

Going to Smackdown Tonight

Talk about it here. I'll have a quick live report up tonight and I'll have the review up tomorrow at the latest.

Smackdown – November 14, 2002: Two Layups

Smackdown

Date: November 14, 2002

Location: Nationwide Arena, Columbus, Ohio

Commentators: Michael Cole, Tazz

It's the go home show for Survivor Series and that means it's time for more Big Show. One of the big stories coming out of this week came on Super Tuesday when Stephanie McMahon announced that the Smackdown Tag Team Titles will be decided in a triple threat match, which should be an amazing spectacle. Let's get to it.

The opening video looks at Big Show vs. Brock Lesnar with Show dominating for weeks and Paul Heyman being at his wits' end.

Heyman says Lesnar has a broken rib and is off the show by doctors' orders. Big Show pops up and says he'll call Lesnar out anyway. It's nice to see someone knowing the cliches and ignoring them.

Opening sequence.

Chavo Guerrero Jr. vs. Edge

Both guys are on their own and Sunday's triple threat is officially an elimination match. Edge armdrags him into an armbar before elbowing Chavo in the face. Chavo sidesteps a charge to put Edge on the apron but gets flapjacked for his efforts. A kick to the ropes hits Edge low though and Chavo takes over for real this time. We hit an armbar on the Canadian until Chavo goes up top, only to get dropkicked out of the air. The Edge-0-Matic gets two but Edge spears

the buckle, allowing Chavo to get in a spear of his own for two. Not that it matters as the tornado DDT is countered into the Edgecution for the pin.

Rating: B-. I'm not surprised that this was good as Chavo really was a solid hand in the ring. He gets a bad reputation for his horribly dull stuff later in his career but when you just let him work a good match, he's a rather entertaining watch. Nice match here and a really strong opener.

Rey Mysterio is talking about the match when he runs over to see the arriving Brock, sounding like a ten year old fan. Brock basically tells him to buzz off.

Dawn Marie comes up to see Al Wilson and is ready to invite Torrie to the wedding. Al isn't sure but she talks him into it. As enjoyable of a visual as it is, I do like the fact that we're supposed to believe Dawn (and Torrie for that matter) walk around on the streets in the outfits they were on the show. Dawn was just casually strolling around in a top that showed off half her chest and went all the way down to her waist. Totally normal travel gear right?

Heyman wants to know why Lesnar is here and Brock says it's because that's what the title is all about. Paul goes on a rant about the injuries Lesnar has suffered and how it's going to go badly if Lesnar stops doing what the team should do. If Lesnar doesn't leave now, there's nothing Heyman can do to protect Brock from Big Show. Paul has an idea though. I'll give them credit for this: they're making Big Show sound like a threat. You know, assuming you forget that he's Big Show.

Matt Hardy/John Cena vs. Rikishi/Tajiri

What a completely different team that first one would be today. Matt was the Fear Factor Champion and loves guacamole. Cole describes Cena as being "lost in the 80s". Like that's a bad thing. Tajiri and Matt start things off with a quick hurricanrana sending the Fear Factor Champion down.

It's off to Rikishi to take care of both Matt and Cena until a Side Effect gives Cena two. Matt hammers away in the corner as the fans want Jeff. Rikishi drives Cena over to the corner for the hot tag to Tajiri and things speed up. Tajiri gets a running start and grabs a running faceplant which sends both guys into the mat (picture

fighting over a vertical suplex but both guys jump up and swing around, landing face first). Matt's hand is on Tajiri's chest for the pin.

Rating: D+. I have no idea what they were going for with that ending. First of all, a faceplant for the ending? I'm glad Matt and Cena got the win but it felt like a fluke (with the announcers talking about how Matt's hand just happened to land on Tajiri's chest) and I really don't get this one. Oh and make sure Tajiri loses and not Rikishi because he's the star power.

Hardy makes Cena put him on his shoulders to celebrate.

Angle and Benoit yell over the title loss last week. Benoit brings up winning their last two singles matches. Angle: "YOU WATCH YOUR MOUTH YOUNG MAN!" Benoit: "I have more hair than you!" This goes back and forth until Angle mentioned that he's an Olympic gold medalist.

Scott Steiner video. Can he debut already so I can endlessly mock him?

Heyman asks Big Show to not call Lesnar out tonight but doesn't get an answer. I'd like an answer as to why Show has his own locker room and there are at least ten large suitcases visible. Does he carry his snacks in there?

Los Guerreros run into Edge and Rey Mysterio. Eddie wants a match with Rey later and promises to win the titles on Sunday. Spanish is spoken and Eddie hides behind Chavo, only to have Edge speak some Spanish and tell them to shut up.

Eddie Guerrero vs. Rey Mysterio

Partners are banned from ringside. Eddie takes him down into a headlock to start but gets armdragged into an armbar. The tilt-a-whirl backbreaker plants Rey though and Eddie takes over for real. The arm work continues until Rey monkey flips him into the ropes. It's already 619 time but Eddie pulls the referee in the way, knocking him nearly unconscious.

Chavo runs out for a Gory Bomb on Rey, allowing Eddie to add a powerbomb. Edge comes out to spear Eddie, drawing out the rest of the referees to drag them off. We take a break and come back with Rey hitting the Bronco Buster but getting tossed off the ropes. Eddie follows him out with a dive but takes too much time going up

again, allowing Rey to grab a superplex.

A hard knee to Mysterio's ribs sets up another armbars until Eddie lets him up for no logical reason. Rey springboards into an armdrag to send Eddie outside, followed by a slingshot hilo. Back in and Rey scores with the 619 but the West Coast Pop is reversed into the Lasso From El Paso (with something edited out). Eddie makes sure to grab the ropes, forcing Rey to tap.

Rating: B. I wouldn't really consider that to be the biggest surprise. These two are capable of having good matches in their sleep and this was no exception, though Eddie working on the arm for a good chunk of the match didn't make a lot of sense. Also, it was nice to have them do all the run-ins early on and then have a long stretch of the match follow them up. Good match here, as expected.

Torrie can't talk to her dad but he follows her anyway. Eventually she says Dawn is just using him. Al just wanted to invite her to the wedding but she won't go. She calls her dad an old fool.

Billy Kidman vs. Jamie Noble

Non-title. Jamie goes straight after the arm by wrapping it around the ropes. A keylock doesn't get Noble very far either so Kidman gets in a dropkick for two. The tiger bomb gives Noble two but Kidman reverses the cover into a rollup for two more. Kidman flips over him out of the corner and gets in the BK Bomb for no cover. That looks to set up the shooting star press but Nidia offers a distraction. Jamie pops back up and tries a superplex, only to have Kidman tie the legs up for a small package and the pin.

Rating: C-. This didn't have time to go anywhere but it set up Sunday's match, thankfully without having Kidman hit his finisher. Instead he won off a quick pin, making it look like he can beat Noble without completely destroying him. As little as I don't like having the champ lose, it's about all they could do in the three and a half minutes they had out there.

Dawn consoles Al, who she loves. He puts his head on her shoulder and she gives a bit of an evil smile. This is the THIRD SEGMENT this story has gotten.

Heyman tells Lesnar about going to see Big Show. Lesnar isn't happy and says he's going to call Show out this time.

Kurt Angle vs. Chris Benoit

Before the match, Angle laughs off the idea of either other team being a challenge to him. He's a better athlete than Benoit, is better looking than Edge and has actually grown, unlike Mysterio. Cue Los Guerreros and the champs to watch from ringside. Angle starts fast by snapping off the suplexes but Benoit comes back by just hitting him in the face. A backbreaker gives Benoit two before Angle sends him outside, leading to a whip into the champs.

Back in and Kurt rolls the German suplexes for two but the Angle Slam is countered into the Crossface. That's reversed into the ankle lock until Benoit rolls out, only to get caught in the Slam. Kurt grabs the Lasso From El Paso, drawing Eddie into the ring. It doesn't last long as he's launched out to the floor, triggering a brawl between Los Guerreros and the champs. Everyone comes in and that's a no contest.

Rating: B-. The time killed it but much like Mysterio vs. Guerrero, these two are almost a guaranteed awesome match. They're building the heck out of the triple threat tag, which is pretty easily bigger than Lesnar vs. Big Show, at least in the amount of hype it has. Let those six guys tear the house down and the extra build here helped.

Edge and Mysterio clean house and put Kurt in a double ankle lock. Eddie and Chavo make the save so it's an ankle lock to Eddie and a Crossface to Edge. Benoit and Angle shake hands but Kurt hugs him instead, giving us a hilarious look from Benoit when it goes too long.

Lesnar yells at Heyman for telling him to stay out of the ring.

We run down Sunday's card.

Here are Lesnar and Heyman with Brock calling out Big Show. Heyman tries to take the mic away and is told to shut up. Show finally comes out and Lesnar spears him into the steps, puncturing Show's forearm with the blood flowing out like a fountain. Two big chair shots to the head bust open Show's head and the chair is bent over his back. I remember watching this live and thinking it was the first time I thought Lesnar was awesome. If this was meant to be his full face turn, it worked quite well.

Overall Rating: B+. Survivor Series is certainly going to be interesting at this rate. The Tag Team Title match looks great on paper, Show vs. Lesnar could be good if Brock gets to be the Beast, the Elimination Chamber.....well I think we all know where that's

going. This was the big hard sell show and it did make me want to watch the pay per view again, though it certainly seems to be walking a tightrope, which almost never works. Still though, three quite good matches and some other passable stuff sprinkled in (save for the Dawn/Torrie stuff which won't end) makes this another high quality Smackdown.

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Smackdown – April 11, 2017: The Ugly Stepchild of WWE

Smackdown

Date: April 11, 2017

Location: TD Garden, Boston, Massachusetts

Commentators: Tom Phillips, Byron Saxton, John Bradshaw Layfield

It's the second night of the Superstar Shakeup which means we'll be seeing a lot of new names showing up tonight. That primarily means names from Monday Night Raw but there's also the chance of some people from NXT or maybe even the cruiserweights of 205 Live. Let's get to it.

We open with the debuting Kevin Owens(in a suit), who declares this

the new Kevin Owens Show. Now some people might be confused about how a Canadian can be the face of the United States but it makes perfect sense. Canadians are just better athletes than Americans and there's no denying it. Just look at the Montreal Canadiens defeating the Boston Bruins all the time. There's no one in the back that can beat him because he is the new face of America.

Cue Baron Corbin of all people to say that Owens can't beat him up. Last week Corbin beat Dean Ambrose up so badly that he ran off to Raw. Last night, Ambrose beat Owens up so badly that he came here so that means Corbin should get a US Title shot. Owens says no but here's the debuting Sami Zayn (JUST LET HIM STAY AWAY FROM OWENS FOR FIVE MINUTES!) to send Owens into a near fit because he can never escape. Sami wants a shot as well but here's AJ Styles, who is actually still on Smackdown.

AJ gets a huge face reception and says this place is still about him. This brings out Daniel Bryan to say Owens vs. Chris Jericho is still on for Payback and the winner will officially be on Smackdown. The title can't be defended until then though, but tonight we're going to crown a new #1 contender for the US Title. Tonight it's Styles vs. Corbin vs. Zayn for the future shot.

Randy Orton vs. Erick Rowan

Non-title. Orton hammers away to start but gets shoved into the corner. Erick rains down right hands until Orton grabs the powerslam and does the Garvin Stomp. They head outside with Rowan getting sent into the steps, followed by the elevated DDT. The RKO is loaded up but Bray appears on screen, already making the Superstar Shakeup seem worthless. Seriously it hasn't even been twenty four hours. Wyatt says he's everywhere and will see Orton in the House of Horrors. The lights come back up and Rowan hits Orton with the steps for the DQ at 3:50.

Rating: D-. I was tempted to not rate this one as a minute and a half of it was spent on watching Orton listen to Bray. Hopefully things are all square after Payback as these show vs. show matches defeat the point of the Shakeup (just do the Shakeup later). The

match was a squash until the ending and I'm kind of glad they didn't have Rowan just lose clean again.

Rowan gives Orton a full nelson slam.

Tag Team Titles; Usos vs. American Alpha

Alpha is defending in their rematch after losing the belts last month. The Usos don't even get an entrance. Jimmy and Chad start things off with Alpha using some early double teaming to take over. Both champs are sent to the floor and we take an early break. Back with Jimmy kicking Jason in the face but getting sent hard into the corner. The hot tag brings in Chad to clean house, including a great looking moonsault for two on Jimmy.

Some double teaming puts Gable in trouble but the Superfly Splash hits knees for two. The Steiner Bulldog gets a very close two with Jey making a save. Alpha is sent outside for stereo suicide dives but you don't dive at suplexers as Alpha grabs stereo belly to belly suplexes. Back in and Jey makes a blind tag, setting up a superkick into the Superfly Splash to retain at 8:51.

Rating: B. Good stuff here as you would expect but can we PLEASE have someone show up to bolster the division a little bit? Right now it's these two and whomever else we can find as jobbers that week. With a roster as deep as WWE has, there's really no excuse to not be able to put four teams together for a regular division.

Post match the Shining Stars run in and leave American Alpha laying.

Mojo Rawley vs. Jinder Mahal

Rob Gronkowski is in the front row again. Mahal starts fast and takes Rawley down for a kneedrop and armbar. Jinder makes the mistake of going after Gronkowski though and gets a cup thrown on him, allowing Mojo to take him back inside. The running right hand puts Jinder away at 2:41. At least it was short.

Mojo celebrates with some New England Patriots.

Here's Shane McMahon to address the Women's Division. They've acquired some new talent but he'd like to have the entire division come out here. This brings out Naomi, Natalya, Carmella (with James

Ellsworth) and Becky Lynch. Since that's the entire division so far, Shane stops to congratulate Naomi but Ellsworth takes the mic to say Naomi is horrible.

Naomi threatens violence and says bring out the new talent. That would mean a long introduction for a second generation star and the daughter of a Hall of Famer: Tamina! I don't think that really counts as a new talent as she was out injured and never officially on Raw. Shane isn't done though and brings out Charlotte for the real big surprise.

Sin Cara and Rusev (no mention of Lana) are coming to Smackdown.

Here's Aiden English on his own to ask for a spotlight. In a callback to his NXT days, English sings a song about himself, only to be cut off.

Aiden English vs. Tye Dillinger

Tye gets the important things out of the way first with a snapmare and cartwheel into TEN. English takes him into the corner and sings that this is his show. The Tyebreaker is good for the pin on English at 2:20.

Video on AJ Styles.

Video on Lana dancing around a chair in a very revealing red dress. She's on Smackdown too and seems to be her own act instead of with Rusev.

Here's Dolph Ziggler to talk about how awesome he is and how the Superstar Shakeup doesn't matter. Cue Shinsuke Nakamura for his full entrance. Ziggler asks who Nakamura thinks he is so the fans sing his song. Nakamura says his name and blocks a superkick, setting up the BRING IT pose. Ziggler bails of course.

Video on Baron Corbin.

New Day is coming to Smackdown. Now that helps things a lot.

Video on Sami Zayn.

Sami Zayn vs. AJ Styles vs. Baron Corbin

The winner gets a US Title shot at some point after Payback. Styles

and Zayn go after Corbin to start but he suplexes both of them at once without much effort. A double clothesline sends Corbin outside, leaving us with a Zayn vs. Styles showdown. Corbin pulls Styles to the floor but Sami moonsaults onto both of them as we take a break. Back with Corbin in full control, hitting a side slam and big boot for two on Styles.

AJ grabs the Hoshi Geroshi on Sami but gets blasted by a clothesline from Corbin to put all three down. Corbin takes a knee to the face and Sami grabs the Blue Thunder Bomb for two on AJ. Baron gets back up for one heck of a Deep Six on Sami with AJ making the save. The springboard 450 gets two on Corbin with Sami making a last second save this time around. That earns him a Pele kick but the Clash is backdropped to the apron. The Helluva Kick drops Corbin, only to have AJ hit the Phenomenal Forearm for the pin on Sami at 16:42.

Rating: B. Corbin is getting better and better every single week and working with people like AJ and Sami is only going to help him even more. AJ winning is a bit of a surprise but he immediately elevates the US Title. I do wonder who is next for Orton after this as you would think AJ would have been a good choice for the next challenger after Wyatt.

Overall Rating: B-. While I'm going to need some more time to figure out how much I liked the second half of the Superstar Shakeup, the first instinct would be to think that it went a lot better for the red show. The big names here are New Day, Charlotte and Owens, but the problem is a lot of the names are nothing. I mean, Sin Cara? The Shining Stars? Jinder Mahal? Those aren't exactly exciting names. Then again, did anyone really expect WWE to put a focus on Smackdown?

The show itself was good enough with a good Tag Team Title match and main event but we still don't really have a feel for how things are going to go on this show. The problem is we won't until after Payback, which makes things a bit more complicated than they need to be. Smackdown has potential but they're lacking a top level star (remember that Cena is going to be gone for well over a month),

which is a problem they've had for a long time.

Results

Randy Orton b. Erick Rowan via DQ when Rowan used the steps

Usos b. American Alpha – Superfly Splash to Gable

Mojo Rawley b. Jinder Mahal – Running punch

Tye Dillinger b. Aiden English – Tyebreaker

AJ Styles b. Baron Corbin and Sami Zayn – Phenomenal Forearm to Zayn

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Smackdown – April 4, 2017: The Two Point Show

Smackdown

Date: April 4, 2017

Location: Amway Center, Orlando, Florida

Commentators: Tom Phillips, John Bradshaw Layfield, David Otunga

Now this could be interesting as we could get the post-Wrestlemania moments without as smarky of a crowd. A lot of people are going to get tired of how over the top things get on Raw and I'm not sure how

strong that's going to be here. The big name people are expecting tonight is Shinsuke Nakamura as there's no reason for him not to show up here. Let's get to it.

I was in the arena for this show, sitting in the upper deck with the hard camera on my left and the rigging above the ring blocking part of the Titantron. The dark match saw American Alpha defeat the Vaudevillains in about 4:00 with the Steiner Bulldog to English in Gotch's final match with the promotion.

As you might expect, we open with a long recap of Wrestlemania.

Here's Randy Orton to open things up. Do you remember when he said "If you can't beat em, join em? And when the time is right, screw em?". Well he forgot part of it: When you get in the ring with them, beat them up! Randy proved that he's the master but here's Bray on screen to say this has just begun. Sister Abigail promised him so many things so he wants a House of Horrors match. Orton doesn't know what that is but he agrees.

The screen goes off and Bray appears in the ring for the brawl. Erick Rowan, in a new mask, comes out from underneath the ring and the announcers don't recognize him despite the BIG RED BEARD. Luke Harper comes out for the save, likely setting up a tag match later tonight.

Miz and Maryse didn't think much of the proposal on Sunday because it felt like good marketing. Tonight though, they're calling out Cena and Nikki, possibly for the last time with the Superstar Shakeup looming.

Women's Title: Naomi vs. Alexa Bliss

Bliss is challenging and is even more serious than usual. JBL wants to know if Naomi can do it two nights in a row because he can't count. Naomi sends her face first into the buckle and we head outside for a break. Back with Bliss in control due to Naomi tweaking her knee again. Bliss cranks on the leg and the fans can't decide between DELETE, STUPID IDIOT or basic applause. Unfortunately they do have the "1-2-SWEET!" chant for near falls, which just

sounds horrible.

Naomi comes back with a kick to the face for two, only to have Bliss grab a DDT for the same. The Rear View gets two but Naomi gets pulled off the ropes for a crash. Not that it matters as she grabs a sunset flip but switches over to the reverse Crossface to retain the title at 10:18.

Rating: C+. As usual, the wrestling doesn't matter here but this was a fine story with Naomi having an injury and Bliss working it over as well as she could. Naomi even used her new finisher to retain the title in the one on one match. This was a nice little match and that's all it needed to be. Odds are Bliss goes to Raw after this and there's nothing wrong with that.

Here's Curt Hawkins to ask why no one is talking about him. He wants some attention so let's have an open challenge. I think you know what's coming.

Curt Hawkins vs. Tye Dillinger

The fans had been BEGGING to explode for Tye all weekend as that TEN chant was going crazy for every show I took in. You can see the emotion on Dillinger's face as he's spent a LONG time trying to get here. Dillinger immediately snapmares him down and cartwheels into the TEN so we can get that out of the way. A series of strikes drops Hawkins and sets up the ten left hands in the corner. The Tyebreaker is good for the pin at 1:53. This was all it needed to be, though I have a bad feeling Tye is going to find out that his chant is more over than he is.

Mojo Rawley's mind is blown by winning the Battle Royal and wishes he could have seen Andre on a dance floor. This is the biggest moment of his night and the bar has been raised. Now it's time to throw some weight on it. I really hope this goes somewhere for him. This year at Axxess, I was waiting in line to get inside the Elimination Chamber when Rawley walked by during the session change. It took Rawley about six minutes to walk thirty feet as he stopped and talked to, shook hands with, high fived or took pictures with every single fan on the railing. You don't see that often and it's a

classy move.

Here are Miz and Maryse to Cena's full entrance, complete with Maryse doing Nikki's dance. If you pay attention from a distance, you could tell it was Miz by the way he moved but at a glance, you really could be fooled by this. Doing the robotic Cena voice, Miz says rule #1 is you can't say John Cena sucks. Maryse thanks "John" for being manipulated into doing whatever she wanted, including giving her this rock (the size of a small doorknob). They're leaving WWE and going to Hollywood, where you won't be able to see us.

They go to leave (a shame as that means no more Maryse as Nikki, which really works for her)...and we've got a man playing a violin. You know what that means: SHINSUKE NAKAMURA makes his debut with the fans singing/humming/WHOAing/whatever it is you call making the sounds of his wordless music to the pop of the night.

We go to a break with Nakamura posing, during which Dolph Ziggler came out to challenge him for the dark match main event.

Dean Ambrose vs. Baron Corbin

Non-title street fight. Corbin stomps him down in the corner and chokeslaves Dean down (Bliss actually does it better) before going outside for a chair. Dean baseball slides it into his face and knocks Corbin into the crowd as we take a break. Back with Corbin spearing Ambrose through a table in the corner for no cover, followed by a good whipping with a strap.

Dean sends him head first into a chair wedged in the corner and now it's his turn to give a whipping. The top rope elbow to the floor drops Baron again and Dean puts him on a table. Another elbow puts him through it but Baron grabs End of Days back inside for the quick pin at 11:03.

Rating: B-. This should have been the Wrestlemania match as I'm still not sure what the point was in having Dean win the first match clean. Corbin needs the title a lot more than Dean so this should set up another gimmick match of some kind on a big Smackdown as I can't imagine they'll wait for whatever the next Smackdown pay per

view is. Good stuff here though.

Here's Shane McMahon to talk about the Superstar Shakeup. After soaking in the cheers, Shane thanks the fans for being so hospitable over the last week. This Monday's Shakeup could send anyone anywhere but everyone should be hoping they come to Smackdown, the land of opportunity. Cue AJ Styles to say he doesn't want to go anywhere. Everyone knows that this is the house that he built and he shake's Shane's hands. A tease of more violence seems to be a joke and AJ walks away in what feels like a face turn.

Luke Harper/Randy Orton vs. Wyatt Family

Orton and Rowan get things going with Erick hitting his spinning kick as we take an early break. Tom: "Can Orton and Harper get back in this?" It was one kick man. Back with Bray missing a charge into the corner and Harper coming in off the hot tag. The fans around me thought that would be Harper rejoining Bray and that really wouldn't have surprised me. Harper is quickly sent outside for a running clothesline from Rowan, setting up a pull on the face.

It's back to Bray for some slow stomping, followed by a hard right hand for two. Rowan hammers away some more in the corner and rips at the face again. Bray grabs a chinlock before missing a charge, allowing for the tag off to Orton. The DDT looks to set up the RKO but there go the lights and Bray winds up on the ramp. Orton RKO's Rowan for the pin at 12:13.

Rating: C-. You could really tell the crowd was getting burned out at this point and after so many days, that's not the most surprising thing. The fact that you could pretty much write the script for this match the second it was announced didn't help either. Wyatt's team losing again makes it feel like we're seeing the same stuff we've seen before, which isn't a good sign after the mess of a title match on Sunday.

After the taping and 205 Live, Nakamura beat Ziggler in about 8:30 with Kinshasa in a pretty standard dark match.

Overall Rating: C+. This was a good show but the Orton vs. Wyatt

stuff is almost completely out of steam and the rematch, which is likely taking place at Backlash, is six or seven weeks away. The Dillinger and Nakamura debuts worked really well and...did anything else happen on this show? They can't possibly consider Rowan returning as a major moment so this is pretty much a two point show that was pretty normal otherwise.

Results

Naomi b. Alexa Bliss – Reverse Crossface

Tye Dillinger b. Curt Hawkins – Tyebreaker

Baron Corbin b. Dean Ambrose – End of Days

Randy Orton/Luke Harper b. Wyatt Family – RK0 to Rowan

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**Smackdown – November 7,
2002: Look at Hour One.**

Look at Hour Two!

Smackdown

Date: November 7, 2002

Location: Verizon Wireless Arena, Manchester, New Hampshire

Commentators: Michael Cole, Tazz

We're closing in on Survivor Series and that means Brock Lesnar vs. Big Show for reasons I don't even want to comprehend. It's not like we have a small army of amazing technical wrestlers who could have a great match with the former NCAA Champion wrestler running around. No the clear solution here is Big Show. Let's get to it.

The opening video looks at Big Show vs. Lesnar, which still isn't anything interesting. Brock got beaten up, just as Paul Heyman seemed to think would be the case.

Opening sequence.

Later tonight: Edge/Rey Mysterio vs. Chris Benoit/Kurt Angle in a 2/3 falls match. I think we have a selling point.

Billy Kidman/Torrie Wilson vs. Jamie Noble/Nidia

The guys get things going with Noble taking over on the arm. A pumphandle suplex gets two but Nidia tags herself in, much to Noble's chagrin. That means Torrie has to come in for a clothesline but she gets slammed for a near fall. Torrie takes her down out of the corner but stops to slap Noble, who responds with a clothesline. That certainly gets him booed but it doesn't do much damage to Torrie, who gets the tag off to Kidman almost immediately.

Everything breaks down with the heels being sent into each other, leaving Kidman to Bodog Noble. The Shooting Star is enough to give Kidman the pin.

Rating: C. I'm assuming this was done to set up Kidman going after the Cruiserweight Title, likely at Survivor Series, assuming anyone remembers that Noble actually has the title in the first place. That thing has been the least important championship in the company for a long time now with even the Raw Tag Team Titles having a higher

value. Torrie and Nidia were just there, though it's better than Kidman pinning Noble in a regular singles match.

Big Show is looking for Lesnar and wants a security guard to tell Lesnar that he's here.

Torrie runs into her dad, who talks about how lonely he's been. Tonight he's going to do something for himself and he hopes she understands. Do these two never talk on the phone or outside of the arena?

John Cena raps about Rikishi and doesn't seem to like him that much. Cue Rikishi for his half of the battle rap, which is rather inferior to Cena's. "Piece of the Kish" is still a horrible catchphrase.

Stephanie watches the tape of Bischoff kissing her again because they're STILL trying to make that into something. Eddie and Chavo Guerrero come in to make some jokes and ask for a title match.

Stephanie gives Eddie Lesnar instead. She also promises an announcement regarding the Tag Team Titles on the upcoming Super Tuesday special.

Rikishi vs. John Cena

Cena can't get a go behind to start and a headlock doesn't get him very far either. Back in and John gets all fired up but runs away when Rikishi bends over in front of him. Instead Cena trips him up and gets two off a missile dropkick. A chinlock doesn't get Cena very far as Rikishi gives him a Samoan Drop and Stinkface. The Banzai Drop ends Cena in a hurry.

Rating: D-. So Cena gets a new gimmick a week ago which allows him to show off his natural abilities and now he's jobbing to Rikishi in a match where he's humiliated. Even Test got to win some matches and his entire gimmick is his manager saying "Testicles" over and over again.

Rikishi dances post match.

Shannon Moore has embraced Mattitude but gets yelled at for putting sugar in his coffee. Moore is dubbed an MF'er (Mattitude Follower) and Matt goes off to see Brock.

Al is with Dawn Marie and promises to ask her the question.

Matt goes to see Lesnar but finds Heyman instead. He offers to soften Big Show up like he did with Undertaker and Heyman gives him a bunch of praise. Heyman goes in to see Brock to tell him what happened but Brock isn't happy. Paul tells him to chill because it's all about Survivor Series.

Here's Al Wilson to call Dawn Marie to the ring for the question. She's made him feel strong, sexy and virile. He proposes and she accepts as the announcers make jokes about Billy and Chuck. Cole: "Look at Dawn!" Tazz: "Look at Al!" Cole: "Look at Dawn!" Tazz: "Look at Al!" Al threatens to kill herself if she says no and Dawn finally says yes. Cole and Tazz: "NO!"

Big Show vs. Matt Hardy

Matt hates cold weather and scored a 1330 on his SAT's. Dang I got a better score than Matt. Show clotheslines him down to start and tosses him to various places. A backbreaker sets up a bearhug but Matt bites his face to break it up. Not that it matters as the chokeslam ends Matt in less than two minutes. Ok so they just set up Matt with a lackey and they had NO OTHER OPTION here other than to squash Matt? Nothing at all? There was NO ONE associated with Matt that could have done this?

Show says he'll win the title and we see Lesnar destroying a TV.

Tag Team Titles: Kurt Angle/Chris Benoit vs. Edge/Rey Mysterio

Angle and Benoit are defending and this is 2/3 falls. Mysterio sends Angle to the floor to start and grabs a hurricanrana back inside. It's off to Edge as we hear about his great feud with Angle over the summer. Edge snaps off some armdrags but makes the mistake of going after Angle, earning himself a German suplex.

The champs beat on Edge for a bit until he catches Benoit in an implant DDT. The hot tag allows Rey to Drop the Dime for two and the pop up hurricanrana gets a VERY close two as well with Angle making the save. Not that it matters as a powerbomb/springboard seated senton ends Benoit for the first fall. A quick Angle Slam is

countered with an armdrag so Kurt settles for a belly to belly. Benoit adds a gutbuster as Rey is in trouble, which is one of his strong suits.

Rey reverses a super gutbuster to put both guys down, setting up a double hot tag. Edge cleans house (of course) but dares to suplex Angle, who sidesteps a spear to send Edge into a belt shot from Benoit. The ankle lock ties things up and we take a break with Benoit and Angle arguing over credit for the win. I know this story is done to death but when it's done well like this, it's rather fun to watch.

Back with Angle in control on Mysterio until a spinwheel kick allows another hot tag to Edge. A belly to belly sends the Canadian flying though and Benoit comes back in. That means a variety of suplexes, including a belly to back superplex which knocks both guys silly. Angle and Mysterio come in again with Rey picking up the pace and sending Angle shoulder first into the post.

The 619 is countered but Rey grabs a sunset flip for the pin and the titles. Now you know it's not going to end without several more near falls and, of course, Angle had the ropes so there's no fall. Back from another break with Rey dropkicking the arguing champions, earning his knees a solid beating. Benoit grabs a gutwrench suplex and hands it back off to Angle for more suplexes.

Rey counters a wheelbarrow suplex into a DDT and it's back to Edge for the house cleaning. An ankle lock cuts that off in a hurry but Edge sends him into the buckle, allowing Rey to hit a 619 around the post. Edge spears Angle and avoids Benoit's Swan Dive, which hits Angle by mistake. A dropkick puts Chris on the floor and Edge pins Angle for the titles.

Rating: A. This was the rare ultra long TV match and there's almost no way that these four aren't going to have an instant classic with this much time. Every combination of these guys are going to be able to have an amazing sequence and that makes for some outstanding TV. I could have gone with this being a one fall match but the 2/3 falls was hardly a bad idea.

We run down the Super Tuesday card. I'll throw that in as a bonus with the next Raw review.

Big Show has something in mind for Lesnar tonight.

Eddie and Chavo annoy Heyman until Brock comes out and chases them off. Heyman yells at Brock and tells him to stick with the plans that got them here. Paul won't be there for him tonight to teach Lesnar a lesson for one night.

Scott Steiner video.

Brock Lesnar vs. Eddie Guerrero

Non-title. Chavo's cheap shot doesn't get him very far so Brock goes with shoulders to Eddie's ribs. Brock: "Come on holmes! Come on essa!" Eddie gets run down again and we hit the bearhug. The champ switches it up to an over the shoulder backbreaker but bends both arms down at the same time.

Chavo offers a distraction so Eddie can get in a low blow and a hard series of stomps. The Lasso From El Paso goes on but only seems to annoy the champ. A dropkick only makes it worse and that means it's time for the belly to belly. Chavo pulls Eddie out of the way of a charge though and Brock goes shoulder first into the post. Not that it matters as Brock gets back up for the F5 and the pin.

Rating: C+. That's a great use of both Lesnar and someone like Guerrero. Eddie is going to be fine with a loss like this and Lesnar gets something out of a victory here. Losing to the World Champion doesn't hurt Eddie whatsoever so let them do this in a quick TV match. It needed more time but it was good enough while it lasted.

Post match here's Show to toss Lesnar off the stage and onto a crash pad to end the show.

Overall Rating: B+. Talk about a difference between hours. The first half of this show was filled with young talent getting beaten up by older guys and Al Wilson. The second half was a thirty minute classic and a fine Lesnar vs. Guerrero match. I don't remember the last time a show turned on the jets like that and it made for some very fun TV. Get rid of the Al stuff and these shows are even better

than they are now, which is quite the impressive move.

Remember to follow me on Twitter @kbreviews and pick up the NXT: The Full Sail Years Volumes I and II, now in PAPERBACK. Check out the information here:

<http://kbwrestlingreviews.com/2017/03/24/kbs-history-of-nxt-volumes-1-and-2-now-available-in-paperback/>

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Quick Notes From Smackdown Live

Really quick as I have a 13 hour drive ahead of me tomorrow. 1. American Alpha b. the Vaudevillains in about 4:00 in the dark match.

2. Nakamura was by far the most over thing all night. The place just came unglued for him.

3. I really, really hope "1-2-SWEET!" doesn't become a thing on kickouts.

4. Tye got a great pop.

5. People were expecting Harper to turn on Orton, which wouldn't have surprised me.

6. Some people left for 205 Live but it was hardly an exodus.

7. Nakamura beat Ziggler in the post show dark match in

about 8:30 with Kinshasa.

8. The beach balls were in action ALL NIGHT LONG. One fan caught and popped two of them, turning him into the most hated man in the building and my personal hero for the night.

9. During the four way on 205 Live, a fan in the upper deck was just destroying Perkins every few seconds with some hilarious lines that were cracking up all the sections around him. Then he said:

“Roman Reigns is a better professional wrestler than TJ Perkins!”

Everyone else: “NO! NO! NO!”

Fan: “I APOLOGIZE! I PLEDGE TO FADE AWAY AND CLASSIFY MYSELF AS OBSOLETE!”

10. Everyone was just done near the end of Smackdown. It was a very, very long week and I think people are going to realize how tired they are when they wake up tomorrow.

I’ll have a week in review thing up sometime later this week (along with all the other shows I’ve missed) but I won’t have anything up tomorrow save for Raw 2002 and the column, both of which are already done.

Thanks for bearing with me this week guys and thank you all so much for letting me get to do this. I got to do stuff this week that I never thought I’d get to do and it was some of the most fun I’ve ever had as a wrestling fan. Thank you all for supporting me and allowing me to do this as it’s only possible with all of your help.

KB

Heading to Smackdown

And that's the last show for the week. Talk about it here.

Smackdown – March 28, 2017: Flying Sparks From Mouths and Graves

Smackdown

Date: March 28, 2017

Location: Richmond Coliseum, Richmond, Virginia

Commentators: Tom Phillips, John Bradshaw Layfield, David Otunga

It's the final Smackdown before Wrestlemania and that means....well likely it means a bunch of promos and a few matches here and there but that's standard operating procedure for this time of year. I'd expect a big push towards Randy Orton vs. Bray Wyatt and some more names being announced for the battle royal so let's get to it.

No Mauro again, though now we know why (having a severe bout of depression apparently so hopefully he's getting the rest/treatment he needs).

Here's Daniel Bryan to get us going with a contract signing between AJ Styles and Shane McMahon. Shane says this place is supposed to be somewhere families can come and be entertained with AJ as a major part of that. Personal feelings aside, Shane knows AJ is phenomenal. AJ agrees, but Shane keeps going by saying it was AJ's ego that got him in trouble. It was his ego that cost him the WWE Championship and got inside his head because he wasn't on the Wrestlemania card (I'd think he has a right to be angry over that one).

Shane is ready for him though and knows he'll bring out the best in AJ. The boss signs and AJ reminds him that this isn't going to be a

street fight but rather a regular match, where Styles is untouchable. AJ lists off some of the greats that Shane has been in the ring with but none of them were the Phenomenal AJ Styles. The contract is signed and the table is tossed but Bryan stops things just in time. He asks for a handshake and Shane is willing but AJ walks away smiling.

Becky Lynch vs. Carmella

Alexa Bliss and Mickie James are on commentary and James Ellsworth does Carmella's entrance. For some reason Carmella gives Ellsworth her gum and runs away from the threat of a kick to the ribs. As Carmella goes after Becky, Bliss and James get in a fight which spills into the ring. Both of them wind up hitting Carmella and that's a DQ (which will be treated as a no contest because WWE doesn't quite understand the basic rules of wrestling) at 2:13.

Becky Lynch/Mickie James vs. Carmella/Alexa Bliss

Joined in progress with Mickie hitting Bliss with a running dropkick for two. Becky comes in to a nice pop but Carmella tags herself in, sending Bliss into some screeching. Bliss offers a bit of a distraction though and Mickie gets kicked down as the heels take over. Did Mickie ever turn face? She doesn't really need to but it would be a nice plot point to clarify.

Bliss grabs a chinlock but here's Natalya down the ramp as we take a break. Back with Natalya on commentary and Bliss charging into an elbow in the corner. The hot tag brings in Becky, who Natalya calls a Pippi Longstocking knockoff. That's not enough for Natalya as she gets on the apron for a distraction, allowing Ellsworth to trip Lynch up and give Carmella the pin at 9:12.

Rating: C-. This didn't have time to go anywhere but the ending was the right call as I don't think anyone is buying Carmella as a major threat to win the match on Sunday. Have her win here and give her a little momentum going into Wrestlemania and things will be a little more interesting.

The brawl continues post match until Naomi makes her return for the save. In case it wasn't clear enough for you, Naomi officially announces her entrance into the Women's Title match.

Tyler Breeze, as Nikki Bella, offers his services for the Women's Title match. Bryan says no but Fandango comes in and they get spots

in the Andre Battle Royal, plus in a ten man tag with some other participants tonight. Not a bad parting gift.

Here are Miz and Maryse for MizTV. Tonight we get a special treat: the rest of the "lost" Total Bellas episodes (if Miz isn't Bryan this time, I'll be rather disappointed). After a recap of last week, Miz (as Cena) yells about people being late for dinner. Miz has some issues with reading his cue cards until Maryse (playing Nikki) starts talking about the pitter patter of little feet. This brings in the other guests: Maryse as Brie and MIZ AS BRYAN!!!

Daniel, with a huge beard, needs a phone book to sit on and the couple brags about marriage. Daniel isn't happy with having steak but is pleased with his juicebox. Cena reads off the rules for how to eat and, again, it's hilarious given how robotic Cena comes off on Total Bellas. Another fake proposal sees John demand that Nikki take her rules seriously. This time Nikki asks John to marry her and it's to be continued.

Part two is after a break with Cena saying no because it would damage his brand. He's hustled the fans by convincing them he's something he's not. He's loyal to himself and he only respects money. Cena can never give up because someone more deserving, such as Miz, will take his spot away. You can't see him because there's no real person to be seen. Miz and Maryse flip the costumes away and promise to make Wrestlemania their curtain calls.

Without WWE, Cena can just lumber around and pretend to be a star. After Wrestlemania, everyone will know that their lives are total BS. This was great serious stuff to go with the comedy, which isn't a surprise from these two anymore. Back in the arena, here are Cena and Bella to respond. Cena makes fun of everything Miz did and says sure Nikki and Brie have moments where they're too dumb to tell each other apart (the fact that this is considered ok might sum up my entire issue with reality TV).

After the praise, Cena asks how Nikki could hold Maryse out of WWE if she's here now? Maybe Maryse wasn't asked back because she didn't do anything in her first run (What exactly did Nikki do in her first run John? Maryse had two Divas Titles to Nikki's one and was a far better character and worker. I know why he said it but that doesn't make it true.).

Next we have Miz's Hollywood theory for Cena, but John is more brand

loyal than anyone other than Vince McMahon and no one can get rid of him. Miz leaves to make movies of his own but only ones Cena made first. That's what Cena can't get: what is Miz doing here anyway? There's a Women's Revolution going on right now and last week, Nikki beat up Tyler Breeze (Can we never bring that up again?) and Miz is using Maryse to get on Total Divas. Oh and how many kids do Miz and Maryse have? Cena: "You firing blanks there sport?"

Cena calls them all talk because Miz never knows how to stop running his mouth. John rips off the gear so he's here man to man and promises to destroy Miz and Maryse on Wrestlemania. If you want to talk tough, you better be tough but Miz is a p***y. Miz is offered a free shot but the villains back away again. Nikki promises a beating on Sunday to wrap things up.

This was OUTSTANDING stuff and again some of the best talking Miz has ever done. While Miz and Maryse have been nailing the story from the beginning, this was the first time I really bought Cena's rebuttal. Basically Cena had been saying Miz didn't know himself but now Cena actually had some examples to really hammer the point home. I'm looking forward to the match and I'm actually buying Miz and Maryse having a chance, which is a lot more than I was expecting. Nikki beating Maryse would be far more acceptable than Cena beating Miz, but you can probably pencil in the stereo submissions.

American Alpha/Mojo Rawley/Heath Slater/Rhyno vs. Usos/Breezango/Dolph Ziggler

All ten of them will be in the battle royal. Jordan and Ziggler start things off with an amateur sequence on the mat and Dolph is just in over his head. Gable comes in to take over on Ziggler's arm and it's off to Slater for more of the same. Rhyno adds a belly to belly as this is one sided so far.

Back from an early break with Gable getting taken into the wrong corner so Fandango can come in for two off a hard whip into the corner. I know he's a low level guy but maybe an improvement in offense would help. Jimmy dives over to break up the tag but Gable drops him as well, meaning it's off to the (near) hometown boy with Rawley cleaning house. A parade of superkicks is capped off with Rhyno Goring Ziggler, followed by Rawley's running right hand knocking out Breeze at 11:00.

Rating: D+. Did Breeze run over Vince's dog or something? At least

he lost to a power move from a power wrestler this time instead of being beaten up by Nikki Bella. This was a fun way to help set up the battle royal and even though none of these people have a chance, I can appreciate throwing in some false hope.

Luke Harper has seen the truth: he doesn't need Bray Wyatt. Bray should run.

We run down the Wrestlemania card. Naomi is officially added to the Smackdown Women's Title match, which has been moved to the pre-show. As a bonus, the Raw Tag Team Titles match will now be a ladder match.

We see Bray doing....something to Orton with that stick thing last week. Yeah I'm still not sure what that was, though multiple masked men helping him is interesting.

Bray Wyatt vs. Luke Harper

Non-title and Harper is now in a clean black shirt. Dang he really is mixing it up. Bray starts fast with the running body attack but gets dropkicked out to the floor and punched in the face. Harper throws him over the barricade and we take an early break. Back with Luke escaping the release Rock Bottom, only to have Bray block the powerbomb. That means the Rock Bottom can connect, only to have Sister Abigail broken up. Luke gets in the suicide dive and a big boot is good for two. Back up and Bray goes into trance mode, freezing Luke long enough for Sister Abigail to put him away at 8:33.

Rating: D. Yeah I really wasn't feeling this one and I really would have preferred Harper being allowed to get a title shot after a few weeks' build. This could have been something special but it was still the same Bray hypnosis bit (Now I want to watch an Osirian Portal match.) with Harper losing the big match. He's starting to make me think of Cesaro and that's not a good thing.

Post match Orton appears on screen, kneeling over Sister Abigail's grave. Bray has claimed that Abigail gave her powers to him but Orton pulls out the same weapon used on him last week (How did he get that?) and stabs the dirt. Orange sparks fly out to end the show on a rather dumb note.

Overall Rating: C. This was an acceptable go home show but as is so often the case with WWE, it's all over the place. First of all, you

have a classic segment with Cena vs. Miz. Those two have some very underrated chemistry together and I've liked their stuff since all the way back in 2009. I'm not crazy on the mixed tag but they've really brought me around on it.

On the other hand though, WWE slipped on two major matches: the Orton vs. Wyatt match with the really stupid ending and Corbin vs. Ambrose with the really stupid lack of everything. You would think they could at least have a promo (like they had on Talking Smack) but in this case, there wasn't as much that could be cut.

Finally, the Women's Title match being moved to the pre-show is fine and if nothing else it eliminates a bunch of entrances that would take up pay per view time. As great as Alexa has been, I'm fine with them just being on the pre-show as it's not like people are really dying to see this one.

Overall, Smackdown should be fine on Sunday though I'm a bit worried about how well Orton vs. Wyatt is going to go. If they do a hard hitting, back and forth match, everything will be fine and it'll come close to match of the night. If they do something stupid with Sister Abigail appearing...well it might be better than Orton getting the title, though I'm not sure he will. Anyway, fine go home show but Sunday is still a potential big misfire for reasons beyond Smackdown's control.

Results

Carmella b. Becky Lynch via DQ when Alexa Bliss and Mickie James interfered

Carmella/Alexa Bliss b. Becky Lynch/Mickie James – Rollup to Lynch

Mojo Rawley/Heath Slater/Rhyno/American Alpha b.

Usos/Breezango/Dolph Ziggler – Running right hand to Breeze

Bray Wyatt b. Luke Harper – Sister Abigail

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Smackdown – October 24, 2002: How Do You Like Your Wrestling?

Smackdown

Date: October 24, 2002

Location: Pyramid, Memphis, Tennessee

Commentators: Tazz, Michael Cole

With No Mercy done (and Undertaker probably still bleeding), it's time to start the road towards Survivor Series in about a month. The real buzz is about the Tag Team Titles though after Chris Benoit and Kurt Angle became the inaugural champions in a masterpiece. Unlike Raw, there are a few things I'm excited to see develop so let's get to it.

Opening sequence.

Matt Hardy vs. Rikishi

This is fallout from Matt getting a Stinkface last week. Before we get started though, did you know that Mattitude is practiced in over 100 countries or that Matt's bedtime is 4am? Rikishi wipes himself with Matt's shirt before taking him down off a clothesline. Matt's top rope clothesline gets two but the rotund Samoan wins a slugout. A Stinkface doesn't work but Matt is shoved away from the Twist of Fate, setting up the Rikishi Driver (I've missed that one) for the pin. Cole: "Mattitude has been deleted!"

Rating: D+. So Matt gets a new, amazing gimmick (which he probably came up with himself) and gets to lose clean to Rikishi to pay off a moment where he got humiliated. I mean, it's not as bad as almost

anything Raw has done lately but this isn't the brightest booking in the world.

Rikishi dances post match but Big Show comes in and lays him out. Wasn't he teasing a face turn on Raw? Show challenges Lesnar for the title.

Here's Stephanie McMahon to present a trophy to Benoit and Angle. Kurt says he lead his team to victory last night so he'll accept the trophy and put it on his Wall of Fame at home. Benoit grabs the trophy and says if it wasn't for Stephanie's ruling, he would have taken Angle out a long time ago. Angle says it's his because he got the submission last night. They fight over the trophy and Stephanie gets hit in the face as the thing breaks. That earns both of them a slap to the face before Stephanie makes a match for the broken trophy.

Cruiserweight Title: Jamie Noble vs. Tajiri

Noble, dressed as Elvis of course, is defending in a rematch from their good effort on Sunday. Tajiri hits the ring after a lame impression and elbows the wig off the champ. Of course Tajiri puts the wig on for a little dance before dropping Noble (still in the Elvis jacket) into the corner. The Tarantula is broken up and Nidia offers a distraction, meaning Tajiri kicks the post by mistake. Back in and Noble kicks the leg out but can't hit the Tiger Bomb. Nidia gets on the apron but Tajiri kicks the bickering couple together, only to get rolled up (with an assist from Nidia) to retain the title.

Rating: C-. These two work well together but you need more than four minutes to make something like this go. Noble has been champion for about four months now and I really don't think anyone has noticed. I know the idea was to have Mysterio fix the division but when he's doing all that other great stuff, it seems like a waste of time.

Tazz has the wig and we hear about next week's Halloween party.

Dawn Marie, with the lowest cut dress legal by law, finds Torrie and apologizes for her behavior in recent weeks. She really cares for Al but she'll break it off for the sake of Torrie and her family.

Torrie says great and walks away, not really convinced.

Eddie and Chavo have a standoff with Angle and tell him that Benoit had some plans for him after the tournament was over. Naturally

Angle believes him and tensions continue to heighten.

Edge/Rey Mysterio vs. Eddie Guerrero/Chavo Guerrero

The winners get a title shot at some point in the future. Edge and Chavo start things off with Edge's armbar not getting him anywhere. Instead a shoulder puts Chavo down but he gets his knees up to block Rey's springboard moonsault. Everything breaks down in a hurry with Rey sending the Guerreros outside but face miscommunication lets Eddie take over.

Eddie elbows Rey in the mask and it's time to work on the ribs and back, which were banged up on Sunday. I love when they remember stuff from just a few days ago. A pumphandle backbreaker gives Eddie two and Chavo's tilt-a-whirl version gets the same. Rey dropkicks Chavo into his cousin though and it's off to Edge as things speed up again. An Edge-0-Matic gets two on Eddie but he's still able to save Chavo from the 619.

Instead it's the spear for two on Chavo, followed by the 619. A powerbomb/springboard seated senton crushes Chavo but Eddie makes the save with a slingshot hilo. The referee goes after Eddie, allowing Rey to sneak in a springboard legdrop to give Edge the pin. Eddie not realizing what was going on behind him gives us a great visual.

Rating: B. This didn't have the time to work as well as their other stuff but these people are incapable of having a bad match at this point. Mysterio and Edge vs. Benoit and Angle in a rematch makes perfect sense after their masterpiece on Sunday. I'm sure the Guerreros will get in on the titles soon enough because they're too good to leave out.

Undertaker is looking for Lesnar. Why would that feud continue?

Video on the Cell, narrated by Paul Heyman, about how Lesnar owns him now.

Here's a limping Undertaker to call Lesnar out. He gets Heyman instead because Lesnar has no interest in hearing what Undertaker has to say. Scratch that though as Lesnar comes out and gets right in the ring anyway. So why was Heyman necessary there? Everyone has told Undertaker that his hand injury cost him the match but the reality is that Lesnar had his number on Sunday. Five years ago the hand wouldn't have mattered but it mattered on Sunday.

Now the purists are going to complain about Lesnar bringing in Undertaker's personal life (that sounds rather out of character for Undertaker) but he understands head games. He's fought and beaten the best but Sunday, Lesnar was the better man. Undertaker goes to leave when Brock stops him and takes the mic. As for Sara, Brock needed an edge but he's supposed to be all about business. I guess that's an apology and leaning towards a face turn for Lesnar?

Brock and Heyman leave but Heyman stops and nods in respect to Undertaker. We're not done though as Undertaker says that after twelve years, his body is....going to be interrupted by Big Show. He can't believe what he's hearing because it's been him beating Undertaker up for the last two years, not Lesnar. Undertaker says he'd rather be a broken down has been than a giant never was.

It's time to leave again but this time Big Show follows and eventually passes Undertaker. Ever the moron (he is a face you know), Undertaker poses on the edge of the stage. Big Show, gorilla press, crash (onto what looks like a big pad that we never get a good look at). This took WAY too long to set up Big Show vs. Undertaker.

Post break some of the locker room has come out to check on Undertaker. Stephanie has now decided that she's a medical expert and is bossing the EMT's around. Undertaker is slowly put on a stretcher as Stephanie threatens the medical people if they don't get him out of here faster. Eventually he gets off the stretcher and stumbles around with Arn Anderson shouting "LET US HELP YOU TAKE!" Agents eventually help walk him to the back.

And now, Dawn Marie! She tells Al that they should say goodbye now before turning around. See, she's only been with a few men and he was the most passionate. Kissing ensues.

John Cena vs. Billy Kidman

Rematch from last week when Cena cheated to win. A dropkick puts Cena on the floor to start but a drive into the barricade has Kidman in trouble. Back in and a spinebuster gives Cena two but Kidman hits some more dropkicks. A middle rope back elbow to the jaw drops Cena and a hurricanrana (with a handful of rope) puts John away. So to recap we have two cheaters with .500 record in recent weeks. The WWE formula in a nutshell.

Cena lays Kidman out post match and shows some fire. I mean it's

some slightly extinguished fire because he just lost but that's common around here.

Lesnar gets interviewed and wants to know where Funaki is. Anyway if Big Show wants a fight, he's not hard to find.

Eddie apologizes to Benoit for what's happened between them and offers to show some respect. Benoit smells an ulterior motive.

Big Show goes into Lesnar's locker room. Heyman tries to talk things down but Brock says Show can have a title shot.

Kurt Angle vs. Chris Benoit

For a broken trophy. Angle takes over on the mat to start and Benoit looks annoyed at not being able to sit out on him. Kurt does it again until Benoit elbows him in the face for the break. A hard clothesline cuts Benoit off and a belly to back gets two. They're not really following up on stuff here as it's one move and then a breather before they do anything else.

Benoit speeds things up a bit with a clothesline to the back of the head, followed by some rolling German suplexes. It's hard not to cringe watching their heads slam off the mat like that. Angle reverses the third suplex into two of his own but the Angle Slam is reversed into a release German suplex. One heck of a Swan Dive gets two so we hit the Crossface.

Angle rolls him over and reverses into the ankle lock but Benoit small packages him for two. The Angle Slam connects for the same and it's back to the ankle. That's reversed back into the Crossface but Angle reverses that as well. Benoit goes up and gets belly to bellied right back down....but here are the Guerreros for a distraction so Chavo can hit Angle with a belt, giving Benoit an easy pin. Benoit might not have seen what happened.

Rating: B. The match was good but they didn't have nearly enough time to do what they're capable of pulling off. These two have some of the best chemistry in wrestling and even if we've seen it multiple times, it's cool to see them bust out all those ridiculous counters. The ending is annoying but if it gives us more Eddie greatness, I think I can live with it.

Angle pops up and hits a quick Angle Slam on Benoit, followed by breaking the trophy. I'm glad some things never change.

Overall Rating: C+. The wrestling was good here but this one depends

on your taste in stories. Lesnar vs. Big Show is just depressing, Dawn Marie and the Wilsons works for an obvious reason and the tag stuff is outstanding. If you can stand some of the slow paced stories and at times dumb ideas (What is Dawn doing this for?), you can get to the excellent wrestling. Unfortunately, Big Show coming in at such a high place isn't going to help anything as I'd be more than fine with Lesnar vs. most of the Smackdown Six. The good stuff is REALLY good right now though and that's what matters most. Well that and no Katie Vick.

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Smackdown – March 21, 2017: Oh Shane....Just Stop

Smackdown

Date: March 21, 2017

Location: Mohegan Sun Arena, Uncasville, Connecticut

Commentators: John Bradshaw Layfield, David Otunga, Tom Phillips

We've got two shows left before Wrestlemania XXXIII and it's not likely that any brand new ideas are going to be added to the card. Odds are we'll have Dean Ambrose vs. Baron Corbin confirmed and we're guaranteed to see American Alpha defending the Smackdown Tag

Team Titles against the Usos. Let's get to it.

We open with a long recap of Shane McMahon vs. AJ Styles from last week, including Daniel Bryan firing AJ.

Bryan is in his office when AJ comes in. Shane isn't here tonight but Bryan warns AJ to watch his steps. Styles says tonight, everyone is going to find out what it means to beat up Shane McMahon.

Mauro Ranallo is out sick this week. This is starting to get a bit suspicious.

Here's AJ to the ring for a chat. It's been seven days since he did what he did to Shane and he doesn't feel a bit wrong about his actions. Shane's challenge is accepted because AJ wants to be part of Wrestlemania but the question is why would Shane want to face him at Wrestlemania. As for tonight, he's going to be waiting for Shane to arrive again and we'll see if it's even worse than last week.

Baron Corbin asks Bryan if Dean Ambrose has accepted his Wrestlemania challenge. Bryan hasn't heard from Ambrose in weeks so tonight, Corbin can face Randy Orton.

Tag Team Titles: American Alpha vs. Usos

Alpha is defending after the Usos beat them last week. Jordan takes Jimmy down to the mat to start and the twins are in early trouble. A double clothesline sends both Usos outside and it's all champions as we take a break. Back with Gable fighting out of a chinlock but getting sent chest first into the buckle ala Bret Hart.

Chad breaks away but gets sent to the floor instead making the tag. That's good for a nine count before Gable is put in the Tree of Woe. Of course he powers up to avoid a charge and the hot tag brings in Jordan. An Angle Slam (they're just trolling us now) gets two on Jey but Jimmy escapes the Steiner Bulldog.

Back to back superkicks puts both champs down and the Superfly Splash is good for a very near fall. Jordan breaks up another splash and Jey is superplexed down. The Steiner Bulldog is only good for two as Jimmy makes the save. I completely bought that as the finish. With the other three down on the floor, Gable moonsaults down onto

everyone. Back in and Jordan gets crotched on the middle rope, allowing Jimmy to superkick him down for the pin and the titles at 12:32.

Rating: B+. This was great stuff with some really strong false finishes. They also really surprised me as I didn't think the Usos had a chance after the Superfly Splash was only good for two. It's not like American Alpha has done anything with the titles (not their fault) so maybe changing the belts can give them a shot in the arm for all of a few days. I just hope they don't put the rematch on Wrestlemania because the card just does not have room for it.

AJ is waiting in the parking lot.

Luke Harper wants Bray Wyatt next week.

Miz and Maryse have a special never before seen episode of Total Bellas. It's Maryse as both Bellas (a really, really good look for her) and of course mocking everything the two of them do. Maryse as Nikki: "Of course I'm Nikki! I'M THE ONE WITH THE HAT!" Maryse as Brie: "BRIE MODE!" Cue Miz as John Cena, who has a bunch of rules like no singing. Since Nikki has followed a rule, he'll pop a question to her, meaning he has a big balloon labeled "the question" which he pops.

Again, I have no idea why I'm supposed to boo Miz and Maryse. If you watch the show, which is supposed to be REALITY, this is exactly what Cena and the Bellas are like. Cena is a control freak who has a ridiculous set of rules and the Bellas are two of the dumbest people who have ever lived. Why am I supposed to cheer for them?

Baron Corbin vs. Randy Orton

Corbin shoulders him down to start but gets sent into the corner for some uppercuts and right hands. A hard whip into the post keeps Orton down though and it's off to a break. Back with Corbin sliding underneath the ropes and back in for his clothesline. Orton grabs the powerslam (that's always good looking) but can't hit the elevated DDT.

Instead they go outside with Orton sending him into various metal

objects like a good viper is supposed to do. Now the DDT hits but of course it's too early for the first RKO, meaning Corbin gets two off Deep Six instead. They head outside again (happening too often) and Corbin goes into the steps. Back in again and here's Ambrose for the distraction, setting up the RKO for the pin at 12:49.

Rating: C+. Pretty good stuff here as Corbin has the size to make his offense look good against someone like Orton. There was no doubt that Orton was going over here (save for a surprise by Wyatt) because there's no reason to have him lose so close to his biggest match of the year.

Corbin vs. Ambrose for the title is official at Wrestlemania.

Orton is in the back talking about his match when the lights start to flicker. He tells Bray to show himself but here are an army of people in sheep masks to beat Orton down. Bray appears and seems to bless Orton with a red X on the end. Wyatt kneels in front of him and says Orton changed him by exposing his one weakness. The power of Sister Abigail lives inside him forever and it's time to sing.

Breezango vs. John Cena

Tyler Breeze is dressed as Nikki Bella, which is far too common of a thing tonight. Before the match, Fandango gives Cena fashion tickets and introduces Breeze as his muscle. This brings out the real Nikki. The bell rings and Cena does his normal stuff but here's Breeze to the apron. Nikki comes in to spear him down and hits the Rack Attack 2.0. Stereo STF's give us simultaneous taps at 1:29. For a Southpaw Regional Wrestling related match, I've seen worse.

Carmella vs. Becky Lynch

Natalya is on commentary and comes in to hit Carmella for the DQ.

Post match Mickie James and Alexa Bliss come out for the big brawl with Bliss being the last woman standing.

Time for more Total Bellas with Miz (as Cena) reading his affections for Maryse (as Nikki) off cue cards and giving her a diamond.....Dallas Page yoga set. As we see the kitchen (the TV kitchen where the unseen servants prepare food off camera so we can

feel relateable to the show you see), Miz gives her a WWE ring ("It's to scale!"). Later, in the bedroom, which is TOTALLY where Cena sleeps, Miz agrees to tie the knot. On his shoes you see. Maryse is sad to end things. These are hilarious and makes me cheer for Miz and Maryse even more.

AJ is still waiting but is disappointed when Rhyno and Heath Slater arrive. With fifteen minutes left. Why is Shane even bothering to show up at this point?

Actually never mind as Shane is in the arena, which doesn't please AJ. Back from a break with Shane, sporting one heck of a black eye, calling AJ out. We see Styles making the long walk to the ring and he takes his time going through the curtain. AJ wants to apologize but Shane beats on him anyway. Styles suplexes him into the barricade and loads up the announcers' table, only to have Shane hit him in the head with a monitor. Shane goes up top for the big elbow...which MIGHT have grazed AJ's forearm. The fans call BS on it as Shane slowly gets up to end the show.

Overall Rating: C+. As is almost always the case this time of year, the wrestling wasn't the point and if you think it was, you're missing the point. This was all about setting up Wrestlemania (and cracking me up with the Total Bellas stuff) and they did so on a bunch of matches. The Shane elbow looked horrible but I don't think anyone was expecting him to really be able to pull that off after last year's performance. This show did its job, which is more important right now.

Results

Usos b. American Alpha – Superkick to Jordan

Randy Orton b. Baron Corbin – RKO

John Cena b. Fandango – STF

Carmella b. Becky Lynch via DQ when Natalya interfered

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