Stephanie slip off the steps as she leaves to end the show.

Overall Rating: C. I actually liked this show more than I was expecting to as it absolutely flew by. Even though it was just a big preview for the Draft next week (as it should have been), they kept it entertaining enough and set some stuff up going forward, which is all it was supposed to do. Unfortunately the ending really hurt things as it's going to be all about the McMahons even longer, which is really the last thing they needed to go with but that's how WWE works. Anyway, not a good show or anything but it was good enough for a show in a vacuum like everything else is around here at the moment.

Results

Darren Young won a battle royal after Baron Corbin and Apollo Crews eliminated each other

Sheamus b. Zack Ryder – Brogue Kick

Breezango b. Lucha Dragons – Superkick to Kalisto

Kevin Owens b. Cesaro – Torture rack neckbreaker

Enzo Amore/Big Cass b. The Club via DQ when AJ Styles interfered

Sasha Banks b. Dana Brooke – Bank Statement

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Monday Night Raw – July 4, 2016: Half A Cheer For The Red Monday Night Show

Monday Night Raw

Date: July 4, 2016

Location: Nationwide Arena, Columbus, Ohio

Commentators: John Bradshaw Layfield, Michael Cole, Byron Saxton

Now this should be interesting as it's another show where almost no one is going to be watching, meaning WWE isn't likely to put much, if any, effort into the show. There's a US Title match between Rusev and Titus O'Neil plus a big US vs. The World elimination tag match which will likely get a lot of time. Let's get to it.

We open at the roster's Fourth of July party with Golden Truth rapping in the background. The Vaudevillains take their place with English singing the Declaration of Independence, only to have food thrown at him. Miz and Maryse (who should wear red more often) go into a rant about how this is why we can't celebrate holidays anymore, which turns into an ad for Smackdown going live in two weeks.

A massive food fight breaks out with Kane and Big Show getting into a chokeslam battle until Heath Slater throws something at them, earning himself a chokeslam through a table. Everyone else leaves with only Kevin Owens sitting at a table. Owens: "This would never happen on Canada Day." Someone hits him with a pie and Owens freaks out. Total filler but it's tradition at this point.

Opening sequence.

Lillian Garcia sings the National Anthem as we have red white and blue ropes again.

US Title: Rusev vs. Titus O'Neil

Rusev is defending and yes this is actually happening again. Titus is dressed like Apollo Creed for a nice touch. This is joined in progress after a break with Titus throwing Rusev around with ease before being tossed/suplexed out to the floor. Back in and we hit the chinlock for a bit before Titus fights up for the slugout. Some shoulders and a big boot put Rusev down, followed by a powerslam for no cover. The Clash of the Titus gets two and the announcers basically admit that it's over. Rusev gets in some kicks to the head and the Accolade ends this at 5:53.

Rating: D+. Next. Like please, find ANYTHING to go with from here because

this feud has been over from the second the match was announced in the first place. Titus was fine (ok that's a stretch) enough for a one off match but this is something like four times that we've seen Rusev beat up Titus, save for a lame countout. This needs to end the whole thing though because it's not interesting and never really was.

Miz vs. Ambrose tonight in your weekly Smackdown rematch.

Here are the Social Outcasts dressed as minutemen but are quickly cut off by Enzo and Big Cass. Enzo thinks we should have some star spangled banter because they're stars and take meteor showers. Amore lists off the Presidents in order and it's time for a match.

Enzo Amore/Big Cass vs. Social Outcasts

Bo and Curtis since Heath is still banged up from earlier. Enzo gets beaten down for all of a minute before Cass comes in to clean house with the usual. A big boot sets up the Bada Boom Shakalacka for the pin on Dallas at 2:03. In other words, the people dressed as the old school Americans get squashed.

Here are Charlotte and Dana Brooke with something to say. Charlotte talks about people being jealous of her and the proof is around her waist. It must be eating Sasha alive that Charlotte is the champ and all she has is a WE WANT SASHA chant. There is no one that has done more than Charlotte this year because Sasha is all hype.

Cue Sasha to say Charlotte can be champion but she'll never be Sasha. Charlotte doesn't want to be here but Sasha says she would be champion if not for Charlotte's daddy. We get the very good question of what it means to be the boss. Charlotte has been champion for most of the time since they debuted in WWE a year ago so she's the legit boss. Sasha talks about how a boss fights all the time and is about to fight now but Dana's distraction lets Charlotte kick Sasha in the face. That earns her a Bank Statement with Dana making the save before Charlotte can tap.

Dean Ambrose vs. The Miz

Non-title and another Smackdown rematch that won't be billed as a rematch

because Smackdown means nothing. Dean starts fast and clotheslines Miz out to the floor for a whip into the barricade. Miz reverses a whip and we take an early break. Back with Ambrose fighting back but getting dropkicked in the knee for his efforts.

We hit the Figure Four for a bit as JBL goes on his same rant about how you can't put Ambrose's face on billboards or have him on Jimmy Fallon, even though NO ONE BUT CENA (and occasionally Reigns) EVER DOES ANY OF THAT STUFF. Miz's top rope ax handle is countered and Dean sends him outside for the suicide dive. Ambrose is nice enough to hold his leg after the dive connects. Back in and Miz kicks him in the face, only to walk into Dirty Deeds for the pin at 9:42.

Rating: C-. The match was fine, albeit a shorter version of the exact same match that we saw back on Smackdown because that show is a dress rehearsal for whatever they're doing on Monday. JBL continues to get on my nerves with his whole HE CAN'T BE CHAMPION thing because as usual, it makes no sense.

Post match here's Seth Rollins for his match and a quick staredown with Ambrose that goes nowhere. Dean changes his mind and comes back to do commentary as it's time to rip off Dean Ambrose from a few months ago.

Seth Rollins vs. Dolph Ziggler

Non-title and Dean switches from Spanish commentary to English as they get started. They hit the mat to start with Ziggler sending Rollins outside. Seth comes back in for some stomps and an enziguri to knock Dolph to the floor as we take a break. Back with Dolph getting a faceplant off the top for two, followed by Rollins' low superkick getting the same. Ziggler evens the superkick score for another near fall, only to have the Zig Zag countered into the Pedigree for the pin at 11:18.

Rating: C+. This was fine and a better use of Ziggler than you normally see. Ziggler is going to be fine no matter how many times he loses and it's a good idea to have Rollins win matches clean like this one. Rollins is a much bigger star so this really doesn't hurt anyone in the short or long run.

Post match Rollins gets on the announcers' table to rant about his legacy. He still thinks Reigns should be taken out of the triple threat because Reigns hasn't worked for anything a day in his life. Ambrose gets on the other announcers' table so Rollins can yell at him a bit before the fight is on. Rollins gets the worst of it though and it's Dirty Deeds onto the table, which doesn't break.

We get an old school Wyatt Family video with them talking about how New Day's reality doesn't really exist. They invite New Day into their world because the power of positivity is a myth believed only by fools and children. Join them.

Video on Baron Corbin. You don't see this kind of thing often enough.

Here's Vickie Guerrero to say she should be in charge of Smackdown. This goes on for a good while until security takes her away. Cole calls this very strange, despite it happening every week for the last month.

Big Show gives Team America (Zack Ryder, Kane, Dudley Boyz, Apollo Crews, Mark Henry and Jack Swagger) a pep talk about how it doesn't matter where you're from. Naturally the Battle Hymn of the Republic is playing in the background.

Vickie is being taken away when she runs into ex-boyfriend Dolph Ziggler...who says he's never seen her before so she should be taken away.

Golden Truth vs. Vaudevillains

Breezango is at ringside. Truth and Gotch start things off with Simon taking a kick to the face. A double tag brings in Goldust to work on English, including a bulldog for no cover. Everything breaks down and Truth tags himself in, setting up a powerbomb/side slam combo (Solid Gold) for the pin on English at 1:31. I'm so glad they brought the Vaudevillains up for something like this. Breezango did nothing.

Bob Backlund wants Darren Young to live a problem free life. His advice is to make his problems bend to his will. Then he asks about Young's finisher, which is still the Gut Check. Backlund isn't cool with the fact

that Darren doesn't have a submission hold so he suggests the Crossface Chickenwing, which he officially gives to Young. See, Backlund believes in Darren and wants him to be great again.

Here's John Cena to suggest that the crowd isn't as fired up as they normally are. They seem a little disappointed tonight but maybe they need to find that energy they had the first time he stood face to face with AJ Styles. We were waiting fifteen years for the big showdown but then AJ failed to stand on his own two feet. It wasn't a big surprise though as Cena always knew he'd have to fight all of the members of the Club if he wanted to fight one, which is why he got laid out last week.

Cue the Club with AJ talking about the Club making their return to Tokyo this past week but the posters were all about John Cena. The Club runs Tokyo and soon they'll run WWE, but first they have to get rid of Cena himself. AJ knows that Cena is loading up that shovel to get rid of him but last week there was no one out to save Cena when he was in trouble. It's because no one relates to him because he's this top star. Instead people relate to the Club, because they have the guts to get it done.

The Club is going to beat him up week after week, including on Labor Day and Halloween, even if it means dressing up like Bushwhacker Luke and Brutus Beefcake. Then on Christmas Day, Anderson is going to wrap presents with his hot Asian wife (his words) and then beat up John Cena. The Club comes down to the ring to beat him up now and the attack is on until Enzo and Big Cass of all people make the save. That's certainly better than the Usos.

The Shining Stars are actually still a thing.

Summer Rae vs. Becky Lynch

Natalya is watching from the back as Summer chokes in the corner to start. We hit the chinlock less than a minute in before Summer botches a suplex, basically dropping Becky on her head. Some clotheslines set up the Bexploder for two before the Disarm-Her makes Summer tap at 2:58.

Chris Jericho wishes the Multi-National Alliance (Yes really. That would be Jericho, Alberto Del Rio, Cesaro, Sami Zayn, Sheamus, Kevin Owens and

the Lucha Dragons) a happy Canada Day but a multilingual argument breaks out.

Enzo and Cass shill Sonic.

Here's New Day to talk about the Wyatt Family. We get Deliverance jokes before New Day promises to bring them a bowl of Booty0's. The Wyatts pop up from their compound and say New Day's screams are music to their ears. Bray issues the challenge to come to the compound. Kofi accepts but Woods keeps looking worried. As Big E. promises to spread positivity from the window to the wall, Woods cuts them off and says Bray just knows about fear. This is a bad idea and it's no longer fun and games. If they can't see that, New Day can't survive.

John Cena/Enzo Amore/Big Cass vs. The Club is set for Battleground.

Team USA vs. Multi-National Alliance

USA – Apollo Crews, Big Show, Kane, Dudley Boyz, Mark Henry, Jack Swagger, Zack Ryder

Multi-National Alliance – Chris Jericho, Kevin Owens, Sami Zayn, Cesaro, Sheamus, Alberto Del Rio, Lucha Dragons

Elimination rules and the foreigners (including Kalisto, who hails from the far off land of Chicago) come to the ring to their national anthems. Owens beats up Ryder to start before it's quickly off to D-Von vs. Cara. This is going to be really hard to keep track of early on. A quick 3D gets rid of Cara at 1:05 and the Brogue Kick does the same to Bubba at 1:12.

Back from a break with Cesaro swinging D-Von into the Sharpshooter for the submission at 5:45. Swagger comes in for the Patriot Lock but has to fight out of the Sharpshooter attempt. Jericho comes in and the Vader Bomb hits raised boots, setting up the Codebreaker for the elimination at 7:53. Kane comes in but everything breaks down for a huge brawl as we take another break.

Back with Del Rio getting two on Crews off a Backstabber before getting dropkicked out of the air. The hot tag brings in Henry for some slow

motion house cleaning, only to have Kalisto dive into the World's Strongest Slam for the elimination at 13:20. Owens comes in and GIVES HENRY A POP UP POWERBOMB for the elimination at 13:35.

That was insane and I was thinking there was no way he could do it but he just did anyway. Ryder is in next but Owens sends him into Sami, triggering the obvious brawl. Kane tags himself in but Owens hits Sami with a chair for the DQ at 14:55. As in Owens is disqualified, though it should really be Kane. Speaking of Kane, he hits Owens with the chair for another DQ at 15:24, despite Owens already being eliminated. Kane chokeslams Sami so Crews adds the standing moonsault for the elimination at 15:49. Sheamus Brogue Kicks Crews for the elimination at 15:53 and we're rapidly running out of people.

So it's down to Ryder/Big Show vs. Jericho/Sheamus/Del Rio/Cesaro with Jericho beating on Ryder. Cesaro tags himself in and it's time for the uppercut train on Cesaro's own teammates. He loads up the Neutralizer on Ryder but gets rolled up to eliminate Cesaro at 18:41. The announcers treat that way too lightly and it's Sheamus beating on Ryder, only to get caught with a neckbreaker. The hot tag brings in Big Show to start cleaning house with the KO Punch eliminating Jericho at 20:14. Del Rio's low superkick is blocked and a chokeslam gets rid of Alberto at 21:31.

We're down to Sheamus vs. Ryder/Big Show with Show pulling Sheamus back in over the top by the hair. The chokeslam doesn't work though and Sheamus is smart enough to go for the leg. Ryder comes in for his forearms in the corner, only to get caught in the powerslam for two. Show grabs Sheamus by the throat and shoves him into the Rough Ryder for the final pin at 22:18.

Rating: C-. Oh what else were you expecting here? You knew that a bazooka blast to the chest wasn't going to defeat the Americans here and that's exactly how this should have gone. Ryder getting the win is a fun little moment and no one is going to remember this by the time it's the fifth of July so everything is fine. The match was nothing to see but it's not like any rational person was expecting anything else.

Old Glory is lowered and fireworks take us out.

Overall Rating: D+. Again I ask: what else were you expecting? It was mostly a skippable show with some decent wrestling and a grand total of nothing of note, save for a six man being announced twenty days before a pay per view. This is a good example of a throw away show that no one was going to watch in the first place but at least there was enough stuff on here to keep me entertained for three hours. We'll be back to serious next week and that's fine on a holiday like this.

Results

Rusev b. Titus O'Neil – Accolade

Enzo Amore/Big Cass b. Social Outcasts – Bada Boom Shakalacka to Dallas

Dean Ambrose b. The Miz – Dirty Deeds

Seth Rollins b. Dolph Ziggler – Pedigree

Golden Truth b. Vaudevillains – Solid Gold to English

Becky Lynch b. Summer Rae – Disarm-Her

Team USA b. Multi-National Alliance – Rough Ryder to Sheamus

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Monday Night Raw – June 27, 2016: Holes In Limbo

Monday Night Raw

Date: June 27, 2016

Location: Amalie Arena, Tampa, Florida

Commentators: Michael Cole, John Bradshaw Layfield, Byron Saxton

We're getting closer to Battleground but things have changed a bit because of Roman Reigns' suspension. It should be interesting to see if that's actually referenced during the show as they could just as easily say Rollins attacked him off air or that he was injured during last week's match. Let's get to it.

Here's Seth Rollins to open things up. He talks about the upcoming triple threat but stops to talk about the Roman Reigns scandal. What he did to get himself suspended soiled the Shield's name and then he even put out a statement about it. We see the Tweet from Reigns saying he violated the Wellness Policy and apologizing for it, which Rollins doesn't buy. What about an apology to the fans?

As for the last part where Reigns says he owns it, all that matters is Rollins owns him. Reigns doesn't deserve a second chance or forgiveness or to be in the main event of Battleground. Based on the suspension, we might as well just make it a singles match because that's what Rollins deserves.

Cue Ambrose to say everyone makes mistakes, like being Seth's friend or Rollins wearing skinny jeans. As far as Dean is concerned the triple threat is still on. This brings out AJ Style to say it should still be a triple threat with himself taking Reigns' place. Dean doesn't make the decisions around here but thinks it's still a triple threat.

They all bicker with each other when John Cena comes out as well. He's held that title fifteen times and had his first match in WWE fourteen years ago today. Cena won the last time he beat Ambrose so let's make it a fatal fiveway. Now it's Stephanie McMahon to say she doesn't like

Ambrose standing in the ring as champion. She does however like the idea of Cena and Styles in the Battleground title match. Therefore tonight it's Cena vs. Rollins and Ambrose vs. Styles. If Cena and AJ win, they can be added to the title match at Battleground.

Paige/Sasha Banks vs. Charlotte/Dana Brooks

This is Sasha's first match on Raw or Smackdown since April because WWE has no idea how to book more than one story in this division at a time. Sasha sends Dana into the corner to start but Brooke reverses and does the pat on Sasha's head. That just earns her an ejection out to the floor and we take a break.

Back with Charlotte putting Paige in a chinlock, apparently due to kicking her in the face during the break. A running flip neckbreaker allows Charlotte to taunt Sasha a bit and draw the hot hotheaded Banks in. Paige dives for the tag but settles for a superkick to the champ's face, allowing her to bring in Sasha. Everything breaks down and double knees in the corner sets up the Bank Statement to make Dana tap at 8:46.

Rating: C-. The ending made sense and it's a good sign that Paige's win over Charlotte wasn't just a one off plot device. Sasha going through Charlotte's lackey to get to the big title showdown makes sense though I could see them waiting until Summerslam to go there. Unfortunately this makes the whole Natalya series seem like a waste of time as there was no real reason to wait on Sasha getting this run. Oh and please don't have them put Ric Flair in Sasha's corner for some stupid reason.

Titus O'Neil vs. Rusev

Non-title and we actually get a match here despite Titus attacking before the bell again. Titus misses a charge in the corner and gets stomped down, setting up a chinlock that goes nowhere. A dropkick puts Titus down and a few knees to the ribs keeps him in trouble, only to have the threat of a big boot sends Rusev outside. We get a double clothesline before Titus throws Rusev over the timekeeper's area for the countout win at 4:09.

Rating: D. Why in the world are we getting another of these matches?

Titus vs. Rusev was one of the lamest title matches I've seen in a long time and now we're getting another despite Rusev already beating him? WWE really needs to comprehend the idea of a one off match. Not everything needs to be part of a big story, despite what WWE seems to think.

Stephanie runs into Kane, who is still trying to get a chance at running Smackdown. Miz and Maryse come in to complain about the lack of a red carpet and the limo driver not opening the door for them. Kane mentions his own acting career before bringing up Miz not defending the title in a long time. That's accurate actually so Stephanie makes a title match against a mystery opponent. It's like a cliffhanger you see.

As usual, every single word Stephanie says feels like it comes off a teleprompter. I don't know if it's that she sucks as an actress or what, but she's sounded like that for over fifteen years now and it almost never changes. She can rant and rave very well but anytime she tries to sound natural or spontaneous, she sounds like an eight year old in a school play.

Seth Rollins vs. John Cena

If Cena wins he's in the title match at Battleground. They start fast with Seth actually getting the better of it off some right hands. A dropkick and Blockbuster get two each on Cena but he initiates his finishing sequence to come back. Of course it's WAY too early for that so the Shuffle is broken up with a kick to the face.

Back from a break with Cena hitting the shoulders into the Protobomb again but catching the kick that would break up the Shuffle. A third Protobomb sets up the Shuffle but the AA is countered into the low superkick for two. Cena comes right back with a tornado DDT for two of his own, only to have Seth kick him in the face.

The great looking frog splash misses though and Cena heads up top but Seth runs the ropes for a superplex and rolls into a Falcon's Arrow for two. A quick AA gets two more with Seth getting his foot on the ropes. Another AA doesn't work so Cena grabs the STF but cue the Club for a distraction, setting up the Pedigree for the pin at 16:00.

Rating: B. It's nice to have these two feel fresh after all those matches they had back in the fall. Cena losing this close to clean is kind of surprising but Rollins needs wins like these to really look like a top player again after the injury. I mean I know he won the title but does that really mean much anymore? Good match here though, despite the somewhat obvious ending.

Enzo Amore/Big Cass vs. Carlos Kershing/Mitch Walding

Enzo says they're riding a wave and the wave is these people. Therefore he wants the fans to do the wave as soon as the bell rings. The Bada Boom Shakalacka ends we'll say Kershing at 25 seconds.

Post match Cass loads up the spelling but the Social Outcasts interrupt. Dallas says the Outcasts are H-A-R-D so Cass asks which is the hardest. A big boot drops Slater and the other two aren't so willing to get in the ring.

Bob Backlund/Darren Young segment with Backlund saying it's time for the Darren Young Era. This sounds like the last one.

Some Special Olympians got to train at the WWE Performance Center. Nothing wrong with that.

The Special Olympians are here and get a presentation to the crowd.

Becky Lynch vs. Summer Rae

Natalya is on commentary and there's no match as Becky goes right after her, earning a pretty loud BECKY chant as a result.

It's time for the Highlight Reel with guests Sami Zayn and Kevin Owens. After Jericho blames both of them for that maniac Dean Ambrose being WWE World Champion, he brings them out and brings up their careers being put on hold because of this feud. Sami wants to end everything at Battleground because they might wind up on different shows without anything being settled.

Owens won't say anything so Sami accuses him of being a coward. Sami wants to hear Owens admit that he's jealous of Sami for getting to WWE

first in NXT. Owens says he's told Sami the truth many times: what he did was to advance his own career. Everything they did was to get to WWE and Sami should have done is congratulate Owens for using him as a stepping stone. The fact that he doesn't shows that Owens is a better friend than Sami ever was, but the match is on for Battleground.

Jericho loves the idea but says Owens is just trying to follow Jericho's path. Chris doesn't think much of Sami either and would love to shut up his stupid idiot face right now, but he'll leave Owens to do that at Battleground. We get the Gift of Jericho pose but both Sami and Owens kick him in the face at the same time. The fans seem really intrigued at the idea of these two working together.

We recap the opening segment.

Intercontinental Title: The Miz vs. ???

Miz is defending against....Kane. I had it being Cesaro but why do that when you can do someone not quite that interesting who hasn't had a match since Wrestlemania? Kane throws him around to start but can't get a chokeslam. Instead it's a big boot to the champ's face, followed by a side slam for two. Maryse gets on the apron to break up another chokeslam attempt, only to get knocked to the floor for some screeching. Miz is nice enough to check on her and her injured ankle, drawing our second countout for the midcard champions of the night at 3:27.

Rating: D. I'm glad Kane didn't win here but tell me we're not going to see a rematch between these two at Battleground. I really don't need to see Kane getting a second title shot but since they did this match here we absolutely need to see them do it again because HOW ELSE CAN WE POSSIBLY DO A STORY???

Post break Maryse shows Miz that she was faking. Miz is impressed.

Apollo Crews/Cesaro vs. Alberto Del Rio/Sheamus

See, Del Rio and Cesaro had a match on Smackdown (not shown of course) so they're in a heated rivalry now. Sheamus wants nothing to do with Crews to start so Apollo grabs a quick suplex on Del Rio and brings in Cesaro.

Some kicks stagger Cesaro and a DDT gets two for Alberto.

Sheamus comes in for the Irish Curse before slapping on a chinlock to keep things slow (not a bad thing here). Cesaro throws him down and the double tag brings in Crews to clothesline Del Rio a few times before Alberto intentionally enziguris Sheamus and walks out. A dropkick sends the steps into Sheamus, setting up the toss powerbomb to give Crews the pin at 5:00.

Rating: D+. Well ok then. I'm not sure where they're going with this but it's a good sign that Crews is just in the midcard without too many questions. I really don't need to see them waiting around while he has a nothing feud to introduce him to the roster. The short thing against the Social Outcasts was bad enough but he seems to actually have a place now. Not exactly a character or that much of a story but he's got something.

Dean Ambrose is disappointed that he didn't get a parade for winning the title but he'll settle for a match with Styles tonight. Stephanie comes in and talks about how she wants to get the title off Dean as fast as she can because he's a disgrace to the company. Oh and no one would want his autograph because he's not worth it.

Ok, this is just stupid now. Stephanie just keeps going from one side of the spectrum to the other and you can pretty much guess which one she'll be on a given week. It's either the fun loving one who dances with kids and wants to make WWE great or the one who is basically Vince with better legs. At some point you need an actual motivation for your character and "I want WWE to be respected" isn't enough.

We get that because she tells you every single week but just saying it and giving no reason for why someone isn't worthy of your praise isn't enough. Pick a side or at least tell us why you're doing something. Just having Stephanie go all over the place because she's Stephanie and the rules don't apply to her. This has been going on for years but she's a self made woman and empowering or whatever their line is.

The Wyatts are here...and it's New Day in costumes, with Kofi as Rowan, Woods as Harper and Big E. as Bray, complete with cowboy hat, gray beard with a string to hold it on, overalls and a lantern made up of light up

unicorn horns. We even get a New Day themed Wyatt style montage. Kofi throws the mask off and wants to know how Rowan can breathe in that thing. They get in the ring and Big E. plays up to being born in Tampa. Big E.: "Tampa General Hospital anyone?"

They make fun of the outfits until the real Wyatts interrupt. Bray says it's a new day and tells the fans to vilify him. How can the power of positivity help someone who just lost his job and can't put food on his table? Kofi calls the power of positivity a way of life and Big E. agrees but Bray focuses on Woods. Xavier looks a bit shook and Bray says Woods can confide in him. They're just playing one of Woods' games but there are no winners or loses. There's just malice and destruction and New Day will fall. Remember when Bray was going to be a face and he was looking awesome? Is there a reason that was canceled?

Post break New Day thinks it's a great idea to keep messing with the Wyatts. Kofi: "It was the best idea we've had since we went and saw Finding Dory the other day." Woods looks shaken and walks off.

Dean Ambrose vs. AJ Styles

Non-title and Rollins is on commentary. Feeling out process to start with Ambrose getting taken down in a headlock. Back up and Dirty Deeds doesn't work so we take an early break. We come back with AJ hitting a good looking dropkick and slapping on a chinlock. A hot shot breaks up AJ's momentum and a fisherman's suplex of all things gets two for the champ.

AJ gets the same off a faceplant but takes too much time getting to the top, allowing Dean to grab a butterfly superplex. Styles is back up though and grabs a torture rack into a spinning powerbomb, only to miss the Phenomenal Forearm. Dean wrenches his knee though and that means the Calf Crusher. You don't have the champ tap though so he grabs the rope instead.

Dean sends him outside and OF COURSE he can still do the suicide dive on the bad leg. Back in and AJ rolls through the top rope elbow, followed by the Pele. Dean is JUST FINE and hits the rebound lariat to put both guys down. This brings out the Club so AJ can get two off a brainbuster. Cena comes down to fight Gallows and Anderson but the distraction sets up

Dirty Deeds to put AJ away at 15:45.

Rating: C-. Completely ignoring the leg injury aside, is there a reason why Seth didn't come in and attack Dean to keep it a triple threat like he wanted? He's supposed to be all smart and he was fine with letting Dean be in the Calf Crusher while he just sat there. I know it's not how you do a match like this, but it goes against Seth's intelligence to have Dean in that much danger and not do anything about it. This match had too many holes it in for me to work, despite it being entertaining at times.

Post match the Club beats up Cena as Rollins hits two Pedigrees on Ambrose. Is there ANY reason he's still using that move? He's not associated with HHH anymore and it really doesn't fit his style but that's what he was using before and nothing is allowed to change for a main eventer so I guess that's what we're getting for good. Cena gets a Magic Killer on the stage and Dean takes another Pedigree to end the show.

Overall Rating: C. This wasn't quite the same as last week as the wrestling was just there for the most part. The bigger problem though is how weak Battleground is looking aside from the main event. It looks like a lot of rematches and then some nothing matches like Kane vs. Miz and Titus vs. Rusev. On top of that there's also the impending Draft, which really makes so much of this stuff seem like filler. The show certainly wasn't horrible but it was really just there, and that's rarely a good sign. Oh and next week is the Fourth of July, meaning the biggest throw away show of the year. Have fun with that one.

Results

Sasha Banks/Paige b. Charlotte/Dana Brooke – Bank Statement to Brooke

Titus O'Neil b. Rusev via countout

Seth Rollins b. John Cena – Pedigree

Enzo Amore/Big Cass b. Carlos Kershing/Mitch Walding – Bada Boom Shakalacka to Kershing

Kane b. The Miz via countout

Apollo Crews/Cesaro b. Sheamus/Alberto Del Rio – Toss powerbomb to Sheamus

Dean Ambrose b. AJ Styles – Dirty Deeds

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Monday Night Raw – June 20, 2016: How To Make Battleground Important

Monday Night Raw

Date: June 20, 2016

Location: Talking Stick Resort Arena, Phoenix, Arizona

Commentators: Michael Cole, John Bradshaw Layfield, Byron Saxton

A lot changed last night at Money in the Bank, not the least of which is all three members of Shield held the WWE World Title at some point. Dean Ambrose walked out with the title after cashing in Money in the Bank briefcase to end the show on new champion Seth Rollins, who had taken the title from Roman Reigns. We're heading towards Battleground now but first up is that whole Brand Split and completely changing the company thing.

Let's get to it.

Dean arrived earlier today and threw money at the cab driver, only to have to chase after the cab because he forgot the title.

Opening sequence.

Here's Dean to open things up, walking past a Raw and Smackdown podium on the way to the ring. The fans tell him that he deserves it before Dean talks about barely remembering a lot of last night. Apparently he ran into the Cleveland Cavaliers but he isn't a fan. I'm sure the crowd booing him out of the arena didn't sway that decision in the slightest. Dean gets right to the point: hard work and dedication pay off and when it pays off, it pays off BIG.

If Roman Reigns is the guy, maybe Ambrose can be the Dude. Call him whatever you want but you have to call him champ because it was all worth it to get here. Cue Roman to some LOUD booing. Roman says last night wasn't his night because it was Dean's night. He's here to congratulate the new champ but the fans cut him off with a YOU CAN'T WRESTLE chant. Roman says all the people chanting that need to take a sip of their beer and calm down. The other reason Reigns is out here is to find out if Dean is a fighting champion.

This brings out a furious Seth to say he never properly lost the title and Reigns needs to go to the back of the line. Here's Shane McMahon to calm things down a bit. Shane thinks the best idea is to have Seth vs. Roman with the winner facing Dean. Shane talks to an invisible Stephanie about her idea since the real version isn't here tonight. Stephanie agrees so let's have the match tonight instead of waiting around.

Sami Zayn vs. Kevin Owens

Owens bails to the floor to start so Sami takes him down with a clothesline. You would think Sami could come up with some different offense somewhere in there. Sami moonsaults off the barricade to drop Owens again so Kevin bails into the crowd. That goes nowhere as Sami throws him back to ringside, only to have Owens drive him into the post as we take a break.

Back from a break with Kevin's backslash hitting raised knees. Sami low bridges him to the floor for the running flip dive, only to charge into a superkick for two. Sami's half and half suplex looks to set up the Helluva Kick but only earns him another superkick. A victory roll out of nowhere gives Sami the pin at 8:54.

Rating: C+. These two always work well together and it's a good idea to have Sami get a clean pin over Owens. You can't have the whole thing be one sided and I kind of like the idea of not waiting for some big moment for the first win for a change. Good enough match here but these two have that natural chemistry that you just can't fake.

Kevin goes after him again post match but Sami escapes a powerbomb on the stage and they trade fists until referees break it up.

After a break, Sami and Kevin are still fighting in the back.

The announcers talk about the Draft, basically making the official announcement.

Here's John Laurinitis to throw his name in the hat as GM but Shane comes out to say no way because that's not how it's going to work.

Enzo Amore/Big Cass vs. Vaudevillains

Enzo and Shane compare shoes and dance a bit on the way to the ring. After the usual catchphrases, Enzo says he didn't like what Johnny Laryngitis was saying. Any guesses how many dimes he would have if he got one for every time Johnny said something important? English stomps Enzo down to start before it's off to Gotch for a neckbreaker. The slow beating continues until Gotch eats a Downward Spiral into the middle buckle. The hot tag brings in Cass to clean house with the Empire Elbow for two on English. Enzo goes up for the Rocket Launcher, now named the Bada Boom Shaka Lacka, for the pin at 2:53.

Here's AJ Styles to talk about the tainted win last night. The bottom line though is that he beat John Cena, even if it didn't go down like he expected it to go. Either way, the Club is going to continue but he wants Anderson and Gallows to come out and apologize right now. Anderson and

Gallows come out and AJ yells at them a bit, saying that was his only first chance to beat Cena and now John has an excuse. AJ wants an apology right now and gets one from both guys, but now he needs Cena out here as well.

Cena comes out and says AJ broke the contract but Gallows says AJ had no idea what they were going to do. That's the apology but Cena thinks it's a coverup to hide the fact that AJ isn't as good as he says he is. Cena can accept the win because that's the most important thing in WWE. What AJ doesn't get is the idea of being a man of his word. Last night Styles proved that he doesn't have a word or balls. That earns him a CENA chant but AJ doesn't think the fans know what they're talking about.

AJ thinks there should be a fight right now and Cena is ready but that's not what Styles meant. Instead AJ meant against either Anderson or Gallows, not Styles himself. Cena says it doesn't matter which one he faces because the other will be at ringside. Therefore, he'll fight all three, which is the contract AJ should have signed in the first place. AJ stops him again and says it's Anderson vs. Cena right now.

John Cena vs. Karl Anderson

Joined in progress with Cena pounding Anderson down but stopping to look at the entrance for Styles and Gallows. An early ProtoBomb sets up the Shuffle and the AA, drawing in the rest of the Club for the DQ at 2:24 shown.

Post match Cena takes the Magic Killer and Styles Clash.

Stills of last night's ladder match and World Title situation.

We also look at the opening segment.

Rollins is ready to take the title back from Ambrose and it starts tonight. He wants to prove that he's the best member of the Shield once and for all. Oh yeah that's grounds for a triple threat.

Becky Lynch is sick and tired of everyone turning on her with Natalya being the latest one to do so. Natalya jumps her from behind and says it's time to think about herself.

Baron Corbin vs. Zack Ryder

Ryder pokes him in the eye to start but Corbin might have been goldbricking as he blasts Ryder in the face with a right hand. Zack shrugs off some choking and sends him outside for a dropkick from the apron. The Elbro gets two but Corbin slides under the ropes and runs back in for a right hand, followed by End of Days for the pin at 3:03.

Rating: D+. This was better than I was expecting with Ryder getting in a lot more offense than I was expecting. Of course the second you heard Ryder's music playing you knew how this was going to go but that's all you can expect from someone like him. At least they kept this short though and there was almost no mention of Dolph Ziggler, a development that is LONG overdue.

We look at WWE announcing a partnership in China and signing a Chinese wrestler to a developmental deal.

The Wyatts are coming back soon.

We look back at Paige beating Charlotte in a non-title match last week.

Paige (who seems to not be under arrest) talks about having a history with Charlotte from Team PCB but Charlotte and Dana are behind her laughing about getting cell phone service. Charlotte brags about rocketing up the charts after Team PCB broke up while Paige fell down like a tree. Paige says she'll win the title tonight and Charlotte will have no one to blame but herself.

Women's Title: Paige vs. Charlotte

Charlotte is defending and we get big match intros. A rollup gets an early two for the champ but she nips up off a shoulder. Paige hits a running knee in the corner followed by a series of knees to the face from the bottom rope. Dana offers a distraction though and Charlotte nails Paige to take over as we take a break.

Back with Charlotte doing her figure four headscissors faceplants but Paige grabs a backslide for two. Some superkicks set up a running knee for two on the champ, followed by a fall away slam. Paige's superplex is

broken up and the moonsault gives Charlotte two. The Figure Eight is countered into a small package for two and the Rampaige gets the same with Dana putting the foot on the ropes. That earns her an ejection but Charlotte hits Natural Selection for the pin at 8:30.

Rating: C+. Good match here as usual and it's nice to see Paige not have to babysit the lower level women for a bit. That being said, we're just waiting on Sasha at this point and it's just a matter of time until Sasha comes back and gives us the big Summerslam feud for the title. Well maybe Battleground but whatever.

Post match Paige gets suplexed but here's Sasha for the big return to clean house. Charlotte gets caught in the Bank Statement to draw Dana back in, only to have Paige help make the save.

Roman says he's going to be the guy to beat Seth Rollins.

The Wyatts are here.

Here are the Wyatts for their big return. We get a big welcome back chant so Bray asks if they missed him. The Wyatts have been locked away and punished but they have never forgotten what they stand for. Bray issues a warning to everyone back there...and here's New Day to cut them off. Woods says Bray needs to stop talking so much and Kofi goes into the usual spiel, only to have Bray seem to hypnotize Woods. Kofi gets him back but Bray thinks the future is New Day falls. That's uh...quite the odd choice for a pairing but Bray controlling people is interesting. Are the Wyatts still faces though?

Life Lesson With Bob Backlund, focusing on Backlund giving orders, not advice.

Rusev vs. Titus O'Neil

Titus says this is about respect and revenge instead of the US Title. He charges in and a fight starts before the bell, meaning no match so this MUST CONTINUE! They fight outside with Rusev getting the worse of it and being sent out into the crowd.

Miz and Maryse are on the set of Marine 5 and Miz gets annoyed because he

can't get good quail. He freaks out and goes on a rant about how bad the crew is, right in front of the crew.

Chris Jericho is in Shane's office and rants about how he should be #1 contender but Shane doesn't see it that way. Jericho brings up the 69 tacks and calls Shane a stupid idiot, which doesn't sit well with the boss. Chris wants to be on whatever show Shane isn't running but Shane says he'll be on both.

Seth Rollins vs. Roman Reigns

Winner goes to Battleground for a title shot and Dean is on commentary. Roman shoulders him down to start and they head outside with Rollins getting knocked around even more. Roman loads up the announcers' table but gets caught with a Blockbuster back inside. A dropkick gets two for Seth and we hit the chinlock. Rollins takes it to the floor and sends Roman into the barricade, only to get kicked in the face back inside. They head outside again with Reigns sending him into the barricade as we take a break.

Back with Rollins throwing on a sleeper but Reigns quickly escapes and fires off some forearms until the referee breaks it up. The distraction lets Seth get in a jumping enziguri and he sends Roman outside for the suicide dive. Back in and Reigns scores with his powerbomb for two. Neither guy can hit a finisher but Seth tries a springboard and dives into the Superman Punch for two. The spear is blocked by a kick to the face so Reigns punches him out to the apron.

Now the springboard knee to the face sets up the slow superkick for two but Reigns avoids a great looking frog splash. There's the apron boot and Roman loads up the announcers' table. Seth escapes to avoid extreme pain and scores with another enziguri. Seth barely breaks the count but Reigns pulls him back outside for a spear over the announcers' table. That spot loses a lot when there's no big crash. Neither guy gets back in and it's a double countout at 17:27.

Rating: B-. Obvious ending aside, this was actually a bit more entertaining than last night as the length really pulled the first match down. Of course this sets up the Shield triple threat which should

headline Summerslam but why do that when you can do it at a nothing show like Battleground? In theory this leaves Reigns vs. Lesnar II for Summerslam but that's assuming Lesnar is healthy after the UFC fight. But hey, why play it smart when you can play it stupid?

Post match Shane comes out to say we need a #1 contender but Dean says he'll fight both of them in the same night. The triple threat is made and Dean hits Dirty Deeds on both guys to end the show.

Overall Rating: C+. This show set up some stuff for Battleground as it seems like we're heading towards some Money in the Bank rematches. You have to assume we'll get Sami Zayn vs. Kevin Owens in a big showdown, plus the Cena vs. Styles rematch and of course the big triple threat. Still though, good enough show here with some watchable wrestling but again we're still stuck in a weird bit of limbo with the Draft in a month. I'll take a watchable show that's off the air at two minutes after the hour instead of thirty two minutes after the hour though so this is a bit less annoying than last night's show.

Results

Sami Zayn b. Kevin Owens – Victory roll

Enzo Amore/Big Cass b. Vaudevillains – Bada Boom Shaka Lacka

John Cena b. Karl Anderson via DQ when AJ Styles and Luke Gallows interfered

Baron Corbin b. Zack Ryder – End of Days

Charlotte b. Paige – Natural Selection

Roman Reigns vs. Seth Rollins went to a double countout

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Monday Night Raw – June 13, 2016: Someone Give Me A Good Title For A Strong Go Home Show

Monday Night Raw

Date: June 13, 2016

Location: Smoothie King Center, New Orleans, Louisiana

Commentators: John Bradshaw Layfield, Byron Saxton, Michael Cole

It's the go home show for Money in the Bank so it's hard to say how much will actually happen this week. In this case we'll have the buildup to the actual ladder match but one of the participants will be crossing over to the main event as well as Dean Ambrose hosts a special Ambrose Asylum with Seth Rollins and Roman Reigns. Let's get to it.

Opening sequence.

We have a moment of silence for Orlando.

Here's New Day to get things going. During their entrance we see a sign in the crowd reading "The guy behind me can't see." That actually made me groan and furthers my loathing of most wrestling fans. They talk about the upcoming four way but stop to make fun of Kofi for wearing the new Steph Curry shoes, which apparently look old. Kofi: "These shoes are hot on the streets!" Woods: "What streets? The streets of Greenwich,

Connecticut?" Kofi: "Those are some mean streets." They promise to keep the titles but here are Enzo and Big Cass to interrupt.

Cass says they're going all in on Sunday and walking out with the titles. He implies that the unicorn horns are made for her pleasure and asks if Kofi is serious with the Jerry Seinfeld shoes. After New Day makes fun of the shoes as well, Cass wants to talk about Francesca. Woods: "That's my girl." Cass: "Well where was your girl last night?" Apparently she was with Enzo, who had his lips all over her like Satchmo.

Woods gets very serious and says he's the only one who blows his girl. Kofi introduces the verbal joust of wits between New Day and Enzo/Big Cass but the Vaudevillains interrupt. English sings about how the new era but Anderson and Gallows cut them off. Gallows makes fun of the New Orleans Saints so Cass calls them S-A-W-F-T.

New Day/Enzo Amore/Big Cass vs. The Club/Vaudevillains

This is joined in progress with Kofi working over Gotch before bringing in Big E. for the Unicorn Stampede. Cass throws in some elbows before Enzo tags himself in so Cass can throw him at Gotch. English shoves Gotch out of the way of a high cross body, only to have Gotch run Amore over. It's time for Enzo to take a beating as all of the villains take a shot at him. English gets kicked out to the floor though and a kick to the chest is enough for the hot tag off to Cass as everything breaks down. Kofi dives on everyone and we take a break.

Back with Big E. in trouble but countering a sunset flip and dropping Gotch with an elbow to the jaw. Gallows gets in a clothesline though and Big E. is in trouble again. The Vaudevillains chop away before it's off to Karl for a kick to the face in the corner. Big E. gets in a shot to the ribs though and it's off to Kofi as things speed up again. A high cross body gets two on Anderson as Enzo and Gotch are sent out to the floor. English does the same to Cass, only to have Big E. LAUNCH him with a belly to belly. Gallows comes in off a blind tag and the Magic Killer puts Kingston away at 13:26.

Rating: C+. That break in the middle hurt this a lot as it felt like nothing more than a way to fill in time rather than something that the

match actually needed. That being said, Kofi was on fire here, which is why he just had to take the pin. Big E. or Enzo were available, though they were smart to keep Cass looking strong as he's possibly the biggest prospect in the whole match.

We look back at the debut of the Shield at Survivor Series 2012 to help set up the Ambrose Asylum later tonight.

Bob Backlund/Darren Young segment from Smackdown with Backlund telling him to save money, including only having one pair of clothes.

Shane and Stephanie are bickering over who should run Raw and/or Smackdown when Kane comes in to offer his services. He has a resume and a letter of recommendation from Undertaker so Stephanie lets Shane handle this one.

Zack Ryder is laughing with some random people about Apollo Crews knocking Sheamus down on Smackdown. Sheamus comes in and says he'll beat Ryder up tonight, just like he'll do to Crews on Sunday. Ryder says hi to Crews....who isn't there, allowing Ryder to run away like any former United States and Intercontinental Champion would do.

Clip of Shield's face turn.

The Shining Stars brag about Puerto Rico's water. How is this supposed to make money?

Titus O'Neil comes out for a match but Rusev jumps him from behind and beats him down on the stage. The referees have to come out and break the Accolade.

Clip of Shield breaking up. So to recap: they arrived, they turned face, and they split with nothing in between.

It's time for the Ambrose Asylum with special guests Roman Reigns and Seth Rollins. Before they come out though, Ambrose says he feels like he's just woken up from a coma because this Sunday feels like Wrestlemania. There are two major matches and we're focusing on one of them here. Therefore, let's bring out his first guest, the scum of the Earth, Seth Rollins.

Reigns is brought out as well and we get the big visual of the three of them standing there. Ambrose: "This is great huh?" He asks Rollins about the knee and Rollins is stunned that Ambrose hasn't watched his special on the WWE Network (he should because it's awesome). Dean thinks Seth's face must be hurt because it's killing him. Reigns on the other hand had a great time on Bourbon Street last night.

Dean wants Rollins to calm down and stop being a party pooper. After the party pooper chant dies off, Rollins lists off some fun moments they've had like Wrestlemania XXX, flying in on a helicopter to fight Undertaker and HELL NO in London and finding Dean unconscious next to a dumpster in....what town was that? Seth brings up the matches against Evolution and we get a BLUETISTA chant.

Rollins gets to the Wrestlemania XXXI cash-in and violence starts boiling over. Dean breaks it up and says Reigns beat Ambrose for that title in the first place. Yeah Reigns accomplished a lot in Rollins' absence but he's never beaten Seth one on one. Rollins rants about how he's going to get the title back on his own but Dean laughs the idea off. Reigns actually says Rollins is right because it's going to be one on one Sunday and then they'll call him the guy because he beat Seth. Dean asks the fans which one it's going to be but offers a third option: he wins the Money in the Bank contract and cashes in on either of them.

The music plays and the brawl is on with Reigns throwing Dean away so he can beat Seth up himself. That earns Seth a Superman Punch but Dean gives Reigns Dirty Deeds because that's what friends do to each other. Ambrose looks up at the briefcase and the fans seem to like the idea.

Back from a break and Stephanie makes Ambrose vs. Jericho for the main event. Over the weekend I made a comment about how Smackdown is worthless because the matches mean nothing and there's a good chance that they'll just repeat a match on Monday anyway and I had a feeling it would be this one because it's the one that didn't need to happen again.

Paige vs. Charlotte

Natalya and Becky Lynch are at ringside. Non-title and the second match of the show starts an hour and twenty one minutes in. Paige runs her over

with a knee to start but gets small packaged for two. Charlotte yells at Natalya and walks into the Rampaige for the pin at 2:31. I'm not even going to bother getting mad about this.

Cesaro is about to talk about Money in the Bank when Sami Zayn comes in to give the real answers. Cesaro is ticked off and says Sami is acting like a child but Sami says Cesaro can't talk down to him like this. Apparently they're in the same match tonight so Cesaro says he'll see him out there.

Charlotte yells at Dana for failing and implies that Dana is her assistant. Dana is of course mad but Charlotte says her payment is to be part of Charlotte's legacy.

Sheamus vs. Zack Ryder

This is the second match in a row with no entrances, likely for the sake of more backstage stuff. Sheamus attacks early to start but gets caught by a quick dropkick and the Broski Boot. The Elbro gets two but the Rough Ryder is easily blocked. The Brogue Kick puts Ryder away at 1:53.

Sheamus beats him up even more until Crews runs out for the save.

We get a video of Kane winning Money in the Bank in 2010 and cashing in the same night.

Kevin Owens interrupts Kane and Shane's talk but he wants to talk to Stephanie. Apparently Alberto Del Rio just arrived twenty minutes ago and should be taken out of the Money in the Bank match as a punishment. Del Rio, already in his gear, comes in to blame Owens for calling airport security to get him delayed for five hours. They start yelling in Spanish and French until Kane cuts them off with an idea. How about a tag match against the Lucha Dragons with the winners getting the spot in the ladder match? Shane likes the idea and makes the match.

Sami Zayn vs. Cesaro

Feeling out process to start with Cesaro nipping up out of a wristlock but getting armdragged right back down. A nice tilt-a-whirl backbreaker plants Sami for and Cesaro sends him into the post as we take a break.

Back with Cesaro hitting a corner uppercut and stomping on Sami's chest for two. A quick Michinoku Driver gets two for Sami but he takes too long going to the top, allowing Cesaro to power through the apron superplex for another near fall. Back up and the Blue Thunder Bomb gets two, followed by the sunset bomb for....actually for three on Cesaro at 8:06.

Rating: C+. That's one of the few booking ideas I've seen tonight that I really like. Sami (and a lot of other people) have those big moves that never win anything so it's a really good idea to have one get a pin every now and then to make you believe that it could get another one later. The loss doesn't hurt Cesaro either as none of these wins really mean anything heading into the big gimmick match.

It's time for the contract signing between John Cena and AJ Styles as moderated by Michael Cole. Cena hypes up Money in the Bank as a show bigger than Wrestlemania with a match fifteen years in the making. For years, the WWE bosses had told AJ Styles that he didn't belong here. That's nonsense because from PWG to New Japan to Ring of Honor, AJ Styles has been the best everywhere he's gone. Sidebar: Is there any real reason why they won't say TNA? Ring of Honor is arguably bigger and New Japan is definitely bigger but TNA isn't allowed? Unless there's some legal reason, I see no logical justification for not saying it.

Anyway Cena tells Cole to leave because this is going to get rowdy. AJ comes out and says he's turned Cena's world upside down. Cena agrees that it's been done but there's something up his sleeve. There are two contracts here, one of which says John Cena vs. AJ Styles and the other which says John Cena vs. AJ Styles w/The Club. Cena would love to sign the first one so we can have one heck of a fight on Sunday but if they sign the second one, AJ will win on Sunday and then start complaining the very next night when he doesn't get the same respect.

AJ thinks Cena is so confident because of all the things he's won but Styles wants to know what would have happened if AJ had been here fifteen years ago. My guess is not much because he still would have been a nothing tag guy but I get his point. AJ says he would have been the one on the covers of magazines and in all the movies. Cena cuts him off and says he's heard this before and AJ doesn't get it because he has the

chance to prove it on Sunday.

AJ can sign one contract and prove how great he is or sign the other one and be put on a bullet train back to Japan because that's where he left his balls. AJ grabs a pen and looks at the contracts before signing the one on one version. Styles says after Sunday, Cena's time is up. As usual, this was AWESOME stuff.

We see Randy Orton winning Money in the Bank in 2013 and cashing in on Daniel Bryan at Summerslam.

Kevin Owens/Alberto Del Rio vs. Lucha Dragons

The winners are in Money in the Bank. Del Rio beats on Kalisto to start before it's off to Owens who isn't happy with the way Alberto is acting, only to calm down at the threat of a DQ. Owens teases walking out but comes back in when Alberto is rolled up for two. Kevin and Alberto get in a shoving match and get dropkicked to the floor, setting up a double dive from the Dragons as we take a break.

Back with Kalisto eating a clothesline but Del Rio won't tag out. Owens and Alberto get in another argument, allowing Kalisto to hit a quick Salida Del Sol to send Del Rio outside. Kevin throws his partner back in and it's off to Sin Cara for the Swanton, only to have Owens breaks it up at two. The Pop Up Powerbomb ends Cara at 8:15.

Rating: C. I liked the idea of having something on the line here. Of course it wasn't going to happen but it was nice to have a reason to care about the match. The Dragons are just so nothing these days and it's sad to see the promise that Kalisto showed wasted as much as it has been.

Del Rio superkicks Owens post match.

Back from a break with Owens telling Stephanie that Sami Zayn is going to be on commentary for the main event. Stephanie is furious because that's something so horrible so she makes Owens a commentator as well. Del Rio comes in and says he wants to be out there too so Stephanie makes him guest timekeeper.

Stephanie yells at Shane about his decisions so Shane makes Cesaro guest

ring announcer. On another note, Kane isn't getting the job running Smackdown. Kane comes in and asks if this is about electrocuting Shane's testicles with a car battery. Shane tells Stephanie they'll keep running Raw but he'll run Smackdown on his own. This is getting old in a hurry and it's only going to get worse.

Chris Jericho vs. Dean Ambrose

All of the other Money in the Bank participants are at ringside. Dean chops him down to start and scores with a quick suplex. Jericho is sent to the floor for a suicide dive before Dean knocks Owens' headset off. Back in and Dean flips out of a Walls attempt but eats an enziguri. The corner dropkick puts Dean on the floor and it's time for the announcers, timekeeper and ring announcer to stare at each other.

We come back from a break with Dean fighting out of a chinlock. Some clotheslines stun Jericho but he counters the top rope standing elbow drop into the Walls. Owens: "I taught him that!" Dean grabs the ropes but can't get Dirty Deeds. Instead Jericho takes him down for two off the Lionsault, only to have Dean get up top for the elbow.

Byron asks how Kevin would handle not winning Sunday. Owens: "I would handle it the same way: I would come out here and slap your face." Dean tries to put on the Walls but settles for a catapult out to the apron. Jericho runs to the top but dives into a kick, only to have the Codebreaker countered into Dirty Deeds for the pin at 11:58.

Rating: C. This would be the standard reversal of the match we saw on Smackdown because that's what Smackdown is for: a dry run for the following Raw without any mention of the first match. It doesn't help that these two have fought WAY too many times and it's getting less and less interesting every single time.

Everyone brawls after the match with Owens bringing in a ladder, only to have Sami flip dive off the top onto the pile of people. Jericho wasn't in that group though and goes up the ladder to pull down the briefcase to end the show.

Overall Rating: C+. The wrestling (and lack thereof at times) brings down

what was an otherwise very strong show with two excellent talking segments. I'm more invested in the pay per view than I was coming in and that's the point of a go home show. The Cena vs. AJ stuff was excellent as Cena is still the best hard seller in the business and the Shield segment made things feel more personal, especially with Dean at the end to add some flavor. As has been the case so many times, if this was a two hour show, it would have been one of the best in a long time. As it is though, it's still good enough.

Results

The Club/Vaudevillains b. New Day/Enzo Amore/Big Cass – Magic Killer to Kingston

Paige b. Charlotte – Rampaige

Sheamus b. Zack Ryder – Brogue Kick

Sami Zayn b. Cesaro – Sunset Bomb

Kevin Owens/Alberto Del Rio b. Lucha Dragons – Pop Up Powerbomb to Cara

Dean Ambrose b. Chris Jericho – Dirty Deeds

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Monday Night Raw – June 6, 2016: My Least Favorite Time Of The Year

Monday Night Raw

Date: June 6, 2016

Location: Chesapeake Energy Arena, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

Commentators: Michael Cole, John Bradshaw Layfield, Byron Saxton

As we head into June, the big story is AJ Styles vs. John Cena as Styles rejoined his Club buddies to attack the returning Cena last week. A match at Money in the Bank has already been signed and it should be interesting to see the big time promos leading up to the match at the pay per view. Let's get to it.

We open with Dean Ambrose coming to the ring to join the rest of the Money in the Bank participants, all of whom are sitting on top of a ladder. Owens says he doesn't need to be introduced because he's already more famous than everyone else. Some insults are thrown out with Owens cutting off Jericho because Jericho says the same thing every week. He'll win the Money in the Bank contract and give title shots to anyone who wants one, from Jean-Pierre Lafitte to Waylon Mercy to the Four Horsemen to anyone else you can see on the WWE Network ("There's your plug.").

Sami says he's willing to fight anyone on the roster but Dean just wants to get to the fighting. Jericho brags about winning one of these before but Sami asks where the match was. Jericho: "Apple. Appleton. The Big Apple. It was in Stupid Idiotville!" The fight finally breaks out but TEDDY LONG returns to cut it off. He wants to take the longest weekly wrestling show (he butchers the names, meaning he's probably fired) and make this a sixty minute iron man no DQ fatal fourway match and there must be a winner.

Cue Stephanie to say that made no sense but Teddy says he wants to run Smackdown. Stephanie says no so Teddy wants to see Shane. Well Shane isn't here tonight so Stephanie tells Teddy to get to steppin. Ah so

she's a witchy heel tonight instead of the friendly one like she was last week. Just pick one of them already. She makes singles matches for the night, starting with Jericho vs. Cesaro for after the break.

Cesaro vs. Chris Jericho

Jericho grabs a wristlock to start but Cesaro keeps nipping up, befuzzling Jericho so much that he can just stand there watching. Cesaro powerslams Jericho for two before the big uppercut knocks Jericho outside. Jericho dropkicks him out of the air though and we take a break less than three minutes in.

Back with Cesaro firing off the uppercuts to send Jericho into the corner followed by one to knock Chris out of the air for two. The springboard uppercut is countered into a Codebreaker but it sends Cesaro outside to delay the cover and allowing Cesaro to get out again. The apron suplex gets two more for Cesaro before he just blasts Jericho with a clothesline. Jericho backdrops out of the Neutralizer but can't get the Walls. Instead Cesaro reverses into the Swing and slaps on the Sharpshooter for the clean win at 12:08.

Rating: B-. Just two guys with talent having a TV match and there's nothing wrong with that. This would be the latest time Cesaro got a win that isn't likely to mean anything but I'm sure he'll be just on the verge of breaking through the glass ceiling for the next six months or so because that's what he does.

We look back at AJ attacking Cena last week.

Quick tribute to Muhammad Ali.

Video on Rollins vs. Reigns from Rollins' perspective. Yeah the time with the Shield was fun but Reigns was just in the wrong place at the wrong time. There was no moment to steal from Roman at Wrestlemania because the moment belonged to Rolling the whole time. Then he tore up his knee and had to work even harder to get back to the top. Watching Reigns win the title at Wrestlemania killed him because he deserved that spot. Rollins came back early and attacked Reigns at Extreme Rules so he can take back the title he deserves.

Rusev vs. Jack Swagger

Since Smackdown means nothing and we haven't gotten to destroy Swagger in his home state in a few months. Non-title with Titus O'Neil on commentary. Swagger takes him down until Rusev gets in a kick to the head. Titus talks about wanting to face anyone he has to face because that's what being a champion means. A powerslam gets two for Swagger and it's off to the Patriot Lock, only to have Rusev get outside. They COLLIDE off a double clothesline and Rusev throws Swagger into Titus to win by countout at 3:40.

Rating: D+. Yeah we know. This is another match that never needs to happen again so WWE chooses to air it twice in a week to remind us that Swagger still has a job. Nothing to see here of course but I'm pretty sure we'll be getting Rusev vs. Titus for the title at Money in the Bank. Eh actually throw Swagger in there for the perfect WWE logic.

Here's John Cena to talk about last week's incident with AJ Styles. Last week was something special because normally we have a rowdy crowd with the LET'S GO CENA/CENA SUCKS chants but last week it was LET'S GO CENA/AJ STYLES. For over two minutes, Cena felt the same kind of energy he's only felt when he was in the ring with the Rock. For fifteen years we've asked the question of "what if" but last week we saw it happen. Now though Cena needs an answer to Why AJ Why.

This brings out the Club with AJ saying he had a plan: get in the ring, shake Cena's hand and punch him in the face. Cena has that Hollywood lifestyle and his movies are entertaining. Maybe not the ones he stars in but his cameos are always great. However he insults AJ as soon as that bell rings. Even on Cena's best day, he can't beat AJ. When he goes home, AJ's kids ask why he never wrestles John Cena but AJ can't tell them that he'd run circles around Cena.

John isn't pleased that the best AJ can do is say the same thing that everyone else says. Those insults are as outdated as the jorts. When Cena looks at AJ, he sees someone who spent years getting here and then failed at everything he's done. AJ looked at him and saw the one guy that he thought might get him noticed. That makes AJ sound desperate but Styles

says he's not about to get buried like everyone else who fights Cena and loses. The Club comes to the ring but New Day makes the save. This was EXCELLENT and made me want to see the match even more, which is saying a lot.

Vaudevillains vs. Enzo Amore/Big Cass

Before the match, Enzo and Cass quote a little Muhammad Ali by saying they'll make medicine sick. Enzo may have been injured at the pay per view but he doesn't remember it so it doesn't count. They're about to prove that the Vaudevillains are S-A-W-F-T. Enzo and Gotch start things off before it's quickly off to English. Aiden doesn't do as well as it's off to Big Cass for the house cleaning. The Empire Elbow gets two and everything breaks down. Aiden gets all evil by trying to throw Enzo's head into the ropes ala Extreme Rules, only to have Big Cass go NUTS and destroy English in the corner until it's a DQ at 2:30.

Cass beats up Gotch as well.

Sami Zayn says he's the underdog in this match because Alberto Del Rio has actually done the things that everyone else is talking about doing. Del Rio comes in to say that he's going to show that Sami is just a perro.

Teddy Long comes in to see Stephanie and gets on her nerves. His idea is a four way for the Tag Team Titles at Money in the Bank with New Day defending against the Club, the Vaudevillains and Enzo/Cass. Stephanie throws him out and then calls marketing to make the match.

Alberto Del Rio vs. Sami Zayn

They're quickly on the floor with Sami hitting a moonsault off the barricade and we take a break less than a minute in. Back with Sami fighting out of a chinlock but getting caught by a Backstabber and the low superkick for two each. Del Rio spends too much time slapping his arm though, allowing Sami to hit his hard clothesline. Sami charges into two raised boots in the corner though and Del Rio puts him in the Tree of Woe for the delayed double stomp and the pin at 8:22.

Rating: C-. That finisher is just so stupid. Even the 619 doesn't require that much cooperation and it gets really tiring watching people have to sit up for it because something like the cross armbreaker or ANY OTHER MOVE is off the books for Del Rio. Nothing to see here of course, other than Sami losing to keep everyone equal.

Owens and Ambrose bump into each other with Kevin saying Dean has been crazier than usual recently. Dean thinks that's a compliment and offers to beat Kevin up tonight and at the pay per view.

It's time for a video from Reigns' perspective. Reigns was the explosive part of the Shield while Seth was the brains. It was Seth's idea to break up the Shield so he could go on his own, which meant him cashing in the Money in the Bank contract at Wrestlemania to take everything away from Reigns. Every time that Rollins has attacked him, it's been from behind. At Money in the Bank, there's nothing to keep them apart and it's head to head.

Dean Ambrose vs. Kevin Owens

Cole calls this a rivalry despite their last match being nearly two months ago. They quickly head outside with Owens jumping in on commentary to say he'll win at Money in the Bank. Back in and Owens stomps Dean in the head before saying the briefcase is his. We hit the chinlock for a bit before Owens elbows him in the jaw instead. Kevin takes too much time going up though and gets superplexed down, only to catch Dean in a German suplex.

The Cannonball is blocked with a hard clothesline. The second Cannonball attempt works better but Dean sends him outside. That's it for this offensive flurry though as Dean's suicide dive is caught and rammed into the apron. Owens drops a frog splash off the apron but Dean just grabs Dirty Deeds for the pin at 6:36.

Rating: C. I really don't like that ending as Owens was dominating for at least eighty percent of the match but got caught with one move for the pin. I like that they're keeping Dean looking strong and can continue to do so without having him win the ladder match but Owens losing always gets on my nerves.

Post match Dean gets a ladder but Owens shoves it over.

Bob Backlund/Darren Young video from Smackdown with Backlund taking his car keys and telling him to walk eight hours to the next town.

Here are Dana Brooke and Charlotte with the latter talking about how she only got rid of her father from her professional life. She'd still love to work out with her father or spend Christmas with him. This brings out Natalya and Becky to talk about how horrible Charlotte was a few weeks back. Charlotte refers to Dana as her protege but that doesn't sit well with her. Becky and Natalya mention all the backstabbing and manipulation that Charlotte has done over the years and Dana is thinking about something. That lasts all of ten seconds before she helps Charlotte (with the title still on) beat down Becky and Natalya.

The Shining Stars brag about some drink from Puerto Rico.

Tyler Breeze vs. R-Truth

Breezango now has matching fur vests. Earlier today, Breeze was shaving Fandango's back to make him more arrowgigantic. Fandango: "It's when your body has no hair and you fly through the air like a giant arrow." Truth starts with some hip thrusts but the partners get in an argument on the floor, only to have everyone come in for the no contest at 1:00.

Post match Teddy Long comes out to say "let's make it a tag team match" but that's not happening because he has no authority. Teddy goes to the back where Stephanie does her best Stephanie impression to get rid of him because SHE wants to run Smackdown. And that is a good example of why I can't stand Stephanie. That segment could have been fun but no, let's have Stephanie go all evil again because it lets her get TV time after a month or so of being all smiles and nice. I'm sure she'll be back to "normal" again next week, or at least until there's someone else she can emasculate.

We get a long tribute to Muhammad Ali and his connections to wrestling, including emulating Gorgeous George and throwing punches at Gorilla Monsoon, who put him in the airplane spin. Of course the big moment was Ali refereeing the main event of the first Wrestlemania, even though it

was just a glorified cameo. The video gets a standing ovation.

The Club vs. New Day

New Day wants to know what kind of club this is. It's certainly not the Hair Club For Men. Kofi wishes it was the Mickey Mouse Club because they all want autographs. However, the only club that really matters is the club of WWE World Tag Team Champions because NEW DAY ROCKS.

They start slugging it out before the bell with only Woods and AJ being left inside. Big E. is sent into the steps and Gallows punches Kofi out of the air. Woods flip dives over the top to take Gallows out though and we're still waiting on a bell. Anderson gets in a kick to Woods on the apron, followed by the Styles Clash on the floor to knock Xavier silly as we take a break.

Back with Big E. and Kofi agreeing to fight three on two as we finally get the opening bell. Kofi charges at Gallows to start before it's off to Big E. The fight is sent outside where AJ gets in a Pele Kick, followed by a big clothesline from Gallows to really take over. We hit the chinlock on Big E. for a bit until E. gets in a belly to belly. The hot tag brings in Kofi to go after AJ, including the Boom Drop. The SOS gets two with Anderson making the save, allowing AJ to get in the Phenomenal Forearm for the pin at 5:16.

Rating: C. This didn't have the time to go anywhere and it's fine to have New Day lose when they're facing a handicap. It would seem that the Club takes the titles at Money in the Bank as New Day has almost outgrown them at this point. Fine main event here, though more time would have helped.

Post match the beating continues but the fans want Cena. That's exactly what they get as well with Cena charging down for the save, only to be beaten down by AJ from behind. New Day gets back in though and the good guys clean house to end the show.

Overall Rating: C-. This is easily one of my least favorite times on the WWE calendar as I've never been a fan of the mostly meaningless matches between the Money in the Bank participants. You could always just do the qualifying matches over the course of a few weeks as the ladder match

itself is going to sell things, but why do that when you can do the exact same thing every year?

The wrestling tonight was watchable and the AJ vs. Cena promo was outstanding but the Stephanie stuff where she yelled at Teddy came off as cruel instead of anything else. It's not a bad show or anything like that but I had a hard time sitting through a lot of the same reason I have every year: the matches between these guys means nothing but it's all they do all the time. Find something, ANYTHING, different for a change because I really don't care about this stuff.

Results

Cesaro b. Chris Jericho – Sharpshooter

Rusev b. Jack Swagger via countout

Vaudevillains b. Enzo Amore/Big Cass via DQ when Cass wouldn't stop attacking in the corner

Alberto Del Rio b. Sami Zayn – Top rope double stomp

Dean Ambrose b. Kevin Owens – Dirty Deeds

The Club b. New Day – Phenomenal Forearm to Kingston

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Monday Night Raw – May 30, 2016: The Slow Ride To The Bank

Monday Night Raw

Date: May 30, 2016

Location: Resch Center, Green Bay, Wisconsin

Commentators: Michael Cole, Byron Saxton, John Bradshaw Layfield

It's a big night here as we have the return of John Cena since his injury late last year. At the same time though we're probably going to hear the first news about the new Brand Split as Raw and Smackdown will become stand alone shows again starting in July. A lot of the details are still up in the air at this point but it should be interesting either way. Let's get to it.

We open with a moment of silence for Memorial Day.

A bunch of wrestlers quote a Ronald Reagan speech on fallen troops.

Opening sequence.

Here's Shane McMahon to open things up but Stephanie comes out to join him before anything can be said. They mention the Brand Split and Smackdown moving to Tuesdays before New Day comes out for a chat. Big E. likes the idea of bringing the power of positivity to Raw and Smackdown ("That's a lot of P's.") but then it turned into paranoia because the rosters might be split up. After making fun of Kofi for being the oldest member of the team (Woods: "You were my favorite wrestler in middle school."), they get to the point: which show will New Day be on?

Stephanie dodges the question and New Day does a dramatic reenactment of Stephanie dodging it like an invisible ball. Woods goes insane and nearly

starts crying over the team being split up and Francesca II being in a broken home. There's also no decision yet on who will be running which show so New Day thinks there should be a dance challenge. Stephanie isn't interested but Shane gets into it to a nice reaction. They finally get Stephanie to join in but the Vaudevillains cut her off.

Vaudevillains vs. New Day

Non-title and joined in progress with Cole welcoming us back to Smackdown. English gets stomped down in the corner as JBL tells us that a herd of unicorns is called a glory. We get the Unicorn Stampede but Gotch pulls Kofi's foot to give the villains control. Gotch headlocks Kofi and knocks him to the floor as we take a break after less than four minutes of action. Back with Kofi taking Gotch down and making the hot tag to Big E. for the overhead belly to belly suplexes on English. As this is going on though, Karl Anderson and Luke Gallows run in to attack Kofi for the DQ at 8:54.

Rating: D+. I liked the ending as Gallows and Anderson were pretty much the only option to go after the titles at this point and would be a good choice for new champions. The Vaudevillains were just there to give Anderson and Gallows a reason to come out, though at least it was a non-title match and not a rematch for no particular reason.

Anderson and Gallows lay out the champions post match.

Post break Anderson and Gallows say they've just put the tag team division on notice because they can do just as much damage without AJ.

We look back at Sheamus attacking Apollo Crews last week.

Crews is doing pushups when Big Show returns to say hello. Apollo says he's ready to fight Sheamus and Show can admire that. Show knows Crews will make it work because Sheamus is scared of the New Era.

Usos vs. Breezango

Golden Truth is on commentary with JBL ripping on them for being a horrible team. Truth: "JBL they do not allow elephants in here." Fandango hammers on Jey to start but Breeze charges into a superkick on the floor.

Back inside, Jey crucifixes Fandango for the pin at 1:48.

Golden Truth beats up Breezango.

Here's Roman Reigns for a chat. Reigns talks about how the Shield broke up a long time ago and until someone takes this title from his shoulder, he's still The Guy. This brings out Rollins for a fight but of course he doesn't get in the ring. Instead he grabs the mic and teases talking but throws the mic down and goes towards the ring instead. This happens five or six times before Rollins just leaves. The fans call this boring because they have the attention span of drunken goats and can't go three seconds without being entertained. Rollins sprints down the ramp one more time but stops at the apron again to wrap this up.

Trailer for Warcraft.

Rusev vs. Zack Ryder

Non-title. Rusev knees him in the ribs to start and drops Ryder with a clothesline. Ryder gets the knees up in the corner and drops Rusev with a middle rope dropkick. The Broski Boot connects for two but the Rough Ryder is easily countered and the Accolade makes Ryder tap at 2:31. That's the sixth time Rusev has made Ryder tap on Raw in just over two years and actually the longest Zack has ever lasted.

Rusev calls himself a real American hero but here's Titus O'Neil to interrupt. Titus says this is Memorial Day and drops Rusev to the floor with a single right hand.

The Shining Stars want us to come to Puerto Rico.

We get a video on Charlotte dropping Ric Flair with comments from various people. This aired on Smackdown.

Earlier today, Stephanie yelled at Charlotte for being a spoiled, selfish brat. She yells a bit more and there's no reaction from Charlotte as Stephanie collects her first set of lady balls. To recap, so far the first Women's Champion has been made to tap out to Natalya more than once, played second fiddle to Ric Flair and not been allowed to say a word when Stephanie, yes STEPHANIE MCMAHON, yelled about someone being a

spoiled brat who didn't respect her father enough.

Enzo Amore/Big Cass vs. Dudley Boyz

Before the match, Cass lists off various types of cheese that he's putting on the knuckle sandwiches he's about to hand off. Bubba and Cass lock up to start but both Dudleyz are quickly sent to the floor as we take an early break. Back with Enzo in trouble (as expected) and eating an elbow to the jaw for daring to fight out of a neck crank.

Bubba comes in and drops some elbows for two before ripping at Enzo's face. We hit the chinlock from D-Von for a bit before the hot tag brings in Cass. The reverse 3D gets two on him though and Bubba goes up, only to have an Enzo distraction let Cass slam him down. D-Von takes the big boot and the Rocket Launcher gives Enzo the pin at 9:23.

Rating: C-. This was a really basic match though it's cool to see the new guys getting a clean win like this. I'm really not sure where you go with these two but they've looked awesome so far with Cass more than acting as a solid big man and Enzo as a great mouthpiece. There's no point in them fighting the Dudleyz anymore, so I'm sure we'll see them at Money in the Bank.

Sami Zayn, Dean Ambrose and Cesaro discuss their match against Chris Jericho, Kevin Owens and Alberto Del Rio. They're keeping an eye on their opponents but Dean doesn't seem to think much of Canadians. Sami: "You know I'm Canadian right?" Dean: "...Oh. That explains so much."

It's the top of the third hour and here's the returning John Cena. He looks at the mic and gives a speech about Memorial Day and is very glad that he's back home. However, he wants to thank everyone who has paid the ultimate price to keep our liberty safe. As for the business at hand tonight, the question is whether or not Cena still belongs here. That starts up a YES chant in quite the little surprise.

It's a New Era around here with a bunch of new names and new faces and all of them are thinking that Cena's best days are behind them. The name of this new era doesn't matter because Cena isn't going quietly into the night and the face that runs the place is back so the future must go

through him.

Cue AJ Styles for something that would have been a dream match ten years ago. The fans are split (JBL: "The WWE Universe is having fun right now!") until AJ says he's been waiting for this for a long time. He's always heard about Cena being the first in and the last out and now AJ wants to be the first man to welcome him back.

Cue Anderson and Gallows to as they're here for a fight. That sounds like a challenge but AJ blasts Cena in the face and the Club is back together. The big beatdown is on and AJ even goes back in three more times to keep beating on him. Even Anderson and Gallows pull him back.

Natalya vs. Dana Brooke

Charlotte is at ringside as this feud is somehow continuing. Natalya hits her in the corner but gets taken down, allowing Charlotte to yell a lot. Charlotte distracts her to break up the Sharpshooter and the Samoan Driver gives Dana the pin at 1:20.

Post match Becky Lynch runs in for the save.

Dolph Ziggler is ready to show off tonight against Baron Corbin in a technical wrestling match. Dean Malenko was the Man of 1000 Holds and on the WWE Network you can see Chris Jericho list off his 1004 holds. Well Ziggler knows 1005, which he starts to list. As expected, every other one is armbar. This uh, wasn't funny.

Baron Corbin vs. Dolph Ziggler

This is billed as a technical wrestling exhibition and Dolph puts on headgear. And there's a low blow to Baron for the DQ at 33 seconds.

The fans aren't sure how to react to this so Dolph says the loser of this match is still Baron Corbin.

Miz is on the set of his new movie and needs to get some rest before shooting starts.

Owens, Jericho and Del Rio bicker about the six man tag. They agree to

work together but Jericho calls them both idiots after they leave.

Alberto Del Rio/Chris Jericho/Kevin Owens vs. Dean Ambrose/Cesaro/Sami Zayn

Del Rio suplexes Cesaro to start but Cesaro runs to the floor for the running uppercut on Jericho. The Swing is blocked by a rope grab and Cesaro is taken outside for a triple team. Jericho stomps away as the fans chant STUPID IDIOT. Cesaro suplexes his way out and the hot tag brings in Sami to clean house with his clotheslines. The villains get in a fight on the floor and Sami scores with a big dive as we take a break.

Back with Owens dropping Sami ribs first over the top rope and getting two off the backplash. Del Rio grabs the leg to stop a tag and it's back to Jericho who misses a Lionsault and bangs up his own knee. The Blue Thunder Bomb finally allows the hot tag off to Ambrose as house is cleaned again.

Jericho dives into a kick to the ribs but still blocks Dirty Deeds. Instead Dean hits the suicide dive to take Chris out, only to have Jericho grab a Codebreaker back inside. Owens wants the pin but only gets two. The Canadians start arguing so Cesaro knocks them together and Swings Jericho. Everyone comes in and Owens tries the Pop Up Powerbomb on Zayn, only to get caught in Dirty Deeds for the pin at 17:56.

Rating: B. This was good, albeit a bit pointless. You have to expect things like this over the coming weeks as there isn't much you can do to set up the ladder match other than having mostly meaningless matches like this one. At least the finish was clean though and we have some dissension among people.

Overall Rating: C+. It wasn't exactly a great show but there was more good than bad going on. The problem is you have something like Stephanie yelling at Charlotte without her being able to say a thing because ALL HAIL STEPHANIE but then you have something amazing like AJ vs. Cena being set up which basically makes people hand their wallets over in advance. The rest of the show was hit or miss but I'm really not too excited about so many feuds continuing in the lame duck period between now and the Brand Split.

Results

New Day b. Vaudevillains via DQ when Karl Anderson and Luke Gallows interfered

Usos b. Breezango – Crucifix to Fandango

Rusev b. Zack Ryder – Accolade

Enzo Amore/Big Cass b. Dudley Boyz – Rocket Launcher to D-Von

Dana Brooke b. Natalya – Samoan Driver

Baron Corbin b. Dolph Ziggler via DQ when Ziggler kicked him low

Dean Ambrose/Cesaro/Sami Zayn b. Chris Jericho/Alberto Del Rio/Kevin Owens – Dirty Deeds to Owens

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**Monday Night Raw – November
1, 1993: Bobby Heenan**

Deserves Better

Monday Night Raw

Date: November 1, 1993

Location: Mid-Hudson Civic Center, Poughkeepsie, New York

Commentators: Vince McMahon, Bobby Heenan

It's another fresh month as we're getting closer to the Survivor Series. Unfortunately it's late 1993 and that means we're in for some very hit and miss shows but we're also in for a confusing few weeks as the main event is sorted out. It's a dark time for the creative direction of the company so let's get this over with. Let's get to it.

Bobby Heenan finds Bastion Booger eating a bunch of food. Heenan: "None of this food is...." Booger: "IT'S RAW!"

Opening sequence.

Bastion Booger vs. Razor Ramon

Non-title. Booger is just embarrassingly fat here. The toothpick throw gets us going and Razor easily puts him up against the ropes for a soft slap to the chest. We take an early break and come back with Booger getting two off a splash and Heenan admitting that it's his birthday. For some reason this stuns Vince as Razor ties Booger in the ropes for a.....belly rub?

They head outside with Booger actually hitting the splash against the post. A bearhug goes nowhere so Booger starts slowly hammering away. Booger gets two off a World's Strongest Slam as Heenan suggests Bastion could use the title as a tray at his birthday party. Another bearhug just seems to annoy Razor so he gets out and slams the big man. The Razor's Edge is laughable at best so Booger sits on Razor's chest and gets sunset flipped to give Ramon the pin.

Rating: D. Yeah this was horrible but what else were you expecting from someone as worthless as Booger? He was huge, he wasn't anything worth seeing in the ring and his gimmick was that he was fat and gross. Razor

is an incredible talent but he can't do anything with someone like that.

Here's a Survivor Series report, including a preview of a boxing match between Riddick Bowe and Evander Holyfield II. After that cross promotion, we hear the current main event lineup: the All Americans (Lex Luger/Tatanka/Steiner Brothers) vs. the Foreign Fanatics (Yokozuna/Quebecers/Ludvig Borga) but this weekend, the Fanatics beat Tatanka down and cost him his first ever pinfall loss in about two years. Luger tried to make the save (and to high five fans while jogging down to help his partner) but was stopped by one of the Quebecers.

Back in the arena, the Foreign Fanatics are in the ring for a chat. Cornette keeps laughing about how "Tatanto" is out of the Survivor Series where it's all about surviving. Jim goes on a rant about all the possibilities the Survivor Series could see before Quebecers' manager Johnny Polo talks about a team of anthropologists coming up from Bora Bora to see this kind of stupidity in person.

Borga says Scott Steiner's American dream will never come true next week when he takes Scott out personally. Cornette wraps it up by saying that just like in Ten Little Indians, there will be none at the end of Survivor Series. Heenan: "And they're all coming to my birthday party!"

Mr. Perfect vs. The Executioner

Executioner is your standard masked man. Some chops have Executioner in trouble but he whips Perfect into the corner. That's about it for the jobber offense though as Perfect avoids a corner charge and kicks him in the ribs. We hit a leg lock on Executioner, followed by a spinning toehold to slow things down even more. This goes on WAY too long with Perfect pulling on the leg as Heenan suggests that his birthday be made a national holiday. The PerfectPlex gives him the pin to finally wrap this up.

Rating: D. WAY too long here despite it not even being four minutes long. This was a bunch of waiting around while Perfect worked on the leg which went nowhere, only to have the PerfectPlex end it a few seconds later. I'm not sure what was up with Perfect here but it got really old in a hurry.

Jeff Jarrett is in Nashville and complains about the politics in country music holding him back. He's sick of seeing Billy Ray Cyrus with his buggy whip arms getting so much exposure. Jeff is ready to face people like Razor Ramon, Men on a Mission and the 1-2-3 Kid. This gimmick was dead on sight and I think everyone knew it.

Well Dunn vs. Smoking Gunns

Well and Dunn have purple thongs over their black singlets. Normally I would say that would tell you everything you need to know about them, but their names are Well and Dunn. Billy jumps over Dunn to start and punches him to the face as Heenan says Harvey Wippleman will be at his birthday party.

Some armdrags put Well down and we hit the armbars as this dead show keeps going. A suplex/high cross body combo gets two but Well snaps Bart's throat across the top rope to take over. We hit the chinlock on Bart to kill even more time before Well tags out to Dunn for another chinlock. Back up and the hot tag brings in Billy for a running clothesline. Harvey trips him up though...and they actually end this on a DQ after over seven minutes.

Rating: D-. Well Dunn vs. the Smoking Gunns just went to a DQ in nearly eight minutes. This was one of the worst matches I've seen in a very long time and I have no idea who thought this was something that needed to air on national TV. Horrible stuff here that just kept going and made an awful show even worse.

Randy Savage calls in to say he'll be back to take care of Crush. Heenan makes fun of Savage's voice because he's a bit insane.

Adam Bomb vs. Virgil

Your main event people. They stare at each other to start until Virgil gets two off a cross body (though it looked like Bomb was supposed to catch him). That means it's time for Adam to have a meeting on the floor with Wippleman, who Virgil chases around for fun. Back in and Virgil dives over the top but somehow winds up under Bomb. They head inside again with Adam hitting him in the head and slowly working Virgil over,

only to miss a charge in the corner. Virgil scores with a dropkick but his cross body bounces off Bomb in what looks like another botch. The Adam Smasher (powerbomb) puts Virgil away.

Rating: D+. Who would have guessed that Virgil vs. Adam Bomb would somehow be the match of the night? Virgil actually tried in this one and got in some good offense, but when your opponent can't figure out how to take a cross body, there's only so much you can do. Bomb would get MUCH better after turning face but this was a hard one to sit through.

Heenan starts singing Happy Birthday to end the show.

Overall Rating: F. Holy sweet lederhosen this was a horrid show. The stuff for Survivor Series wasn't bad but with this being the last episode of a TV taping, they basically threw whatever last talent they had out there to fill in some time. Just a dreadful show here, which really is the theme of this era.

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Monday Night Raw – May 23,

2016: Crying All The Way To The Bank

Monday Night Raw

Date: May 23, 2016

Location: Royal Farms Arena, Baltimore, Maryland

Commentators: Michael Cole, Byron Saxton, John Bradshaw Layfield

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

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

Opening sequence.

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

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

None of these fans were here with him when he was rehabbing his knee twice a day. Now he's back on his own to get the title back but here's

Reigns to interrupt. Rollins of course bails and says it's happening on his time. This brings out Shane to invite Rollins back inside for an adult conversation. This conversation consists of Shane making Roman vs. Seth for the title at Money in the Bank.

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

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

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

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

Post match Sheamus is furious.

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

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

New Day vs. Social Outcasts

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

Slater takes the cake post match.

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

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

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

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

We recap the opening segment.

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

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

Crews seems just fine after the beatdown earlier tonight while Jericho's back is covered in bandages from the thumbtacks. Jericho throws a t-shirt

in Crews' face to start and hammers away, only to have Crews just hit him in the bandages because Crews has an IQ above butter. Jericho's dropkick and chinlock don't do much as Apollo elbows him in the jaw and avoids the dropkick out of the corner to send Jericho outside.

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

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

Sheamus laughs at the result.

Life Lesson with Bob Backlund from Smackdown.

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

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

Big Cass vs. Bubba Ray Dudley

Feeling out process to start until D-Von goes after Enzo, allowing Bubba to get in a belly to back suplex. He spends too much time shouting though, allowing Cass to take over with a clothesline. A Stinger Splash has Bubba in trouble and we keep up the Sting treatment with Cass

slamming him off the top. Cass' big boot and the empire Elbow put Bubba away at 3:11.

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

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

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

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

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

Both guys try cross bodies at the same time and we get a quick breather. Dean gets superkicked to little effect as he bounces off the ropes with the rebound lariat for two. Ambrose goes for the elbow again but gets

dropkicked out of the air this time. The Zig Zag is countered though and Dirty Deeds sends Dean to the ladder match at 12:09.

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

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

The Shining Stars want us to visit Puerto Rico.

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

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

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

They slug it out to start until Owens grabs a headlock ("HEADLOCK MASTER!"), only to eat a good dropkick for two. Owens gets in a dropkick of his own but AJ bails to the apron. AJ is pulled face first into the apron with Owens heading back inside but rolling under the ropes instead of diving over the top like he was teasing. As usual he's the best troll in wrestling.

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

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

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

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

Results

Sami Zayn b. Sheamus – Helluva Kick

New Day b. Social Outcasts – Midnight Hour to Slater

Cesaro b. The Miz – Neutralizer

Chris Jericho b. Apollo Crews – Codebreaker

Big Cass b. Bubba Ray Dudley – Empire Elbow

Dean Ambrose b. Dolph Ziggler – Dirty Deeds

Kevin Owens b. AJ Styles – Pop Up Powerbomb

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