

# Smackdown – April 9, 2015: He Really Is Awesome

## Smackdown

Date: April 9, 2015

Location: American Airlines Center, Dallas, Texas

Commentators: Jerry Lawler, Byron Saxton, Tom Phillips

For the second week in a row, the advertised big match is Sheamus/Bad News Barrett vs. Dolph Ziggler/Daniel Bryan and that's really all there is to talk about here. Raw ended with Orton becoming #1 contender to Rollins' title after beating Ryback and Reigns in a triple threat. Tonight we might see the Extreme Rules card take more shape as Smackdown gets to announce a match every now and then. Let's get to it.

Opening sequence.

Here's Daniel Bryan to open things up. He says it was one of the highlights of his career to climb that ladder and win the Intercontinental Title at Wrestlemania. However, the actions of the man make the title (which says Intercontinental Heavyweight Wrestling Champion. I bet Vince is FURIOUS at the belt over that), so Bryan wants to defend this title against anyone who wants a shot.

That's what he did after Wrestlemania against Dolph Ziggler, but Sheamus come out looking all stupid with a Brogue Kick to the face. So last week he fought Sheamus, but somewhere in the match he saw Wade (first time hearing that name in a while) Barrett...and now we all see Barrett on the ramp. He says he ended Bryan's magical week with a Bull Hammer, and the fiendish gleam on Barrett's face during that line is great. This brings out Sheamus to say he followed it up with a Brogue Kick.

Sheamus tolerates Barrett because he isn't a munchkin like Bryan, so the two of them should come down there and give Bryan a beating because they can. They get in the ring but Ziggler comes out to call Sheamus the offspring of Captain Jack Sparrow and Carrot Top. The fight is about to be on but here's Big Show because ruining main events just isn't enough

for him anymore. Big Show wants in on this beatdown but here's Roman Reigns to even things up. A quick fight likely makes the tag match a six man. I'll take that over a spontaneous match. They've got something with this tag team feud with the title thrown in.

### Tyson Kidd/Cesaro vs. New Day

Non-title with the New Day getting booed out of the building on the entrances. It's a good sign that WWE has quickly caught onto the reality that no one likes them and is already starting to turn them. There's an idea to the team but it's just working as presented. Big E. wants everyone to get up and clap along with them so that's exactly what they do, but with the SUCKS part added in. That makes Big E. think something has to change and that the fans have to love them. Woods is the odd man out here.

Kofi and Kidd get things going with Tyson taking him into the corner for some forearm before it's off to Cesaro. He mocks the clapping and gets the crowd going again as the champions are the default good guys here. Kofi low bridges Cesaro to the floor and Big E. launches Kofi to the floor to take out the champs as we take a break. Back with Big E. suplexing Kidd but needing a tag. Cesaro breaks up a tag though and rag dolls Big E. into a gutwrench suplex. That's scary strength.

Back to Tyson for some knees to the back as Lawler is talking more than I've heard him do in months. Big E. finally shoves Cesaro off but misses a charge into the post for two. There's the Cesaro Swing into the dropkick from Tyson for two more with Kofi making the save. E. knocks Cesaro out of the air and makes the hot tag so Kofi can clean house with dropkicks and shots to the head. The Boom Drop sets up more clapping and sucking as everything breaks down. Kidd grabs a fisherman's neckbreaker for the pin on Kofi at 10:00.

**Rating:** C. Not much to see here but it could have been far worse. They need to turn New Day soon and thankfully we seem well on the way to that point. Cesaro and Kidd are starting to establish themselves as a really good heel team, which is something we haven't seen in a long time.

Recap of Monday's triple threat and the events that led up to it.

Free Network month skill. Remember when you had to pay for that?

### Curtis Axel vs. Neville

In case you didn't get enough of it the first time ten days ago. Axel wants to know what Neville is going to do when Axelmania runs wild on him. Neville flips around to start and grabs an armdrag but gets caught with a knee to the ribs. Neville's front flips lead to Axel charging into a boot in the corner, followed by a running forearm. The spinning dive over the ropes takes Axel out again and it's a slam followed by the Red Arrow for the pin at 2:17. That's the same match they had on Raw after Wrestlemania.

Natalya, Cameron and Alicia Fox insist they didn't try to con Kane into the Divas battle royal on Raw. Naomi deserves the shot and all but Cameron says she's going to win. Alicia asks how long Cameron has been here and it's been THREE YEARS??? She's this bad after THREE YEARS??? Alicia and Natalya get in a fight.

### Alicia Fox vs. Natalya

Cameron is guest referee so we can see her be horrible at something besides wrestling. To her credit, she found a referee's cut off top and changed in the span of a commercial. It's a catfight to start and they trade slaps until Cameron breaks up a fight next to the ropes. Natalya does her step over into the dropkick spot for two but Fox hits something like the Helluva Kick to take over. Fox's northern lights suplex gets the same and we hit the chinlock. Back up and a cross body gets two for Natalya and the Sharpshooter gets the win at 3:41.

**Rating:** D+. As you may have noticed, there was a lot of play by play here. Here's the reason why: these people have no characters. Cameron is close with the stuck up chick who only cares about herself, but Alicia is just Alicia and Natalya is just a veteran and serious wrestler. There's nowhere to go with those characters as there's nothing that stands out about them. The same is true for most of the Divas. Even Summer is just there as the dancing stuff is gone. I'm not saying we need to go back to the days of GLOW, but something would be nice.

Cameron lays both of them out with DDTs post match.

Bray Wyatt narrates a video about Erick Rowan, who was a child in a man's world. How could society do what they've done to him? They took away Rowan's innocence and we're all guilty, even though we don't know it. Bray has fixed him and now Rowan is free. We might have seen this video when the Family split up last year. If nothing else it's cool to see a video like this to set up the matches later. What happened to the days of promos to set stuff up? It doesn't have to have high production values. Just a quick promo from backstage would be fine.

Here's Bray in the ring for his match but first he talks about remembering the days when Erick Rowan was lost. Society saw all of Rowan's flaws but Bray saw possibilities. "Yes Erick, you too can job to Big Show." The fans give Bray the WHAT treatment as he talks about being Rowan's brother. He fixed Erick like you fix a broken toy and then set him free. Society has returned Rowan to Bray and he's broken all over again. Tonight Bray is going to teach Rowan one last lesson: no matter what, trust no one because evil is inside of us all. If he'll destroy someone he called his brother, imagine what he'll do to you.

### Bray Wyatt vs. Erick Rowan

Bray tells him to bring it on to start so Erick runs over him to knock Wyatt outside. Back in and Bray grabs him by the beard but you don't do that to a former genius. What you do instead is send Rowan into the post and then knock him off the apron and into the barricade as we take a break.

Back with Rowan fighting out of a chinlock but the backsplash hits knees. Rowan hits some running splashes in the corner for two but Bray rolls outside when Erick goes up top. That works better for Bray as he takes Rowan's head off with a clothesline and follows up with the backsplash. The Rock Bottom doesn't work but Wyatt takes him down with the flying body block. Sister Abigail ends Erick at 9:34.

**Rating:** D+. Just a squash here for the most part but I like that they're giving the Wyatts what seems to be some closure. Either that or they're repackaging Rowan into something else. I was interested in the genius

gimmick but that was sacrificed on the alter of Big Show, next to Hideo Itami. Bray needs something to do now that the Undertaker match is over. I'd love to see him actually win a feud against a top name for a change too.

Bray cradles Rowan's head post match.

It's time for a special movie edition of MizTV. We see the trailer for Marine 4 but before Miz can get anywhere else, his co-star Summer Rae cuts him off. They get in an argument over who was the real star of the movie with Summer calling him a co-star and Miz calling her a featured extra. Summer brings up Mizdow eliminating him from the battle royal and the fans chant his name.

Miz asks if the fans know the backstory of Damien Sandow. He was fired twice until Miz saved his career and gave him a purpose. Cue Mizdow but Miz cuts him off and says Mizdow is going to go on a steep decline. These people can't get him on track but Miz is capable and willing to because he's a charitable person. He'll do it for an apology and everything can go back to the way it was.

All Mizdow has to do to get everything back is shake Miz's hand and apologize. Hey now, quit adding things to the rules. Miz asks whose hands Mizdow wants his career in, because the people will drop him in a heartbeat. Damien apologizes....for not doing this earlier and the beating is on. Miz leaves so Mizdow kisses Summer, who seems to like it.

Video on WWE taking over the Bay Area for Wrestlemania weekend.

Daniel Bryan/Roman Reigns/Dolph Ziggler vs. Big Show/Sheamus/Bad News Barrett

I guess because the original four needed star power to carry them? Sheamus and Ziggler get things going with the Irishman taking Dolph into the corner for a right hand to the ribs from Big Show. A big chop puts Ziggler down as Dolph is firmly into his standard style. Dolph dropkicks the knee out and gets two off the running DDT, only to get chopped out of the corner. Barrett comes in for the first time and slaps on a chinlock but the fans are already cheering for Dolph to get out.

Winds of Change gets two but Ziggler flips over Sheamus and dives into the tag to Bryan. The YES Kicks have Sheamus in trouble and Daniel backdrops him to the floor for the Flying Goat. They're moving in this one so far. As Bryan throws Sheamus back in, Barrett gets up and kicks Daniel in the head as we take a break. Back with Bryan getting slammed by Big Show and a huge elbow getting two. Barrett comes in for another chinlock as the fans sound like they want Roman.

Show breaks up a hot tag attempt but his chokeslam is countered into the YES Lock. This time it's Sheamus making the save and trying a superplex, only to get knocked off by Bryan. Daniel's cross body is caught but he spins into a DDT and makes the hot tag to Reigns. Roman cleans house with Superman Punches as everything breaks down. Ziggler and Sheamus go to the floor and Bryan hits Show with the running knee. The spear out of the corner gives Reigns the pin on Barrett at 15:18.

**Rating:** B-. Pretty good match here with everyone moving quickly and putting in some efforts. It's interesting to see that Reigns is back to his old style and looking cool after not having the Wrestlemania main event looming over him. I think people are going to like him better when he's not out there against the most popular guy in the company and now that he's been able to give us something to connect to. Now if only they could get him completely away from Big Show.

**Overall Rating:** C+. This was a pretty basic but well done show with decent wrestling and some midcard storyline development. That's about all you can ask for from Smackdown these days as the illusion of the move back to Thursdays making the show matter is long gone. I do like that tag feud revolving around the Intercontinental Title though as it's something that could go somewhere if they let it get interesting. Not bad this week but nothing great.

### Results

Cesaro/Tyson Kidd b. New Day – Fisherman's neckbreaker to Kingston

Neville b. Curtis Axel – Red Arrow

Natalya b. Alicia Fox – Sharpshooter

Bray Wyatt b. Erick Rowan – Sister Abigail

Roman Reigns/Daniel Bryan/Dolph Ziggler b. Sheamus/Big Show/Bad News Barrett – Spear to Barrett

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## **Smackdown Moving To USA In January 2016**

That's quite the upgrade for them. It's also a good sign for WWE as NBC wants another show on a bigger network. SyFy never fit for a wrestling show anyway.

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## **Smackdown – April 2, 2015: So Long, Farewell, Auf**

# Wiedersehen Wrestlemania

## Smackdown

Date: April 2, 2015

Location: Save Mart Center, Fresno, California

Commentators: Tom Phillips, Byron Saxton, Jerry Lawler

It was nice while it lasted but this is the final part of the big Wrestlemania week. Tonight is likely going to be the last major shows for now as Smackdown will go back to being the supplemental show it's been for years. There isn't much in the way of fallout tonight either as Raw ended without a huge bang. Let's get to it.

Opening sequence.

Here are Rollins and company for a chat. Rollins loves it when a plan works out, like when he cashed in Money in the Bank this past Sunday to become WWE World Heavyweight Champion. Now he's living a new life and doing things like flying across the country to be on the Today Show, then flying back across the country to face Brock Lesnar. That gave him some serious jet lag though and it wasn't time for Lesnar to get his rematch. If Lesnar hadn't lost his head, maybe he could have had that title shot here tonight.

Cue Randy Orton, who says he remembers everything over the last few months. He played the Authority like a fiddle (a very stupid fiddle) before he got to rip Rollins' head off with an RKO at Wrestlemania. More importantly though, he's owed a rematch for the WWE from last year's Wrestlemania and doesn't like how that belt looks around Rollins' waist. Seth wants to know why Randy is dwelling in the past, because he is the future.

Only Rollins gets to decide when the title is defended, which makes Orton insult the Stooges, Big Show and Kane for some reason. At least Big Show won at Wrestlemania while Kane wasn't even there (he was in the battle royal). What does the Director of Operations do anyway? The way Orton sees it, Kane has gone from the big red monster to Big Red Riding Hood. Kane makes Orton vs. Big Show and offers Orton a potential title shot if



he can win.

### Big Show vs. Randy Orton

Orton quickly gets shouldered down but avoids an elbow drop. Show tries to get to the apron but winds up getting pulled into the elevated DDT. Cue the Stooges to break up an RKO attempt for the DQ at 1:19.

Everyone comes in but Randy fights back at Rollins, only to get chokeslammed by Kane. Ryback runs out for the save and it's RKO's all around.

We recap Bryan vs. Ziggler from Raw and Sheamus returning after the match. Who in the world thought that hair would be called anything but stupid? I mean, they had to know that reaction was coming right?

Sheamus vs. Bryan tonight, because they can't keep the matches they set up on Monday straight for twenty four hours.

### Natalya vs. Naomi

The Bellas are on commentary. Naomi's inset interview says she can beat Nikki and win the title but she'll prove herself until she gets a shot. Feeling out process to start with both girls missing dropkicks but nipping up at the same time. That's rather impressive in Natalya's full body outfit. Natalya puts her down for the step on the back into the basement dropkick for two as the Bellas question Naomi's heart. We hit an abdominal stretch for a bit before Naomi is sent to the apron for a kick to Natalya's head. She puts Natalya in a headscissors but drives her head first into the mat instead of flipping her over for the pin at 2:20.

Rollins apologizes to Kane for the RKO but Kane likes the sound of Orton challenging for the title at Extreme Rules. Seth tries to talk him out of it but stops to comment on the smell of the office. He leaves and we hear a toilet flush and Ambrose walks in. Harper vs. Ambrose later tonight because of the use of a bathroom. Seriously.

We get a sitdown interview with Roman Reigns, who talks about how hard it was to step in the ring with the Beast. He proved he was willing to take a beating and showed he could get up after a bunch of suplexes. Reigns

talks about Suplex City but he survived the wave from Lesnar. He's thinking about buying a condo in Suplex City because Lesnar wasn't ready for him. Brock didn't have an answer for all the Superman Punches and they changed his appearance permanently.

The fight changed both of their lives and he'd love to do it again. Saxton asks about Rollins cashing in and Reigns says it crushed him. He was on top of the mountain and Rollins took it away when Reigns was so close. Thirty more seconds and a spear would have won him the World Title. He's beaten Rollins before so he can, he has and he will beat him again. I liked this more than any other interview I've heard from Reigns in a long time as it makes him much easier to relate to now that he's been humbled a bit. Good interview.

### Miz vs. R-Truth

Truth raps to the ring. I don't remember him doing that for the last few weeks. The first ten seconds are spent with Miz taking off his sunglasses and the second ten seconds are spent on WE WANT MIZDOW chants. Truth shoves Miz off a headlock and hits the Lie Detector. The ax kick misses though and the Skull Crushing Finale is good for the pin at 1:22. Welcome back to Jobber Town Truth.

Mizdow runs out for a Skull Crushing Finale on Miz and puts on the sunglasses.

Here's John Cena to one of the loudest positive reactions I've seen for him in a long time (yeah I know it's Smackdown). Cena talks about how hard Rusev fought to stay undefeated for a year but seeing Rusev as the US Champion made him sick. It wasn't due to being Russian, but because of all the things Rusev said about America. The interesting thing is that Rusev was the American dream: he showed up and fought to become everything he wanted to be, but then he thought America sucked. "WELL AMERICA DOESN'T SUCK!"

From now on, this US Title represents opportunity. Cena says bring him your outcasts, your future stars or anyone that the Authority says is a B+ player. He'll fight anyone from Brock Lesnar to the Bushwhackers (hey now, they're Hall of Famers) because every Monday night, there's going to

be an open challenge for the US Title. Now THAT is the best news that has happened for the title in a long time.

Cue Rusev and Lana, the latter of whom sounds like she's lost a bit of her accent. She says Cena is half the man Rusev is because this is Rusev's world. Rusev cuts her off by reaching out his hand for the microphone. With a glare at Lana, he says he didn't lose at Wrestlemania so he's still America's champion.

In Rusev's world, people like Cena have opportunities as well: surrender the title or be crushed at Extreme Rules. Cena thinks Rusev is drunk but if the Russian wants a fight, Cena isn't going anywhere. Rusev wants to wait for Extreme Rules and calls for the flag drop but nothing happens. Instead Cena points and the American flag drops. I'm kind of stunned it took that long to do that. Cena agrees to the match at Extreme Rules. The announcers keep pushing Rusev as the Russian Tank, which isn't a bad name for him.

We look at Sheamus attacking Bryan again. The tag match is off due to Zigler being too banged up to compete. And they didn't know that when they announced the tag match?

#### Luke Harper vs. Dean Ambrose

No entrance for Harper. Dean goes right after him in the corner and a middle rope elbow to the jaw. A basement clothesline gets two so Harper just hits him in the throat to take over. It turns into a slugout (shocking I know) until Luke catches a cross body and throws him over the top as we take a break. Back with Dean's suicide dive being caught so he nails a clothesline on the floor.

The top rope standing elbow gets two but Luke kicks his head off to take over again. Dean escapes the powerbomb and low bridges Harper to the floor. Luke quickly sends him into the timekeeper's area and loads up the table but Dean dives off the apron with a clothesline. He can't powerbomb Luke through the table though so Luke shows him how it's done. The bell doesn't ring but I'm assuming it was a DQ win for Dean (or a double countout) at about 8:00.

**Rating:** C. Nice back and forth brawl here with both guys hitting each other really hard. Harper is great in the old Kane role from about 2004 as the midcard monster and Ambrose is fine as the guy who keeps getting beaten up and coming back for more. If nothing else it's nice to have a match be long enough to rate.

The Prime Time Players make fun of the New Day, with Titus spraying himself with water and shouting about FEELING THE POWER. Big E. sounds like he has a possum stuck in his throat, Kofi has a weird looking chest and Woods has bad hair. They do the New Day chant and crickets can be heard. If nothing else, I love the Prime Time Players shirts based on the old Prime Time Wrestling logo.

### Sheamus vs. Daniel Bryan

Non-title. Sheamus has new music with a slower pace and no lyrics. After seeing the "I'm back" line for the third time tonight, the fans tell Sheamus that he looks stupid. Sheamus encourages them and says he doesn't see any real men around here. All the fan favorites are too vertically challenged and he's going to crush all the underdogs. So he's Batista from last year? Barrett is on commentary.

Sheamus shoves him into the corner to start and shrugs off Bryan's kick to the ribs. Bryan has some more success with the leg but Sheamus drops him with a clothesline. As Sheamus fires off uppercuts, Barrett says he never lost the title and is owed a rematch. That makes Rock, Orton, Bryan, Rusev and Barrett who are owed automatic rematches. It's almost like they're completely overusing a plot device.

Bryan scores with some kicks to send Sheamus outside but he comes back in for an Irish Curse to send Bryan to the floor as well. We come back from a break with Sheamus loading up a suplex but flipping Bryan over instead of going down with him. You might remember that as the Crash Landing from the final month of WCW. Sheamus: "ARE YOU NOT ENTERTAINED???"

Bryan tries some forearm to no avail and gets thrown hard into the corner. Some posing allows Bryan to get a breather though and he moonsaults over Sheamus before dropping him with the running clothesline. A backdrop sends Sheamus to the floor for the Flying Goat. The missile

dropkick and it's time for the YES Kicks. As usual the big one misses but Sheamus can't hit White Noise.

Bryan sends him into the buckle and kicks the ropes to knock Sheamus back, only to get crotched on the top. The ten forearms are broken up as Bryan grabs Sheamus' arm. Why did no one ever think of that before? Sheamus knocks him to the floor and onto the announcers' table, busting Bryan open. Barrett hits a Bull Hammer behind the referee's back for a countout at 15:33.

**Rating:** C+. This wasn't as good as I was expecting as Sheamus is still working the kinks out of his new character. He isn't doing much besides big power moves, but at least he's getting on the crowd's nerves like he should be. Bryan was doing his usual stuff as well, but the match just never got going like you would expect it to.

**Overall Rating:** C-. Well it was nice while it lasted but everything is back to normal in WWE. There wasn't much to see here other than the announcement of a B level pay per view main event and another rematch from Wrestlemania. The show wasn't terrible, but it really falls off a cliff after the hot shows earlier in the week.

### Results

Randy Orton b. Big Show via DQ when Joey Mercury and Jamie Noble interfered

Naomi b. Natalya – Headscissors driver

Miz b. R-Truth – Skull Crushing Finale

Dean Ambrose b. Luke Harper via DQ when Harper powerbombed him through a table

Sheamus b. Daniel Bryan via countout

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# Smackdown – March 26, 2015: Ladies' Night

## Smackdown

Date: March 26, 2015

Location: Staples Center, Los Angeles, California

Attendance: 17,540

Commentators: Jerry Lawler, Michael Cole

It's the final show before the big one and that means we're in for a very different kind of Smackdown. This is likely to be a studio heavy show with a lot of video packages, but it's not like Smackdown means much in the first place. The main event is a big eight man tag with most of the people in some of the bigger matches. Let's get to it.

Opening sequence.

Jimmy Uso vs. Cesaro vs. Fernando vs. Big E.

One fall to a finish and no tags. It's a big brawl to start with Jimmy hitting the running Umaga attack on Cesaro but Big E. suplexes Jimmy and Fernando down. Big E. keeps going by throwing them all into the same corner and driving in shoulders. Fernando is left alone with Big E and the Warrior Splash gets two. Jimmy comes back in to kick Big E. in the head and Fernando hits a big dive to take out E. and Cesaro. That's not enough for Jimmy as he dives on all three for a huge crash.

Back in and Cesaro loads up the apron superplex on Fernando but Jimmy gets in to help him, only to have Big E. German suplex both guys to put all four down in something like a Tower of Doom. Cool stuff indeed. Cesaro and Fernando gets back up with the masked man diving into the Swing. A Backstabber breaks up the Neutralizer but Jimmy kicks Big E. down, allowing E. to hit the Big Ending on Cesaro. Jimmy nails the Superfly Splash on Cesaro for the pin at 4:53. Well that was....short.

**Rating:** C. Total insanity here with nothing resembling structure. That being said, what else can you ask for in a match like this? The fourway match on Sunday is going to be nothing but a big spotfest so why not just have the half sized version here? That Tower of Doom was cool stuff though and one big spot is more than enough in a five minute match.

We go live to Axxess with Byron Saxton and Renee Young. After talking about all the autographs that will be signed there, we go to a clip from ESPN on Monday where Brock Lesnar officially announced that he re-signed with WWE.

Long video on Reigns vs. Lesnar with Reigns saying he has to rise to the occasion and beat his biggest test.

Another video on the Intercontinental Title ladder match but with a different focus, as it looks back at some classics for the title at Wrestlemania. Some of the other ladder matches get a focus as well.

We look back at AJ and Paige brawling on Monday after the Bellas got under their skin.

We get a cool video of Rusev talking about how he's broken Cena and how it means he's broken America. By contrast, Cena promises to fight back for America and we see him getting a lot more intense to get the rematch at Wrestlemania, only to get laid out again on Raw.

Video on Rollins vs. Orton which focuses on Orton being the future ten years ago and Rollins being today's future. Unfortunately it also talks about Orton infiltrating the Authority and beating Rollins down. It didn't make sense then, it didn't make sense when he explained it, and it doesn't make sense now.

Here's AJ for the big showdown with Paige. She says we've seen her as everything from the GM to everyone's girlfriend to the longest reigning Divas Champion of all time. Paige and AJ both love being Divas Champion but at Wrestlemania, AJ is going to stand up to the Bellas and give them what they deserve. The question is whether AJ will be doing it alone.

Cue Paige who says AJ can't just skip past what happened on Raw. It's been almost a year since Paige debuted and took the Divas Title from AJ, which is why AJ doesn't want her to have it back. AJ says she gets what she wants and she knows Paige is out of her mind too. At Wrestlemania, they can't let the Kardashians win. They shake hands but here are the Bellas with a rebuttal.

Nikki calls them the compulsive liar and the backstabber but AJ's ability to make everyone believe her doesn't work on the Bellas. AJ doesn't seem to care but Nikki says Brock Lesnar has worked more days in the last year than AJ has. Nikki has been running the division for a year and the two girls in the ring are just like every other girl in the back. "Who doesn't want to be a Bella?" Paige: "Who wants to be a D-list celebrity and a failed actress?" Paige says they like being the freaks and geeks and the girls that beat the Bellas at Wrestlemania. The Bellas are ready for Sunday. Good promo, but why isn't the title on the line?

Video on HHH's rise to the top of WWE and how he's come to dominate the company. Sting on the other hand is the face of WCW and the one guy that has never been in WWE, making it a huge dream match. I really wish they had decided on the story. It seemed like a rehash of WCW vs. WWE but the interesting story is that HHH and the Authority can't use their bullying tactics on Sting because he's the one guy pure enough and a big enough legend for it to have no effect. Sting tried to get away from the WCW thing and even called it ridiculous, but Stephanie decided that's what it should be about and she runs this place right?

The next recap is on Undertaker vs. Bray Wyatt, with Undertaker finally coming off a loss at Wrestlemania and Bray wanting to replace him as the new face of fear. This is a really easy story but Bryan can only say the same thing so many times without Undertaker showing up. That same problem has plagued this show in multiple matches.



John Cena/Daniel Bryan/Roman Reigns/Mark Henry vs. Seth Rollins/Bray Wyatt/Big Show/Kane

Time for the token main event to make it clear that we're watching a wrestling show. Isn't Wyatt as part of the Authority kind of against what his character stands for? Reigns shoves Rollins around to start and explodes out of the corner with a clothesline. He adds eight more clotheslines in the corner and a nice tilt-a-whirl slam for no cover as Rollins is in early trouble.

Wyatt comes in but eats a right hand as well and gets Stunned over the top rope. Reigns brings back the Apron Kick and it's all good guys so far. Off to Kane, who I guess is supposed to be more intimidating. He charges into Reigns' boot in the corner and a middle rope clothesline gets two so it's off to Big Show.

Henry wants in and gets the tag, giving us the battle of the giants. As expected, this goes badly for Henry and the heels stomp away on the fallen strongman. He looks like a fat turtle on the mat. Back to Kane for more stomping and the tall men take turns chopping Henry down. A superkick stops Mark's comeback and we take a break.

Back with Cena coming in to clean house but Bray does his flying body block to put him down. The giants take turns on Cena this time as the dueling chants start up. Wyatt gets in a cheap shot as Rollins comes in to keep the bad guys in control. John wins a slugout with Rollins but Seth flips out of the AA and kicks Cena down again. The backsplash hits but a second attempt misses for Bray.

Rollins breaks up another tag attempt with a sleeper and jumps on Cena's back for good measure. That's fine with Cena as he drives Rollins into the corner, only to get caught with a Blockbuster for two. Big Show comes in (Big Show vs. Cena!) but misses the Vader Bomb, meaning it's already back to Rollins. He doesn't have the same luck this time as Cena backdrops him to the floor and it's hot tag to Bryan.

Things speed way up and Bryan hits the top rope hurricanrana, followed by the YES Kick. He has to go after the Stooges though and Rollins gets in a kick of his own. Time for more Big Show but Reigns comes in with the

Superman Punch. Sister Abigail is countered with a spear and Kane gets one as well. Henry and Reigns splash Show in the corner and the AA sets up the running knee to pin Big Show at 19:31.

**Rating:** D+. This was long, dull and completely unimportant as the only people in the same Wrestlemania match were Kane, Big Show and Henry who aren't even on the main show anymore. Like I said, this was total filler and I'm really not a fan of having a match just to waste time. They did a decent job of making Reigns look good, but does beating up Kane and Big Show really mean much at this point?

**Overall Rating:** C. Yeah whatever. This is one of the shows I dread every year because it's just a big commercial for Sunday and much more for people who aren't watching the last few weeks. The wrestling here was just to remind us that it was a wrestling show and somehow I wound up liking the Divas stuff more than anything else, despite the match at Sunday not even being for the title. Dull show but that's a tradition for this episode.

### Results

Jimmy Uso b. Cesaro, Big E. and Fernando – Superfly Splash to Cesaro

John Cena/Daniel Bryan/Mark Henry/Roman Reigns b. Kane/Big Show/Seth Rollins/Bray Wyatt – Running knee to Big Show

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# Smackdown – March 19, 2015: The Reigns Problem

## Smackdown

Date: March 19, 2015

Location: Sprint Center, Kansas City, Missouri

Commentators: Michael Cole, Jerry Lawler, Byron Saxton

With ten days to go before Wrestlemania, it's time for the hard sell to the biggest show of the year. Given the recent trends on Smackdown, this show is going to be built around the Intercontinental Title match, which has gone from a huge match to everyone trying to one up each other. Let's get to it.

We open with clips from Brock's sitdown interview on Raw, talking about how he likes to hurt people and saying he'll be WWE Champion if he stays or not. They better have a plan if they keep the belt on him.

Opening sequence.

Here's Roman Reigns to get things going. Before he can get past "Heyman and Lesnar think they can intimidate me", Mark Henry comes out to interrupt. Henry came out here last week to see what Reigns had, and that's what Reigns did. Naturally we have a clip of what happened because just telling us what happened would be too simple. Instead, let's show a minute long video of a beating. Based on that, Henry is putting all his money on Roman Reigns at Wrestlemania, because Reigns can and will beat him.

Cue the Authority with Kane asking when Mark Henry became the World's Biggest Self Help Guru. Rollins holds up the briefcase and ominously says that anything can happen at Wrestlemania. There won't be any Randy Orton tonight because the best security team has locked every door and blocked every entrance. Of course that's just for Orton's protection, because why would Rollins be scared of him? As for tonight though, Rollins thinks he needs a Wrestlemania tuneup. Therefore, tonight it's Reigns/Henry vs. Kane/Rollins. Kane: "Believe in the Authority."

Tatsumi Fujinami is going into the Hall of Fame. I know he's a legend, but they're not exactly knocking this class out of the park outside of Savage.

### Brie Bella vs. Paige

AJ and Nikki are on commentary because we need a five man booth. Paige spears Brie through the ropes to start and pounds her on the announcers' table. AJ: "I taught her how to slap." Back in and Brie gets two off a middle rope missile dropkick before we hit the chinlock forty seconds into the match.

A clothesline gets two and we're on the second chinlock less than ninety seconds in. Back up and a double clothesline puts both girls down before Brie hits the running knee against the ropes. She lays back on Paige for the cover and gets rolled up for a pin at 2:28. The match wasn't two and a half minutes long and it had two chinlocks. How can this woman be married to Daniel Bryan and not be better than that by osmosis?

Recap of Seth vs. Orton on Monday with Sting making the big save. That really was an awesome moment and the best thing Sting has done since debuting.

Noble and Mercury tell security to keep an entrance open. They aren't pleased when they're not called sir.

### Gauntlet Match

The participants are all of Barrett's challengers and we start with Ambrose vs. Stardust. Dean slugs away to start and Stardust bails out to the floor. The rebound clothesline connects but Stardust gets two off a Disaster Kick. A release front suplex drops Dean again and Barrett is watching from the back. Stardust tries a sunset flip but Dean drops down on him ala British Bulldog vs. Bret for the pin at 2:18.

Stardust, ever the nice guy, jumps Dean after the match and sends him shoulder first into the post twice in a row. R-Truth is in third and beats up Stardust, only to walk into Dirty Deeds for the pin at 3:02 total. Harper is in fourth with an inset interview talking about how they

took his freedom away. Now he's using you to set them all free. He's been talking to Bray again hasn't he?

Back from a break with Dean hammering away in the battle of undershirts and jeans. Harper goes after the bad arm to take over and we hit the chinlock. Notice that it's one instead of two and we're over five minutes in. Dean is sent face first into the buckle and gets locked in a crossface. Back up and Dean sends him to the floor, setting up the running standing elbow drop.

The discus lariat is countered into a rollup for two and it's back to the crossface. When all else fails, Dean bites the hand to escape and slugs away. The running dropkick against the ropes and la majistral get two for Dean but he eats a superkick, only to knock him into the ropes for the rebound clothesline to drop both guys. Back up and Dirty Deeds is countered into the discus lariat and the sitout powerbomb is enough for the pin at 12:50 total.

Daniel Bryan is in fifth and starts with Harper after a break. During said break, Mercury and Noble yelling at security guards. They check someone's credentials and let him in for a scene that doesn't seem to mean anything. Back in the arena with Bryan wrapping Harper's knee around the post a few times before firing off the kicks. He even gets Harper up for the full surfboard and lifts him up for a YES chant.

More YES Kicks have Harper in trouble so he picks Bryan up and throws him out to the floor. Luke slows things down with a headlock but Bryan knee crushes his way to freedom. That's fine with Harper as he just punches Bryan in the face to put him down. We hit the chinlock for a bit before Bryan goes right back to the knee. A headscissors takes Harper to the floor and there's the Flying Goat for good measure.

Back in again and we get more YES Kicks but the big one is countered into the half nelson suplex for two. The discus lariat is kicked away but the left arm version blasts Bryan for another near fall. Luke is getting frustrated but Bryan helps him out by tripping the leg and putting on something like a heel hook for the submission at 25:33 total.

That only leaves Dolph Ziggler in sixth and we take another break before

the bell. They lock up to start until Bryan takes him into the corner for more kicks. Ziggler goes a bit more conventional with right hands to the head but misses a Stinger splash. Bryan busts out a top rope hurricanrana but Dolph rolls through into a sunset flip for two. Both try cross bodies and both get knocked to the mat as we take another break.

Back again with Bryan working on the shoulder after sending him into the post while we were away. Daniel gets crotched on top but he counters a superplex attempt by crotching Ziggler right back. Dolph keeps up the countering by reversing the belly to back superplex into a cross body for two more. Bryan responds by kicking him in the face for the same as the fans (or at least the canned noise) are way into this. The running knee is blocked by a superkick but he can't follow up. The YES Lock goes on in the middle of the ring but Ziggler rolls out, ducks a big kick and grabs the Zig Zag for the pin at 27:36.

**Rating:** B+. It took some time to get going but the Bryan vs. Ziggler stuff was awesome. I can see those two building a roof on Levi's Stadium just so they could blow it off at Wrestlemania, but instead they're just throwing everyone into a ladder match. Really good and long match here, especially once they stopped with the quick eliminations.

Post match Barrett comes in and talks about a code, only to nail Dolph in the face. Bryan gets up and takes the microphone to the face. Both guys get Bull Hammers as well.

We look at Bray's promo from Monday.

LL Cool J video. People still care about him right?

The Divas give their predictions on AJ/Paige vs. the Bellas. As expected, the decision is split. This is giving them a chance I suppose?

Recap of the Cena/Rusev contract signing from Monday.

Another bit with the security.

Cesaro/Tyson Kidd/Natalya vs. El Torito/Los Matadores

Interspecies match. Well of course it is. Cesaro runs Diego over for two

to start but a dropkick sends him into the corner. Off to Natalya vs. Torito for some pelvic thrusting, meaning Kidd tags himself in to face Fernando. Kidd takes it outside and trips Fernando up to send him face first into the apron. Back in and the hot tag brings in Diego with a springboard shot to the head as everything breaks down. Los Matadores dive onto the champs, leaving us with Natalya vs. Torito for the featured part of the match. Torito armdrags her down but gets caught in a sitout powerbomb for the pin at 3:49.

**Rating:** D. We're ten days from Wrestlemania and this is what we're seeing from the Tag Team Champions. I mean.....dang man. The best we can get is an unfunny idea of woman vs. bull, because there are still people out there that think it's really a bull? Who could speak English? This kind of stuff is absurd and makes me hate this show more and more every time.

#### Seth Rollins/Kane vs. Roman Reigns/Mark Henry

And there's no Henry as we cut to the back and see him out cold. Rollins brings out a bunch of security to have his back. Maybe they're Noble and Mercury's students. Kane starts for his team and Mercury offers a trip, allowing the Big Bald to score with a boot to the face. Off to Rollins as the fans chant for Randy. Not the #1 contender and future main eventer mind you, but a guy not here.

Seth whips Reigns into a side slam for two and the bad looking running DDT gets the same. Rollins comes back in for some slow shots to the back and something like a downward spiral into the middle buckle. We're just waiting for Orton at this point and it's showing badly. Roman fights back with a forearm to Kane, followed by the tilt-a-whirl slam to Rollins. The Authority regroups but Rollins dives into a Superman Punch and the spear ends Kane at 5:07.

**Rating:** D. This match summed up the major problem with Roman Reigns: he could have been any given upper level guy and the match would have been the exact same thing. This was five minutes of waiting around for Orton to come out because that's the story we're seeing. Can you imagine that happening to Steve Austin or Daniel Bryan? No, because those guys commanded the audience's attention whenever they were on screen. Reigns

is just another guy here and it's very clear that he isn't someone the fans are ready to cheer as the new top man.

Rollins throws a fit and here's Orton (in wrestling gear for no logical reason) to beat up the security. Noble and Mercury take RKOs, allowing Rollins to escape to end the show.

**Overall Rating:** C+. That Reigns match really told you everything you needed to know about this Wrestlemania season. The main feuds have little heat and the whole show is built around Undertaker, Sting and Lesnar barely appearing or not saying anything. Combine that with the fans just not being interested in Reigns at the moment (and again, a lot of that isn't on him) and this is coming off as a pretty weak year.

As for the show, the Intercontinental Title match made for a good performance but that's not what we're getting at Wrestlemania. The Divas did their usual stuff, the comedy wasn't funny, and the main event was your standard scene with someone AMAZINGLY making it past security to get into the building. This felt like any given Thursday in June, not the next to last Smackdown before Wrestlemania.

## Results

Paige b. Brie Bella – Rollup

Dolph Ziggler won a gauntlet match last eliminating Daniel Bryan

Natalya/Cesaro/Tyson Kidd b. El Torito/Los Matadores – Powerbomb to Torito

Roman Reigns/Mark Henry b. Kane/Seth Rollins – Spear to Kane

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# Smackdown – March 12, 2015: Sign of the Season

## Smackdown

Date: March 12, 2015

Location: Joe Louis Arena, Detroit, Michigan

Commentators: Michael Cole, Byron Saxton, Jerry Lawler

It should be interesting to see if this week's show continues Smackdown's recent focus on the Intercontinental Title. After all the weeks of World Title build on Raw, it's nice to have something a bit different on the other show, if nothing else just to avoid the fatigue of seeing the same things over and over again. Let's get to it.

Opening sequence.

Here's Daniel Bryan to get things going. He thanks the fans for their kindness and says he's been trying to ignore that Wrestlemania sign since Fast Lane. It's become clear to him that he can't repeat what happened last year at Wrestlemania, but when one door closes, another door opens.

A few weeks ago, he was surrounded by people fighting for the Intercontinental Championship and it got him thinking about his heroes. People like Mr. Perfect, Ricky Steamboat, Bret Hart, Shawn Michaels and Randy Savage. When they were fighting for the Intercontinental Title at Wrestlemania, it was more exciting than anything happening in the World Title division. Wrestlemania VIII would disagree with you Bryan.

He's officially in the ladder match this year though and the fans are very pleased. This brings out Bad News Barrett who reminds us that he's still the champion and will still be after Wrestlemania. Dolph Ziggler comes out to disagree but he does say Bryan is his hero. Barrett may be the champion but he can't even hang onto the belt. How could he possibly do that with six other guys throwing him off ladders at Wrestlemania?

Cue Harper to say he wants his Wrestlemania moment. That sounds so wrong coming from someone like Harper. He should be more like old school Cactus Jack who just does stuff for the sake of violence. Dean Ambrose comes out to a very loud reaction to say every one of them should be locked up if they think they can fight without inviting him. He even knows a good place they can be held for observation if need be.

Now it's Stardust who grabs a mic and looks under the ring for the white stallion of the Milky Way. He wants the ivory enterprise, but instead gets R-Truth with the burlap sack. Truth pulls out the belt and calls it a beaut. He thinks the title has been passed around enough so he's going to hold it until Wrestlemania when he climbs that ladder. Barrett cuts him off but Truth calls him sizzle chest. A brawl finally breaks out and it's Zigler, Ambrose and Bryan left standing.

#### Usos/New Day vs. Tyson Kidd/Cesaro/Los Matadores

Big E. is on the floor this time and Los Matadores confirm their heel turn in an inset interview where they say they'll do whatever it takes to have their Wrestlemania moment. Not win the titles mind you but have their moment. Kofi and Diego get things going with the masked man stomping away in the corner. Kingston dropkicks him down for two and it's quickly off to Woods. The intelligence doesn't seem warmed up yet as Diego drags him into the corner for the tag to Fernando.

Jimmy tags himself in, much to Woods' annoyance. Hey dude get over it. You kind of suck in the ring. Diego offers a distraction to break up the Whisper in the Wind and Jimmy gets crotched on the top. We take a break and come back with with Diego jumping on Jimmy's back on the ropes and putting on a chinlock. Jerry: "What do you call a matador with a rubber toe? Roberto!" Jimmy fights up and makes the hot tag to Jimmy, leaving Cesaro to yell at Los Matadores.

Jey starts cleaning house but Kofi tags himself in for a springboard cross body for two on Kidd. Some heel miscommunication sends them to the floor and the good guys bust out dives, only to have Woods land on Jey. Again, he's not that bright. Cesaro uppercuts Kofi through the ropes and Kidd loads up the fisherman's neckbreaker, only to have Fernando tag

himself in. Diego sneaks in with a Backstabber for the pin on Kofi at 8:40.

**Rating:** C+. This did its job and that's almost all you can ask for out of a match like this. I'm assuming it's another multi-team match at Wrestlemania, just like last year, but I'm not sure this one is going to be as good. It also says something that the Usos and Los Matadores are still in the match, just like Cesaro but with a different partner. You would think something would have changed by now. Still though, good way to set things up here.

Video on Sting vs. HHH.

Recap of Rusev vs. Cena from Monday.

Miz lists off his career accomplishments and says winning the battle royal will be the latest entry on that list. Mizdow is worried that Miz can't beat Ryback tonight so Miz tells him to stay in the back, press his pants and get him a drink that is way too complicated to type.

#### Miz vs. Ryback

Ryback will have none of the sunglasses being taken off so he puts Miz on the top rope. A delayed suplex brings Miz right back down but he hammers Ryback into the ropes to take over. The fans want Mizdow as Ryback blocks a running boot and plants Miz with a spinebuster. The Meat Hook and Shell Shock are good for the pin at 2:59. Ryback's push continues to look strong.

Mizdow chuckles in the back.

Here's Roman Reigns to respond to Paul Heyman's comments from Raw. We get a quick clip of Heyman talking about Lesnar destroying Rock, Undertaker and Cena and promising Brock will do the same thing and worse to Roman Reigns at Wrestlemania. Reigns says Heyman thinks he knows his family but he's just disrespecting them. Heyman thinks Reigns is three generations removed from cannibalism? Who thinks that? Reigns won't take someone disrespecting his family and telling him he can't when he can. He'll win at Wrestlemania and do his family proud.

This brings out a slightly thinner Mark Henry, who thinks Reigns is either trying to be funny or he's been hit in the head by one too many coconuts. He doesn't like anyone talking about his heritage but Reigns needs to understand that Heyman has gotten under his skin. Mark knows who he is, and he's been in the ring with Lesnar. Brock nearly killed him with the F5 on the floor and Mark doesn't think Roman is ready for that.

Roman says with all due respect but Mark cuts him off and says Reigns has to earn respect around here. That's enough for Roman as he goes to walk away but Mark spins him around and yells at Reigns for being a young buck that thinks he knows it all. That earns him a Superman Punch and a spear through the barricade.

Reigns is tired of hearing he can't, because he can and he will. Believe that. The family heritage idea is better than nothing but it's still not much of a connection to a guy like Reigns. However, being tired of being told he can't do something and proving people wrong IS something people can connect to and the idea they probably should have gone for months ago.

We look back at Bray Wyatt's speech from Monday and Undertaker lighting the chair on fire to accept the challenge.

#### AJ Lee/Paige vs. Summer Rae/Cameron

Paige is so excited for this match that she took off the white shirt under her jacket between the walk through the back and the entrances. The Bellas are on commentary as you would probably expect. Paige kicks Cameron in the ribs to start and it's off to AJ in about five seconds. AJ goes after Summer on the apron and gets nailed from behind by Cameron.

With two weeks before Wrestlemania, the Bellas are bragging about the ratings for Total Divas. Summer puts AJ in a chinlock as they FINALLY start talking about the upcoming tag match. Paige gets the tag and cleans house with her set of clotheslines, setting up the PT0 for the tap out from Summer at 2:25.

Paige and AJ yell at the Bellas post match. My guess is they're saying "TALK ABOUT WRESTLING! YOU'RE WRESTLERS!"

We look back at Reigns and Henry in case we have the attention span of a goldfish.

Henry says Reigns has made a believer out of him. He doesn't think Reigns will beat Lesnar, but now he believes Reigns can. It's a shame this wasn't Sexual Chocolate as the old Henry would have certainly hit on Renee in her stomach revealing top here. Very fetching indeed.

We look at a Cricket Wireless event with Dolph Ziggler. He's bringing some kids to Smackdown to be ringside.

Low and behold, the kids are here.

This week's sitdown interview is with Randy Orton. He looks at the footage of Rollins curb stomping him a few months back and says that night changed him. We see him returning at Fast Lane but that wasn't the best way to get his revenge. Instead he wove his way back into the Authority to gain their trust. This is really, really not making this horrible story make more sense.

He used Reigns to get closer to Rollins and this past Monday was reverse psychology. Apparently in WWE, reverse psychology is code for REALLY STUPID STORY. Orton explained getting rid of everyone else in the Authority, even though he had almost nothing to do with getting rid of Big Show or Mercury. Basically all he did was punch Noble.

Then he walked away from the tag and had fun beating Rollins up. Orton loved every single bit of hurting Rollins this past Monday and he let all of it out. He's ready for the Authority's retribution and is ready to challenge Rollins for Wrestlemania. Good for you Randy. You had a stupid plan in a stupid story that makes no sense when you actually think about it, but good for you.

Daniel Bryan/Dolph Ziggler/Dean Ambrose vs. Luke Harper/Bad News Barrett/Stardust

Unfortunately no Truth on commentary here. Ambrose headlocks Barrett to start and runs him over with a running forearm. Off to Stardust vs. Ziggler with the painted one taking over in the corner. Cole talks about

Stardust being like Gollum with the Intercontinental Title. To mix things up a bit, Saxton thinks Stardust is acting like Kim Kardashian. I'm going to move on to Bryan putting Stardust in the surfboard instead as it's less painful than talking about that disturbing, hideous, nightmare inducing creature. It's easier than talking about Gollum too.

Stardust gets out and hammers on Bryan in the corner but gets taken down by a hurricanrana. The threat of a running knee sends Stardust running to the floor and we take a break. Back with Harper Gator Rolling Bryan before it's off to Barrett for some forearms to the in the corner. Bryan finally kicks Harper away and the hot tag brings in Ambrose to clean house. An atomic drop into a faceplant gets two on Stardust and everything breaks down.

Ambrose cleans house and dives onto Harper and Stardust for a big crash. Barrett breaks up Dirty Deeds on Stardust and Harper kicks Dean in the face as we take another break. Back again with Barrett kicking Dean in the face for two. That seems so familiar. Bad News' chinlock doesn't go anywhere and Stardust's top rope superplex does just as poorly. Instead Ambrose nails a top rope dropkick and makes the tag to Ziggler.

Harper comes in as well and eats a dropkick followed by the Fameasser for two. Everything breaks down again and the good guys load up a triple dive but Harper nails Ziggler to break up a third of it. The Batista Bomb gets two on Dolph but he comes back with a Zig Zag, followed by the running knee to give Bryan the pin at 17:38.

**Rating:** B. Nice long tag match here to close out the show. When a show is built around talking like this one was, you almost have to give them something like this to affirm that it's really a wrestling show. Above all though, Barrett didn't get pinned! That's one whole show in a row and possibly a new record for him.

Cole congratulates Bryan on the win but Ziggler jokes that Bryan stole the pin from him. Last year Bryan had luck on his side but this year Ziggler is going to be out there with him. Dean chimes in and says Dolph stole the show, just like everyone has been stealing the title lately. Maybe Dolph thinks he isn't quite as good as Bryan and it bothers him.

Dean says the people in the locker room know the truth about Bryan: he's, shall we say, human waste. Ambrose goes to leave and Ziggler agrees with him, leaving Bryan in the ring alone. I really, really hope they don't turn Bryan heel but it seems to be the only thing left for him to do at this point.

**Overall Rating:** C. We're definitely in the last push to Wrestlemania, which means expect several shows like this in a row: mostly talk and hype with a token long match for most of the wrestling content. Reigns sounded fine and it's good that they're FINALLY giving him a reason to want to fight Brock.

On the other hand, Orton sounded like a crazy man trying to explain a stupid story. Either bring him back as a full on psycho or bring him back as part of the Authority without the Fast Lane attack. What they went with makes it seem like they were just hoping people weren't paying attention, though given how this build has been going, they might be onto something.

## Results

Los Matadores/Cesaro/Tyson Kidd b. New Day/Usos – Backstabber to Kingston

Ryback b. Miz – Shell Shock

AJ Lee/Paige b. Summer Rae/Cameron – PT0 to Summer

Dean Ambrose/Dolph Ziggler/Daniel Bryan b. Luke Harper/Stardust/Bad News Barrett – Running knee to Harper

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# Smackdown – March 5, 2015: Reestablishing Equilibrium

## Smackdown

Date: March 5, 2015

Location: Verizon Center, Washington DC

Commentators: Michael Cole, Jerry Lawler, Byron Saxton

With just a few weeks to go before Wrestlemania, one of the main stories has been the Intercontinental Title scene. We're definitely getting the big ladder match, but it's not entirely clear who is going to be in it. It's also not clear who is going to hand over the title belt to have it hung above the ring as everyone keeps stealing the thing. Let's get to it.

Opening sequence.

Here's Dolph Ziggler with the Intercontinental Title. He says he never got a rematch for the title against Bad News Barrett because he got fired by the Authority. This is the fifth month that storyline has now been mentioned in. Even Vince Russo didn't let stories go that long. Dolph officially enters the ladder match, but thinks there's still something missing. Last year, someone did everything he could and never stopped fighting to become champion. The fans chant YES and Dolph agrees, but he gets Bad News Barrett instead.

Barrett says Ziggler has something he wants. Dolph: "Looks? Charisma? A great Twitter account?" Bad News gets in the ring but Luke Harper sneaks in and decks Ziggler. The champ goes for his belt but Luke steps on it. Ziggler gets back up and everyone brawls so here's Dean Ambrose to get in on the fighting. The champ is knocked to the floor because he's just another guy in this story. Everyone brawls on the floor again so R-Truth sneaks down in spy mode, crawling on the mat and getting the belt before hiding under the ring.



Truth is in the back (VERY quickly too) and says he got the title in advance. "It's like when I eat when I'm not hungry, so when I get hungry I don't have to eat." He tries to give the belt to Renee Young but she politely declines. "Where's Gene Ambrose?" As usual, Renee Young is incredibly cute. I'm convinced she could be bald and still be adorable.

### Cesaro/Tyson Kidd vs. Los Matadores

Non-title. Diego and Kidd start things off but both guys tag out less than thirty seconds in. Fernando hurricanranas Cesaro down and Diego does the same with a headscissors, only to get caught in a tilt-a-whirl backbreaker. A double stomp gets two for Cesaro and we hit the chinlock. Everything breaks down and Cesar goes after Torito, who kicks him in the leg. That's not a DQ for some reason but Natalya trips him up, allowing the Cesaro Swing into a dropkick from Kidd to get the pin on Fernando at 2:25. This was a good squash for the champs that we haven't seen before.

Kane and Big Show both say they'll win the battle royal.

We recap the main event from Monday with Reigns getting pinned by Rollins but cleaning house to end the show. Yeah, the dive over the top and big spear were cool, but it's like a cool fireworks display after your home team loses a ball game. It's a fun visual, but your heart isn't in it.

### Ryback vs. Kane

Big Show stares at the Andre trophy at ringside. Kane stomps him down in the corner but runs into some spinebusters. Big Show offers a distraction to no avail as the Meat Hook ends Kane at 2:07. Now why did it take us this many months to get here?

Kane makes Big Show vs. Ryback for right now.

### Big Show vs. Ryback

This is joined in progress after a break with Big Show getting in the ring and pounding Ryback into the corner. A clothesline puts the smaller bald power monster down and Show follows it with a slam. Ryback fires some shoulders in the corner but dives into a chokeslam attempt. The KO Punch misses and Ryback hits an awkward looking spinebuster. Kane gets

dragged in for offering a distraction and takes a second Meat Hook, allowing Big Show to KO Ryback at 2:58. Dang that was close. We almost saw someone get one over on the Big Balds and I just wouldn't want to live in that world. What was this supposed to prove anyway?

We look at Bray Wyatt lighting the casket on fire on Raw.

Bray Wyatt wants an answer from Undertaker. He has something Undertaker can relate to, and he'll unleash its spirit this Monday. Not even Undertaker can outrun his own fate. The camera pans down and shows the urn.

Sheamus return video.

Video on the Daily Show segment with Jon Stewart from Raw. That might be the best celebrity appearance ever. If not then it's WAY up there.

### Brie Bella vs. AJ Lee

I'm not a fan of how Eden says "this is a Deeeeevas match". This is fallout from AJ returning to help Paige on Monday. Nikki brings up the "Give Divas A Chance" line but says that doesn't apply to AJ. The Bellas have been giving the Divas a chance since AJ has been gone and no one has lived up to their standard. It's why they're the stars of Total Divas and they don't care who comes at them.

The match starts after a break with Paige now at ringside to balance things out. AJ cranks on an armbar and elbows Brie in the face. A high cross body gets two on Brie but she comes back with a nice middle rope dropkick for two of her own. Back up and AJ has to stop so Brie can clothesline her before we hit a chinlock.

That goes nowhere so Brie dropkicks her down again, followed by a clothesline for some two counts. A Hennig necksnap gets an even closer two as the fans don't seem all that interested. We hit another chinlock before the running knee to the chest staggers AJ again. Brie immediately goes to the corner but misses another middle rope dropkick. Back up and AJ hammers away with kicks to the ribs to send Brie out to the floor. We get a big staredown outside before the Black Widow makes Brie tap at

7:42.

**Rating:** C. This was better than your usual Divas matches but a lot of that is due to it actually getting some time. Brie seemed to almost run out of offense about halfway through though. The Bellas are decent enough as the better than you heels and I can live with them far more when they're not being treated like all time greats who just happen to be heels now. And when they're not dominating the show. That really drove me insane.

Daniel Bryan thinks the Intercontinental Title picture is very interesting right now and can't wait to see who comes out with the belt.

I really can't stand the theme song for this year's Wrestlemania and I keep forgetting that's what the song is for when it starts up.

#### New Day vs. Miz/Damien Mizdow

Woods is the odd man out this week. Before the match we get a look at the commercial from Monday with Miz being embarrassed. Miz slapped Mizdow as a result but we still didn't get the big face turn. Kofi and Miz get things going by trading armdrags until Miz runs him over for two. Some kicks give Kofi a breather and Mizdow tags himself in and cleans house. Cesaro/Kidd/Natalya are watching in the back as Mizdown's figure four attempt is broken up. Miz tags himself in and orders Mizdow to the floor but Mizdow gets in his face. During the argument, Big E. gets the tag and it's the Midnight Hour for the pin at 3:15.

**Rating:** D. This was the same thing they've done multiple times now but at least it was Miz taking the pin instead of Mizdow. I really wouldn't mind if Woods was left outside as a permanent manager as he doesn't add much to the team. The match wasn't very good though and it just reenforced the same things we've established for weeks now. In other words, it's a Smackdown match.

We look back at Heyman's speech from Raw.

Brock Lesnar video.

Reigns says Heyman is known for running his mouth, but it's true that

Lesnar is going to hurt him at Wrestlemania. Everyone that gets in the ring with Lesnar gets hurt and he'll be no different. The difference is Reigns will get up, lock his fist and hit a Superman Punch. Then he'll spear Lesnar in half to win the WWE World Championship, and then Heyman and Lesnar will believe that. As usual, this was far better because they kept it short and simple.

#### Jack Swagger vs. Rusev

Non-title and Swagger is thrown to the floor a second after the bell. Back in and Swagger throws Rusev to the floor as we take a break. Back with Rusev getting two off a dropkick and we hit the chinlock. Swagger fights up and tries the Vader Bob but has to settle for the Patriot Lock, sending Rusev to the ropes. Back up and Rusev kicks him in the face and Accolades him for the submission at 7:50.

**Rating:** D. Egads find someone new for Rusev to beat up. This didn't prove anything and was the exact same match these two have had roughly 19 times. Yeah we get it: Rusev is big and strong and can beat up Jack Swagger. We've known that for almost eight months now. FIND SOMEONE NEW.

Rusev poses but Curtis Axel pops up on screen and says don't change the channel BROTHER. He's often imitated but never duplicated DUDE. This Monday he's going to put Rusev down 1-2-3 and then coming for the US Title at Wrestlemania. Whatcha gonna do when Axelmania runs wild on YOU??? If Buddy Landel can get over by being Ric Flair, Curtis Axel can get over by being Hulk Hogan.

Cameron thinks it's time someone gives her a chance. Summer Rae comes up and says she should be getting the chance. Eva Marie thinks the two of them have no chance. This is what I was worried about when this thing started up. There are far more talented girls to give this spot to, but instead it's going to the girls on the reality show.

#### Bad News Barrett/Luke Harper vs. Dolph Ziggler/Dean Ambrose

Truth is on commentary and doesn't quite get the rules of the ladder match. He also doesn't like how heights look when you look down at them. Harper Gator Rolls Ziggler to start but has to break up a sunset flip

attempt. The running DDT is easily countered and R-Truth thinks he's talking to Byron Jackson. A double tag brings in Ambrose to stomp on Barrett in the corner before the standing top rope elbow drop gets two. Zigler and Ambrose clear the ring but nearly come to blows as we take a break.

Back with Barrett elbowing Dean in the face and handing it off to Harper for an elbow of his own. We hit the chinlock from Harper, who Truth accuses of not buying his shirt. Barrett comes back in and gets caught in a tornado DDT. Truth wants the match turned into a stepladder match and claims ladder discrimination.

The hot tag brings in Zigler to speed things up but the big elbow drop gets two on Harper. Now the running DDT connects but still only gets two. A big side slam gets the same for Harper but Barrett and Ambrose come in to fight right next to them. Those two head back to the floor and Zigler superkicks Harper, setting up the Zig Zag for the pin at 10:03.

**Rating:** C-. Totally standard midcard tag match here but it's very nice to see that headlining the show instead of more dull stuff. It also helps that this is a logical part of the storyline and fits what they've been doing so far. Truth continues to be funny on commentary with a bunch of "what did he just say" lines. Oh and Barrett didn't get pinned! Life is good.

Post match Barrett goes for the belt but Ambrose dives on him. Truth kicks Harper low but Daniel Bryan shows up to look at Truth holding the title. Truth hands him the belt and starts a YES chant. Bryan poses with the title but Stardust jumps Bryan and grabs the belt to end the show.

**Overall Rating:** C. The show went by fast enough and it's really nice to have stuff away from the main event feud for a bit. It's also nice to not have the Authority making my blood pressure go through the roof but that's a different story. This still doesn't feel like a major show but I like the Intercontinental Title picture when it's not as all over the place and the battle royal is starting to look a lot better. This was a nice way to cool things down and bring them back to normal after a bad Raw, but it's still not a great show.

## Results

Cesaro/Tyson Kidd b. Los Matadores – Cesaro Swing into a dropkick from Kidd

Ryback b. Kane – Meat Hook

Big Show b. Ryback – KO Punch

AJ Lee b. Brie Bella – Black Widow

New Day b. Miz/Damien Mizdow – Midnight Hour to Miz

Rusev b. Jack Swagger – Accolade

Dolph Ziggler/Dean Ambrose b. Bad News Barrett/Luke Harper – Zig Zag to Harper

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# **Smackdown – February 26, 2015: Erg**

## **Smackdown**

Date: February 26, 2015

Location: Phillips Arena, Atlanta, Georgia

Commentators: Jerry Lawler, Michael Cole, Byron Saxton

Wrestlemania is creeping up on us and you can see most of the card from here. The main story coming out of Monday was Randy Orton rejoining the Authority for about two and a half hours but ultimately turning back against them. For some reason he let Seth Rollins off easy, which likely won't be addressed tonight. Let's get to it.

Opening sequence.

Here's Daniel Bryan to open things up. The fans chant YES but Bryan shouts NO for a change. That's what he said a few years ago when he was frustrated at the lack of opportunities. He was wrong though, because the fans were in his corner. The fans gave him the opportunity to climb the ladder to the top and he won the WWE World Heavyweight Championship in the main event of Wrestlemania XXX. He had to give it up due to injury, but then he had another chance to get it back at Fast Lane.

However, he failed and there's no Wrestlemania main event this year. Without that motivation, does that mean the YES Movement is dead? NO it does not! He won't back down because he has big plans this year. Before he can get those out though, here's Bad News Barrett who has somehow gone a full three days since losing a match.

No one wants to hear Bryan's sob story because losers like Bryan don't deserve the spotlight. Neither does a thief like Dean Ambrose, so here's Dean for the brawl. He and Barrett fight to the floor so Bryan picks up the Intercontinental Title. Barrett demands it back but Ambrose decks him from behind and takes the belt back. Daniel didn't seem interested in the belt other than keeping it away from Barrett. Cole sounds like he's begging us to believe that Barrett is still champion.

Dean Ambrose vs. Miz

Is he going to step on Miz's sunglasses and break his foot this time? No Mizdow because he might be off shooting the commercial he mentioned on Raw. An early rollup gets two for Dean but he gets caught in a neckbreaker for the same. We're already in the chinlock but Ambrose fights up with rights and lefts. Some running forearms drop Miz again but Barrett comes back out to steal the belt again. The distraction doesn't work for once though as Dean hits Dirty Deeds for the pin on Miz at 2:47.

We look at stills of Orton returning on Sunday and video of the story with Rollins on Monday. Lawler tries to defend Orton's lack of action by saying he was worried about Big Show and Kane. I'd be worried about them too if I wanted anyone to stay awake during my matches. Seriously even Bryan couldn't survive a Kane feud.

After a break, Barrett can't get Renee's name right but says Ambrose and Bryan don't deserve to touch this title.

### Naomi vs. Natalya

Say it with me: this officially started on Total Divas, even though there's been almost no animosity between them on that show. Somehow though, that's better continuity than you usually get on the main shows. They run the ropes to start and Natalya drops down, only to get rolled up for two. Aheadscissors drops Natalya again and we hit a chinlock with Naomi using her legs instead of the arms. Both girls hit cross bodies and the guys get into it on the floor. The referee holds Naomi back from a downed Natalya, allowing the Canadian to hit the discus lariat for the pin at 2:48.

Here are the Russians to brag about their win on Sunday. Rusev says this is what a championship looks like and Lana walks us through some stills of Cena's spirit being crushed over and over again. Lana says Rusev isn't one to sleep on the job and brags about Putin sending them congratulatory emails. She even shows us one, of course in Russian, which probably has a very funny translation.

Rusev repeats that Cena gets no shot at Wrestlemania so he needs a new opponent. Cue Jack Swagger as we flash back to August. Jack says there's no such thing as a scared US Champion and the fight is on. Just like happens every single time, Rusev survives a storm and superkicks Swagger into the Accolade. Was there NO ONE ELSE they could have used for this spot? Like.....sweet goodness there really isn't much of anyone is there? Is the roster really that thin? Or are the faces really that lame?

### Bad News Barrett vs. Daniel Bryan

Non-title of course, because even Bryan hasn't fallen enough to want the



Intercontinental Title. Barrett isn't sure where to put the title. Byron Saxton introduces R-Truth on commentary. Truth: "COACH! I MISSED YOU!" Ok that was funny. Barrett shoves Bryan down to start but gets sent into the corner for a kick to the ribs. The surfboard knee stomp sends Barrett back into the corner as Truth thinks a crumpet is a musical instrument.

More kicks stagger Barrett but the Winds of Change connect for two. Daniel bails to the floor as Truth keeps babbling about how he should be Intercontinental Champion. Back from a break with Barrett putting on a chinlock. I really do feel sorry for him. This is at least the second and probably third loser title reign for him and I don't know what he does to deserve it.

Bryan fights up and hits more YES Kicks for two but Barrett avoids the running dropkick in the corner. The title was knocked to the floor and Barrett is distracted, allowing Bryan to hit the Flying Goat. Truth: "Bryan looks like a chicken dipped in Rogaine." How do you even respond to that? The YES Lock goes on and Truth sneaks over to the corner and steals the belt but gets back on commentary with the belt under his jacket. Bad News makes the ropes but turns around for the running knee and the pin at 10:31.

**Rating:** C-. This feud is turning into a battle over who can suck more than the other guy. Somehow though, Barrett is going to wind up leaving with the belt because that's how WWE works. Then they'll wonder why no one cares about Barrett, the title, or the losers in the match. Truth was funny on commentary but that doesn't mean I want to see him in the ring. At least the title is getting some attention tonight though.

Barrett can't find the title but Truth denies any involvement. This is somehow making Barrett come off like someone we should feel sorry for, because we're supposed to feel sorry for someone who loses every match he has.

We get a sitdown interview with Roman Reigns from earlier today. Reigns praises Bryan for a hard fought match on Sunday and says Bryan knows what it takes to get where Reigns is going. We look at a clip of Heyman's speech on Monday about how Reigns just can't do it. Roman is tired of

hearing about how he can't do something and says he'll have to train harder than ever before. Lesnar has been on this stage before but Reigns doesn't have any experience at this level. He needs to talk to people in his family to see what it's like to be there.

Reigns wants Lesnar to be bouncing around the ring and at his very best when he faces a man representing a proud family who is trying to make a better life for himself and his family. My goodness this guy is just not good at making me care about him. That's the problem with him: he's just ok at most things other than spearing people in half. He's great as a heavyweight monster, but as a humanized character, he's just stuck in the middle of the pack. Five minutes of him talking about what he needs to do didn't make me care about him any more than I did in the first place, and I can't imagine it getting better anytime soon.

Truth runs into Ambrose and says he beat Barrett for the title. Ambrose says he's coming for the belt so Truth just hands it to him. Cole: "HAHAHAHA!" And that sums up the whole thing better than I ever could.

### Fandango vs. Curtis Axel

Axel shows us a clock which has him in the Royal Rumble for 32 hours, giving Cole and Lawler something else to laugh about. Fandango jumps him to start so Axel throws him over the top. Curtis: AXELMANIA! Fandango plants him with a release suplex and the Last Dance is good for the pin at 1:03. Again, I care about the loser more than the winner.

Miz interrupts Mizdow's commercial shoot and mocks him for just ripping Miz off. The director didn't know Miz was interested in being part of this commercial and gives him the part instead. That's ANOTHER face who is treated like a loser, but at least he hasn't.....when did he last win a match? This company is really bad at setting up good guys. Of course they have to face adversity, but they really need to win once in awhile. This idea of just letting the fans carry them doesn't hold up for everyone but it seems to be all WWE is doing lately. Either that or have the champ lose every time.

Barrett will be defending the Intercontinental Title at Wrestlemania in a ladder match against an unknown number of unnamed opponents. Sheamus

returns there maybe?

We get the Sting career retrospective. WWE does a lot of things wrong but they're awesome at things like this.

### Adam Rose vs. Goldust

Rose has entered the Andre battle royal. Before the match we get a recap of Stardust attacking his brother on Sunday. Rose jumps him to start and charges into the powerslam for two. The Final Cut is good for the pin at 1:02.

Stardust is dressed as a monkey Rosebud and jumps Goldust.

Bray Wyatt claims that Undertaker is clinging to his legacy. He's a snake, but even the cleverest rat can only run from the snake for so long. How long does Undertaker think he can hide? Time is ticking because Wrestlemania is approaching. Come find him.

### Seth Rollins/Kane/Big Show vs. Erick Rowan/Dolph Ziggler/Ryback

We get the Jon Stewart response to Rollins before the match starts. Kane headlocks Rowan to start but gets runs over by a shoulder block. A fall away slam (that's way too popular of a move these days) and jumping elbow get two for Rowan and it's off to Ziggler for a nice response. Kane drives Dolph into the corner for a tag to Rollins, who is quickly dropped with a neckbreaker.

Big Show makes a blind tag and throws Ziggler down with a cobra clutch throw as we take a break. Back with Kane holding Ziggler in a chinlock before kicking him in the face to give Rollins two. Big Show comes back in with a headbutt to set up the Vader Bomb. Big Show: "I'M GOING TO HIT MY MOVE!" It's only good for two though and Dolph scores with a quick Fameasser but he has to add a running DDT to Kane. That's finally enough for the tag to Ryback and house is cleaned.

An overhead belly to belly sends Rollins flying into the corner and a big powerslam plants him for good measure. The Meat Hook connects but Mercury comes in for a distraction. Big Show breaks up a double Shell Shock as everything breaks down. Rollins dives onto Rowan but his Blockbuster

attempt is caught in a Shell Shock. Kane makes a save but eats a Zig Zag, only to get dropped by Rollins. The Stooges are thrown in again and the distraction lets Ryback hit Shell Shock on Rollins for the pin at 11:07.

**Rating:** C+. Well the booking has been frustrating all night so why not job out Rollins again while trading wins in the never ending feud as well? If there's one good thing here, it's Ryback looking like a monster this whole time. However, none of this matters until it actually leads somewhere for him. Odds are he'll be put into the battle royal though and get lost in the shuffle.

**Overall Rating:** D+. This show was one of the most head scratching shows I've seen in a very long time. Between having the Intercontinental Title literally handed over from one guy to another in what felt like a parody sketch instead of...whatever that really was supposed to be to faces looking like hopeless losers to somehow making me feel bad for a villain to trading wins with Big Show and Kane continuing to look strong to set up whatever in the world they're going to do, this show was every problem WWE has going on right now.

The short matches are a confusing point for me. On one hand, I really don't want to see these matches keep going on and on, but at the same time I'd like to see a match get enough time to not be a huge waste. Throw in Roman Reigns just talking for five minutes and not getting anywhere and this was a really rough show to sit through.

### Results

Dean Ambrose b. Miz – Dirty Deeds

Natalya b. Naomi – Discus lariat

Daniel Bryan b. Bad News Barrett – Running knee

Fandango b. Curtis Axel – Last Dance

Goldust b. Adam Rose – Final Cut

Dolph Ziggler/Erick Rowan/Ryback b. Kane/Big Show/Seth Rollins – Shell Shock to Rollins

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# Smackdown – February 19, 2015: Yep, It's Still Smackdown

## Smackdown

Date: February 19, 2015

Location: BB&T Center, Sunrise, Florida

Attendance: 8,000

Commentators: Byron Saxton, Michael Cole, Jerry Lawler

It's the final show before Fast Lane and thankfully the ending to Monday's show was a bit more interesting than trying to figure out exactly when Bryan turned into a whiny loser who is using his contractual obligations to get back in the title picture instead of just winning matches like he did last year. Other than that we have Rollins vs. Ziggler again tonight because what else could they air? Let's get to it.

We open with a recap of the Reigns vs. Bryan story from Monday with both of them messing with the others match and a big brawl to end the show.

Opening sequence.

Miz vs. Daniel Bryan

Before the match, we see Miz ripping on Mizdow earlier in the night, but he insists it's just trying to help Mizdow from being a loser. Mizdow of course out pops Miz, earning him a severe tongue lashing. Miz orders him to go get an Egyptian cotton towel for after his match. Apparently Bryan wants Miz to only use American goods and kicks some patriotism into his former mentor.

The running clothesline and corner dropkick set up a top rope hurricanrana but Miz bails to the floor to avoid the running knee. Back in and Miz kicks out the knee before driving knees into the hamstring. You don't try to match submissions with Bryan though and the YES Lock is good for the submission at 2:54.

### Ryback vs. Kane

Ryback hammers him into the corner to start and hits a decent belly to belly. A threat of the Meat Hook sends Kane outside in the same sequence from the first match with the running knee. Back in and Kane hits a running DDT followed by a big boot to send Ryback into the corner. We hit the chinlock for a bit before Ryback fights up with a Thesz Press and the Warrior Splash. Ryback gets knocked off the top rope to the floor, which means absolutely nothing as he hits the Shell Shock immediately after getting back in for the pin at 3:51.

**Rating:** D. This was a ten minute power match packed into less than four minutes. Ryback and Kane could have a decent match if they were given a few more minutes but they had to fly through this instead, likely so we can see a bunch of videos from Raw. Also, Ryback can pin Kane but Reigns can only beat him by countout? These are the kind of things that just make no sense and make you wonder if anyone is actually thinking backstage.

We recap Ambrose making Barrett sign the contract on Monday.

### R-Truth vs. Bad News Barrett

Non-title so just raise Truth's hand now. Ambrose is on commentary and wants to know why Truth is shouting WHOMP THERE IT IS, even though it's on his iPod. Barrett stomps away in the corner as Dean talks about the

title being the backbone of the company. Truth gives Barrett a pelvic thrust, earning him a beating in the corner.

Cole asks how that contract signing can stand. Dean: "Well there's a graphic for the match on WWE.com and the internet is always true." We hit the chinlock on Truth as Barrett talks trash to Dean. Truth fights up with ease and a side kick gets two. Ambrose ignores more trash talk, even as Barrett takes Truth to the floor and beats him up right in front of Dean. Back in and Dean turns his back on Barrett, allowing Truth to grab a rollup for the pin at 3:09.

**Rating:** D. Egads man I was kidding about Truth winning. Remember the good old days when champions ACTUALLY WON MATCHES??? On top of that, history shows us that Truth isn't going anywhere after this win because pinning the champion is a plot device instead of a way to elevate someone. I don't know what Barrett did to deserve this treatment, but he'd have a better future as a shark dentist than as Intercontinental Champion.

Vince is on the cover of Muscle and Fitness.

We look back at Cena and Rusev fighting on Monday. If nothing else, that segment proved that American healthcare is better than Russian, as Cena's eye went from the focal point of the match to ignored in the span of a week.

Bray Wyatt says find him before he finds you.

Sheamus return video.

### New Day vs. Ascension

Kofi is the odd man out here. Viktor and Woods get things going with Xavier planting a knee into the ribs for two. Ascension drags Woods into the corner for a double teaming, featuring a lot of choking in the corner. Back to Viktor for a kick to the ribs but Woods rolls over for an ice cold tag to E. Viktor gets thrown around but gets a reprieve as Big E. wipes away the sweat. A cheap shot from Konnor allows Viktor to send Big E. into the post, setting up Fall of Man for the pin at 2:52. I'm not surprised they've already pulled the plug on New Day, even though I like

at least two of the members of the team.

### Luke Harper vs. Roman Reigns

My goodness Harper has cooled down since winning that Intercontinental Title. It really has become a death knell in the last few years. Reigns throws him into the corner and stomps Luke down with ease. More stomping sends Harper outside and Roman nails him with a running clothesline. If Reigns can do one thing as well as anyone, it's explode with running moves.

Back in and something like the ProtoBomb gets two but they head right back outside where Luke sends him into the steps. Back in and a slingshot hilo of all things gets two for Harper but Reigns fights out of a headlock. A big Samoan drop sends Harper flying but he escapes another and hits a swinging Boss Man Slam for two. Reigns pops back up, no sells a superkick and spears Harper down for the pin at 4:49.

**Rating:** C. As much as I can't stand the no selling of hard shots to the face, this is the kind of win that makes Reigns look better. Have him get in there for a hard hitting match and then spear someone in half for the pin. It's a really basic way of getting him over and to show off his physical abilities instead of whatever the heck the story with Bryan is supposed to be. I've watched the entire thing so far and I still don't get it. What I do get however is Reigns spearing people and pinning them because it looks cool.

Recap of Flair and HHH from Raw for the response to the acceptance for the challenge to talk.

### Big Show vs. Erick Rowan

I don't see this going well. Show kicks Rowan to the floor before the bell and throws him into the steps. He picks Rowan up by the beard and throws him inside where the referee is fine with opening the match despite Rowan taking a horrible beating which should be a DQ but that might make Big Show look weak and this is a Big Show tribute company after all.



Show stomps him down in the corner and plants him with a slam. More stomping sets up the chokeslam for the pin at 2:26. Why in the world did we need a Big Show squash? He beat Daniel Bryan on Raw and now he needs to win a squash? Oh wait, it's more Survivor Series fallout. Why didn't I see that coming?

### Cameron vs. Paige

The Bellas are on commentary and wearing sunglasses, which actually fit them quite well. Cameron flips her hair at Paige to start and gets the revolving elbows in the corner for her efforts. Paige drives knees into the chest and does her shout on the apron to no reaction from the Bellas. Apparently Nikki is fierce. Good to know. Cameron comes back with her horrible offense and slaps Paige in the face, earning her a series of clotheslines. A kick to the face sets up the PTO for the submission at 2:09.

Paige shouts at the Bellas post match. They were actually far easier to sit through here as they've turned up the obnoxious levels to make it more of a character than just half doing everything and coming off like catty teenagers at summer camp. Naturally Nikki is going to retain the title Sunday though, because Paige has won every match leading up to the showdown and the Bellas are evil, meaning they have to get the upper hand.

We recap Goldust and Stardust's issues with Dusty on Monday.

Stardust knows what it's like to be considered a freak, so he embraced Stardust. They were on fire as a team and won the Tag Team Titles, but then darkness crept in. He saw it coming because it happened to him, and it took Cody away from him. Now Stardust is a cancer eating Cody alive and he wants his brother back. That means he has to face his brother and beat him at Fast Lane. Stardust appears on the screen behind him and asks to be spared from Goldust's sentiments. After Sunday, Cody won't be the only one who has ceased to exist. The universe will forget the name of Goldust.

### Jimmy Uso vs. Tyson Kidd

Before the match, Kidd says his decision to team with Cesaro is the best move he's ever made. Natalya's face is rather amusing to say the least. Also of note here: Kidd is about a foot shorter than Cesaro. I've never noticed that kind of a height difference before. Kidd fires off ROH style forearms to the head to start but Jimmy comes back with right hands in the corner. Not that it matters though as Rusev comes in to beat up both guys at 0:57.

Rusev destroys everyone and rants in Russian about Cena. No Lana here.

### Seth Rollins vs. Dolph Ziggler

The Stooges are barred from ringside. Feeling out process to start with both guys going for arm holds and Rollins bailing to the ropes. They hit the mat with Ziggler caught in a headlock but he comes back with a nice dropkick. Rollins avoids a Stinger Splash though and we take a break. Back with Ziggler fighting out of a chinlock (as is almost always the case) but charging into a hot shot for two.

Big Show, Kane, Ryback and Rowan are all at ringside. After what happened earlier, why would you want Rowan out there? Isn't there an elderly music teacher somewhere that could give you a better fighting chance? Rollins yells at Ryback and Rowan, allowing Dolph to come back with a running forearm to put both guys down.

Now the Stinger Splash connects and Ziggler follows it up with a neckbreaker. Rollins tries the buckle bomb but gets countered into a sunset flip, followed by the Fameasser for two more. Dolph dropkicks him out to the floor where Seth slaps Ryback and Rowan. Back in and Ziggler has to fight off Kane, allowing Rollins to hit the buckle bomb, followed by the Curb Stomp for the pin at 10:23.

**Rating:** B-. Solid enough match here but it's nothing we haven't seen them do far better before. Rollins getting a big win is a good sign and I'd assume there's going to be a six man tag set up for Sunday. If nothing else it would fill out the card a bit and get us beyond six matches for the show. Oh and a big talk, because that's what I want to pay for: a preview for the next show.

The Stooges come out and it's time for the big beatdown. Given that Ziggler is done and Rowan is Rowan, it's basically Ryback getting destroyed, making a decent comeback and then getting destroyed again for the last three minutes of the show, because the Stooges were able to subdue Rowan and we're still doing the same things we did around Survivor Series time. So much for Kane and Big Show having issues I guess, unless something happens Sunday.

**Overall Rating:** C-. Now this felt like an alternative to Raw. Monday night tends to be about packing as much stuff as you can into a show, but at the same time it feels like they're stalling for time. This show flies by with some decent wrestling and VERY few stories. Smackdown is much more streamlined and makes it an easier show to sit through.

However, that doesn't make it an interesting show. Nothing happens on this show and it was pure false hope when it moved back to Thursdays. This is right back to the same stuff they did for years and there's no real reason to watch it. Yeah there was some mild storyline development here, but it's more like the downloadable content for a video game: it might be fun to kill some time, but if you never saw it, you wouldn't lose anything from the game itself.

### Results

Daniel Bryan b. Miz – YES Lock

Ryback b. Kane – Shell Shock

R-Truth b. Bad News Barrett – Rollup

Ascension b. New Day – Fall of Man to Big E.

Roman Reigns b. Luke Harper – Spear

Big Show b. Erick Rowan – Chokeslam

Paige b. Cameron – PTO

Jimmy Uso vs. Tyson Kidd went to a no contest when Rusev interfered

Seth Rollins b. Dolph Ziggler – Curb Stomp

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# Smackdown – February 12, 2015: The Longest TV Match In Company History

## **Smackdown**

Date: February 12, 2015

Location: Nutter Center, Dayton, Ohio

Commentators: Michael Cole, Jerry Lawler, Byron Saxton

The big story coming out of Raw is Bryan and Reigns finally coming to blows with Reigns spearing Bryan after winning the match. It didn't come off like a heel turn, but rather Reigns being more aggressive instead of his usual laid back self. The question now becomes what happens to them going forward, as this is a pretty hard turn for the story and could help things out a good bit. Let's get to it.

We open in the back with Kane and Big Show announcing a tag team turmoil match for tonight with Roman Reigns and Daniel Bryan starting things off. Show mentions grabbing the bull by the horns and we get an El Torito cameo. So basically Reigns and Bryan are running a gauntlet? The other teams include Slater Gator, Usos, Los Matadores, Miz/Mizdow, Ascension and presumably Big Show/Kane.

Opening sequence.

### Bray Wyatt vs. R-Truth

You have to wonder why Truth would keep accepting this match as he's been squashed by Wyatt about a dozen times now. Wyatt just sits in the corner waiting until WHOOMP THERE IT IS makes his eyes bug out and gets him to his feet. A hard clothesline drops Truth early on but he's able to low bridge Bray out to the floor. That's fine with Bray as he nails Truth upside the head and takes over again. We hit the nerve hold before Truth avoids a seated splash. The Lie Detector totally misses but gets two anyway. Bray hits his big clothesline, Spider Walks, and Sister Abigail is good for the pin at 4:31.

**Rating:** D. What else did you expect here? Bray continues to squash people and there's nothing to see here in a match with a jobber like Truth. He does get the fans reacting though and is likely to have a job for years as a result. It seems that we're getting Undertaker vs. Wyatt at Wrestlemania, and there would be almost no logical reason for Wyatt to lose there. That match could mean some interesting stories, but I doubt WWE would go there.

### Summer Rae vs. Paige

The Bellas are on commentary again. Paige armdrags her down to start and hits a hard kick to the ribs, followed by Matt Morgan's rotating elbows in the corner. Summer comes back with something like an Indian Deathlock as the Bellas do their usual "we're better than you" schtick. Byron: "You are aware there's a match going on in the ring?" Nikki: "Unfortunately yes there is." Paige hits three clotheslines because there's no other comeback allowed in WWE. The PTO makes Summer give up at 2:58.

The Bellas pose and Paige yells after the match. This is being written about six hours after the fourway Divas match at Takeover: Rival, which was one of the best Divas matches I've ever seen, topping a list comprised of almost all NXT Divas matches. I would pay BIG money to hear someone tell me how the WWE Divas are so much better than the girls down in Florida without using the words John, Cena, Bryan, Danielson, reality or total.

Quick look at Rusev calling Cena an old man and going after his eye. Cena is 37, looks like he's about 30 and probably has at least four or five good years left in him. We're a few years away from calling Cena an old man. He's six years younger than Kane and ten years younger than Big Show, but Cena is the grizzled veteran?

Sheamus return video.

Rikishi is going to the Hall of Fame. I really don't get why people are freaking out over that. He's a multiple time Tag Team Champion, an Intercontinental Champion and was around forever. He even had a brief main event run. That's far better than some people who have gone in but this one isn't ok for some reason?

### Fandango vs. Adam Rose

Rose yells at the Rosebuds to start and stomps Fandango down in the corner. He hooks a bodyscissors followed by a chinlock as this isn't going anywhere. Fandango pops up and hits a snap powerslam, followed by the Last Dance for the pin at 1:39. I have no idea why I'm supposed to care about Fandango now.

Rose shoves the Rosebuds down again. Is this story ever going to move forward?

We see HHH calling out Sting for Fast Lane and Sting accepting. I did like how clear he made the response. Sometimes you just need to keep it simple.

### Tag Team Turmoil

Either this match is going to go nearly an hour or there's something else to close the show. Reigns and Bryan start against Miz and Mizdow. Miz and Bryan get things going with Daniel kicking him in the back and roughly tagging out to Reigns. Roman pounds him down in the corner and tags out just as hard. It's off to Mizdow for the Reality Check but Miz isn't pleased and tags himself back in. Daniel hits a running kick in the corner so Reigns tags himself in for the Superman Punch, but Bryan tags in for the running knee instead of the spear. Miz is done at 2:18.

Next up are the Tag Team Champion Usos who start their section after a break. Bryan grabs a headlock on Jey to start but has to spin out of a wristlock. Daniel stays on the arm but gets taken down for the double elbow drop. It's off to Reigns for a battle of the cousins and Jimmy is quickly run over with a shoulder. The Usos finally start getting together to clothesline Reigns to the floor as they're clearly in no hurry here.

Back to Bryan for a leg lock and some hard forearms to Jey's face. Daniel starts kicking at the leg in the corner as Reigns just glares at both guys. Jey makes a blind tag and comes in with a kick to the face for two. The champs start in on the arm and Daniel bails outside as we take a break. Back with Reigns suplexing Jimmy but getting annoyed at yet another blind tag from Bryan. Daniel: "THIS IS A SUPLEX!" His has a bit more snap but gets the same two count. The Usos take him into the corner again and stomp Daniel down with the running Umaga Attack getting another near fall.

A running headbutt gets two for Jey and it's back to the arm. That goes nowhere as Bryan pops back up with the running clothesline. The first regular tag brings in Reigns and it's a big boot and a neck crank on Jimmy. Back to Bryan to sidestep a charging Jimmy, sending his shoulder into the post. Both Usos head to the floor for a series of kicks to the chest but Roman says lay off of them because they're hurt. Daniel gets right in his face and they shove each other a bit as we go to our third break.

Back again with Daniel cranking on Jey's arm and suplexing him down for two. Bryan is acting a bit heelish but you could also say he's just being more aggressive and trying to win. Roman isn't interested in working on his cousin, which wasn't a problem for him back in the Shield days of course. A Samoan drop finally puts Bryan down for a breather and the hot tag brings in Jimmy.

The kneeling uppercut has Bryan in trouble but he backdrops Jimmy to the floor. Jey tags himself in on the way over though and gets two off a high cross body with Daniel making the save. Jey asks his cousin what's going on (it can't be what's up or that would be gimmick infringement) and everything breaks down.

Reigns drops Jey but gets sent to the floor for a big dive. Bryan dives on everyone not named Jimmy but Jimmy takes too much time, allowing Bryan to hit the Superman Punch. The Usos hit a few superkicks but the Superfly Splash hits knees and Jimmy taps to the YES Lock at 31:50 (total, as all following times will be).

Reigns yells at Bryan for holding the YES Lock too long as we take another break. Back with the argument continuing and Los Matadores coming in as the fourth team. Fernando throws Bryan down and scores with a headscissors to keep the tired Daniel in trouble. Daniel realizes he's in there with Los Matadores and throws Fernando in the surfboard until Diego makes a save. Fernando heads up top but gets butterfly superplexed down, setting up the YES Lock for the submission at 39:47.

Slater Gator is in next with new music and Heath appears to have chopped off his hair. Reigns tags himself in to clean house with the fireman's carry flapjack to Slater, followed by a big spear for another pin at 41:18. We take what might be a record fifth commercial break in one match and come back with Ascension as the sixth team.

Bryan and Viktor get things going with Ascension easily taking over. Daniel fights out of the corner with forearms but Konnor low bridges him to the floor. The double beating is on and Roman gets one as well for trying to make a save. Bryan gets posted and Reigns is sent over the announcers' table. Back in and Daniel takes Fall of Man but the Ascension has been disqualified, somewhere around 49:10. A bunch of referees break it up and Big Show and Kane are the final team.

Cole informs us that Ascension was in fact disqualified. Normally I would have a sarcastic line here but since the referee shouted "YOU TWO ARE DISQUALIFIED!", I'll be a bit more blunt: Cole sounds stupid. He makes it even worse by saying they can in fact confirm Big Show and Kane as the next team. AS IN THE TEAM COMING DOWN THE AISLE. We take another break and come back with Kane stomping on Reigns. A shoulder block gets two but Reigns pops back up with a clothesline, allowing for the tag off to Bryan.

Daniel busts out the YES Kicks, somehow for the first time in this match.



Show makes a fast save though and sends him out to the floor but throws Bryan back over the top and back inside. It's back to Kane for more stomping as he and Show somehow look more exhausted than Bryan and Reigns. More kicks break up the chokeslam but Kane shoves Bryan into Big Show, much to the giant's annoyance.

A double back elbow puts Bryan down and Big Show yells at Reigns a bit. Daniel kicks out of Show's chokeslam attempt before hitting a DDT. That's still not enough for the hot tag though as Show gets two off a splash. He yells at Kane for being negative and chokes Bryan in the air. Kane wants this to be over but Show says he's having fun. Show gets on the middle rope for the Vader Bomb but Kane tags himself in and yells at Show for taking too many risks. Show: "THAT'S RUDE!"

Kane gets caught in the YES Lock and Show makes a very delayed save. This time it's Show tagging himself in but has to stop and yell at Kane again. Reigns gets knocked off the apron but Bryan pulls Show down into the YES Lock. Kane makes a save but asks Show what he's doing. That's quite a rude question.

Big Show thinks so too as he KO Punches Kane and I think we have the 1000<sup>th</sup> Big Show turn. Well that's quite a milestone if nothing else. Show's gift is a spear and running knee to FINALLY end this match at 1:05:15. From what I can find, that's the sixth longest match in company history. Of the five longer matches, three were Royal Rumbles.

**Rating:** C-. The best part of it all: the match wasn't even that good. It was a mix of squashes and long, drawn out tag matches which really isn't enough to carry a match that length of time. Bryan and Reigns were trying to one up each other (Bryan had four falls to Reigns' one, which was over Slater) and they used half of the show to do it because half the roster is in the Middle East on tour. My goodness this felt long and I need a rest after this marathon. It's a remarkable performance from Bryan and Reigns, but not a good match otherwise.

**Overall Rating:** C. The show was entertaining enough but much more of a novelty than anything else. As much as I hate this booking move, there's almost no way to avoid putting the Tag Team Titles on Bryan and Reigns

now, because they literally just beat most of the entire tag division in one night, including the champions. Until the Usos beat Bryan and Reigns, they're the best team in the company by default and it gives them another way to build to the match at Fast Lane. There isn't much else to talk about here due to the main event literally taking up over half the show, but there was nothing else of note anyway.

## Results

Bray Wyatt b. R-Truth – Sister Abigail

Paige b. Summer Rae – PT0

Fandango b. Adam Rose – Last Dance

Roman Reigns/Daniel Bryan won Tag Team Turmoil last eliminating Big Show/Kane – Running knee to Show

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