

# Summerslam Count-Up – 2003: They Were Chanting His Name

## Summerslam 2003

Date: August 24, 2003

Location: America West Arena, Phoenix, Arizona

Attendance: 16,113

Commentators: Jim Ross, Tazz, Michael Cole, Jerry Lawler

Another year another Summerslam and yet again the company has changed. Tonight we have a double main event with a Wrestlemania rematch of Lesnar vs. Angle II for the Smackdown Title and an Elimination Chamber match for the Raw Title. 2003 was split down the middle in quality as Raw was atrocious and Smackdown was some of the best television in company history. It's always interesting to see the two shows come together. Let's get to it.

The US Marine Corps presents the American flag while Lillian sings the Star Spangled Banner.

The opening video talks about how there is evil in this world and the Chamber tonight will prove it.

### Raw Tag Titles: Dudley Boyz vs. La Resistance

The Dudleyz are challenging and the EVIL foreigners are Rene Dupree and Sylvain Grenier. Bubba of course comes out with an American flag to hammer in the face status. The whole patriotism thing was a big deal in this feud as the third member of La Resistance, an American named Rob Conway, pretended to be a soldier to sneak up on the Dudleyz. It's a brawl to start in the aisle with the challengers in full control.

D-Von chokes Dupree with the robe to start before armbarring Grenier down. A slam and a legdrop gets two on Sylvain and it's off to Bubba for the power brawling. He puts Grenier in the Tree of Woe and stands on his crotch to make the French guy scream. The Dudleys clear the ring but Grenier gets in a cheap shot to give the champions control on Bubba. A

double shoulder puts Bubba down for two as the USA chant starts up.

Back to Dupree for a bearhug, which isn't often a move you see on a fat man like Bubba. Some headbutts break up hold but Bubba walks into a spinebuster for two. Bubba punches his way over to the hot tag (four minutes into the match) and D-Von cleans house. A rollup gets two on Grenier as everything breaks down. D-Von walks into a double spinebuster for two but it's What's Up to Dupree. The 3D lays out Dupree but Grenier makes save. Now a cameraman lays out D-Von with a camera to the head to retain the titles. It's Rob Conway of course.

**Rating:** D+. That's a pretty lame choice for an opener. Not only did the fans not get what they wanted but the match sucked as well. This was a dark time for the tag team division and there was no reason at all for there to be two sets of titles at this point. At the end of the day there wasn't nearly enough depth and it made for lame matches like this. The Dudleys would get the belts next month.

Spike tries to run in for the save but Conway lays him out with the camera. Conway hasn't been named here but I think the spoiler is ok at this point.

Coach says La Resistance was clever so Bubba accuses him of being anti-American and vows to get the belts back.

Eric Bischoff is warming up when Intercontinental Champion Christian comes up. He wants to know why he isn't on the show but Bischoff blames Co-GM Steve Austin. Christian isn't pleased but offers to be in Eric's corner for his match later. Bischoff says he has his own plan and won't answer what happens in the bedroom with Linda. Eric says he'll tell everyone later.

We recap A-Train vs. Undertaker. A-Train (Tensai) is working for Vince who is in a semi-war with Taker, setting up tonight's match. This would evolve into a bigger war soon enough.

#### Undertaker vs. A-Train

A-Train comes out with Vince's mistress Sable and Undertaker has bad

ribs. Feeling out process to start with A-Train grabbing a few headlocks for early control. Taker hits a quick Russian legsweep for two and he cranks on the arm to set up Old School. The second attempt works a bit better and Taker stays on the arm. A big boot misses and Taker falls out to the floor, reinjuring the ribs.

A-Train starts pounding away on the ribs and sends them into the barricade for two back in the ring. Taker gets in some shots to the ribs of his own for a breather but A-Train comes back with an impressive suplex to take him down. This is the kind of character A-Train was perfect as: a heavy who could do some impressive moves at times. A-Train fights out of a sleeper with a belly to back suplex but Taker hits a quick Snake Eyes to get a breather. A big boot misses the big bald head and a double clothesline puts each other down.

Taker wins a slugout after A-Train hung in there a lot longer than expected. Now the big boot sets up the legdrop (BROTHER) for two and another legdrop to the back of the head with A-Train on the apron has the bald one staggered. The Last Ride is easily broken up but the referee is bumped.

A-Train hits the Derailer (chokebomb) but the delayed count only gets two. Taker accidentally clotheslines the referee down again (the second match does NOT warrant two ref bumps) and A-Train brings in a chair, only to have it cracked over his own head for a near fall. A-Train escapes a tombstone but gets caught in a chokeslam for the pin.

**Rating:** D. What are you expecting out of this match? This was back when Taker was pretty bad in the ring due to being completely unmotivated and bored with the biker character. Thankfully he would be the Dead Man again by Wrestlemania and would eventually reignite his career around 2007.

Post match Sable tries to seduce Taker for some reason but Stephanie comes in to go after her, presumably setting up a mixed tag.

Coach polls some fans on who wins the Chamber.

We recap Shane McMahon vs. Eric Bischoff. Shane was feuding with Kane but Bischoff stopped them from fighting. Austin made Bischoff vs. Shane for

that night but Kane interfered and cost Shane the match (he later tied Shane to the steps and electrocuted his testicles. It was stupid back then and it's even worse now. This is what I had to deal with people).

Later, Bischoff caused JR to nearly be lit on fire, so Austin had to prevent a lawsuit by making Kane vs. Bischoff but Kane walked away for some reason, giving Bischoff the win by countout. This was a qualifying match for a Summerslam match with Kane, making our match tonight. Then Bischoff went to Linda's house and pinned her arm behind her back and kissed her against her will. Think that's enough to set up this match?

### Shane McMahon vs. Eric Bischoff

Before the match, Eric implies that he screwed Linda several times over that night. This brings out Shane to send Eric into the corner for a beating. Crossface punches send Bischoff to the floor but Shane clotheslines him in the back of the head. Back to ringside and Shane breaks the referee's count (sidebar: why doesn't that happen when both guys are on the floor and one guy slides back in at the last second?) before kicking away at Shane even more.

Bischoff is sent into the announce table and stomped down, only to have Coach come in with a chair and turning heel by helping Bischoff. The referee says ring the bell but Bischoff makes it No DQ and falls count anywhere. Shane is sent into the steps for two as Coach is playing the enforcer here. He holds Shane as Bischoff tells the production truck to turn off JR and King's microphones so Coach can do commentary.

Bischoff starts firing off kicks as Coach does the eternally annoying JR impersonation. This keeps going for awhile until Shane gets in a right hand, only to be dropped by a low blow from Coach. Cue Steve Austin who can't fight unless physically provoked. Shane shoves Coach into Austin which is enough for the beating to begin. Austin and Shane stomp Coach down in the corner and clear the ring. Austin has the mics turned back on as Shane grabs Eric's hand and uses it to slap Austin's face, meaning Austin can Stun Bischoff. That's not good enough for Shane so he puts Eric on the table for the big elbow for the pin.

**Rating:** N/A. This was a long segment instead of a match. Also to recap

how stupid things were at this point, we're supposed to be interested in Austin/Shane vs. Coach/Bischoff when Austin has equal power to Eric. We also have Stephanie vs. Sable, because EVERYONE wants to see the McMahons dominating the show. This is in addition to Evolution dragging Raw down the drain with the Kevin Nash and Goldberg feuds. See why 2003 is considered so bad?

Wrestlemania moment. Kind of an odd time for one of these but Shawn superkicking Bret was an awesome moment.

We see Kevin Nash getting ready. JR: "Nash is a street fighter at heart." I haven't laughed that hard in awhile.

Flair and HHH tell Orton to keep the title on the Game tonight and nothing more.

#### US Title: Eddie Guerrero vs. Chris Benoit vs. Tajiri vs. Rhyno

Eddie is defending and this is one fall to a finish. Eddie has ticked off all three challengers so they all want to take him out. The champion bails to the floor so everyone else can fight and we quickly get down to Rhyno vs. Benoit. Chris hooks a quick Crossface, drawing Eddie in for the save. Tajiri is back in as well but Eddie breaks up a cover. Everyone is in now and all three challengers go after Eddie at the same time.

Rhyno hits a running shoulder to Eddie's ribs in the corner and powerslams him down for two but Benoit comes back with a German suplex. A belly to back gets two on Tajiri but Eddie makes another save. Benoit is suplexed to the floor and Eddie is left alone with Tajiri, only to have the challenger monkey flip Eddie down for two. Rhyno comes back in and sends Tajiri to the floor but Benoit wants to beat up Eddie himself, triggering a brawl between challengers.

Rhyno gets control again and superplexes Eddie down for two but Tajiri kicks him in the back of the head. Tajiri snaps off the handspring elbow for two on Chris but Rhyno sends Tajiri to the floor, only to have Eddie headscissor him out to the floor. Eddie hurricanranas Benoit out of the corner for two and it's Tajiri in again for some hard kicks. Eddie hooks the Lasso From El Paso (Liontamer crossed with the Texas Cloverleaf) on

Tajiri but Benoit stops Rhyno from making the save with the Crossface.

Tajiri makes the ropes so Eddie turns around to dropkick Benoit in the head for the save. Benoit grabs the Crossface on Guerrero but Rhyno and Tajiri make the double save. Rhyno hits a spinebuster for two on Tajiri but Benoit knocks Rhyno to the floor. Chris rolls some Germans on Tajiri but Tajiri reverses into one of his own for two on Benoit.

Tajiri catches a charging Benoit in the Tarantula and the distraction lets Eddie get the US Title to shield himself from Rhyno's Gore. Tajiri breaks up the Frog Splash but gets caught in the Tree of Woe. Benoit Swan Dives Rhyno but Tajiri makes a last second save. Tajiri and Benoit fall to the floor and Eddie frog splashes Rhyno to retain.

**Rating:** B+. This was non-stop action for about eleven minutes and incredibly entertaining as a result. It's a great example of how wrestling and action can be so much more interesting than whatever drama the McMahons have going on at the moment. Watching these four make save after save is WAY more fun than hearing about Bischoff forcing himself on Linda or Stephanie being FURIOUS with Sable over whatever affair her dad is having this month.

We recap Brock Lesnar destroying Zack Gowen on Smackdown (good for him). Lesnar had him COVERED in blood and rubbed the blood on his own chest. Gowen had his leg broken in two places so he couldn't face Matt Hardy tonight. Matt declared himself the winner on Heat like a good heel would.

We recap Angle vs. Lesnar. Angle lost to Brock in the main event of Wrestlemania, leading to Vengeance where Angle pinned Lesnar in a three way to get the title back. The two of them became best friends and friendly rivals, leading to Brock wanting a rematch. Vince said no, but if Lesnar can beat Vince in a cage with Angle as referee, he can have the shot. Before the match, someone attacked Brock and laid him out with a concussion. Brock popped up and turned on Angle, revealing that he's working for Vince as the new heavy and getting the title shot for tonight. Vince called this the REAL Brock Lesnar.

Smackdown World Title: Brock Lesnar vs. Kurt Angle

Angle is defending of course. Brock shoves him in the corner to show off the power so Angle starts getting lower. They hit the technical stuff on the mat but Brock escapes into a standoff. Brock quickly takes him down with a headscissors but it's Angle escaping to another stalemate. Lesnar shoves him around with the power so Angle leverages him into the corner and says bring it on. Some quick armdrags send Brock out to the floor and various things are destroyed in frustration.

Lesnar picks up the belt and tries to walk out with it but Kurt pounds him down in the aisle to start the brawling. Back in and Angle snaps off the first overhead belly to belly for two before stomping him down in the corner. Brock comes right back with a gorilla press and throws Angle out to the floor. Angle is sent into the steps as this is far different from the Wrestlemania match. Back in and Brock hits a release belly to belly without leaving his feet.

Angle slips out of another gorilla press and gets two off an O'Connor Roll, only to walk into a tilt-a-whirl backbreaker for two. We hit the rear naked choke on Angle which is turned into a bodyscissors. Angle fights up but runs into a knee to the ribs to put him right back down. Kurt is pounded into the corner but grabs a rollup for two, only to be clotheslined back down. The story of this match isn't working as well as their first fight. This is much more of a traditional wrestling match with good vs. evil and that's not what these two are best at.

Lesnar comes right back with something like a Muscle Buster for two, followed up by shoulders to the ribs in the corner. Brock sends him into the corner to stay on the ribs and back before firing off more shoulders in the corner. Angle finally moves to avoid a charge, sending Brock shoulder first into the post. A dropkick takes Brock's knee out and Angle rolls some Germans for a close two. Brock comes back with an overhead belly to belly of his own but Angle pops up and tries the Slam, only to be countered into a spinebuster for a close two. The fans are into this match.

Angle counters an F5 into a DDT and both guys are down. A delayed cover gets two for the champion and there go the straps. The Angle Slam connects but Brock is up at two as per tradition. In one of my favorite

moments, Angle puts the straps up so he can take them back down, firing himself up even more. There's the ankle lock but Brock makes a rope. Angle pulls him back so the rope doesn't count in a questionable call, so Lesnar rolls out, bumping the referee in the process.

Lesnar sends him into the corner and Angle tries a sunset flip but stops before going down, wrapping his legs around Brock's neck in a choke before putting on another ankle lock. Lesnar eventually taps but there's no referee so here's Vince with a chair to Angle's back to break the hold. Brock gets to his one good foot and hits a pretty awesome one legged F5 for a delayed two. Vince demands another F5 but Angle counters into the ankle lock. Brock grabs the rope but again Angle pulls him to the middle for no break. Brock grabs all four bottom ropes but the referee doesn't break it, forcing Brock to tap out.

**Rating:** B. It's a good match but the ending never worked for me. At the end of the day, if you touch the ropes the hold is supposed to be broken. That's wrestling 101, but for some reason it doesn't count at the end of this match. The match was good but it was overbooked when you have these two being able to own whatever ring they're in. The Vince stuff was annoying but that's what you have to expect in WWE.

Post match Vince tries to jump Angle again but gets Angle Slammed through a chair for his efforts. And on Vince's birthday too.

Goldberg is listening to an iPod to get ready. That's such a wrong image.

Some Arizona Diamondbacks are here.

We recap Kane vs. RVD. They had been friends and tag champions but Kane lost a match to HHH, forcing him to unmask. This unleashed Kane's inner demons for the 10<sup>th</sup> time or so, turning him into a psycho who lit JR on fire. Kane swore everyone was laughing at him even though RVD told him everything was fine. Kane beat up RVD in a match and tombstoned Linda McMahon on a stage to start his feud with Shane, leading to a rematch with Rob here tonight.

Kane vs. Rob Van Dam



Fink says this is No Holds Barred. So does that make Kane Zeus? JR calls Kane an inbred mongrel dog, which isn't that high up on his list of sayings. Van Dam fires off right hands to start but Kane takes him to the floor with a few uppercuts. Kane charges into a boot and gets kicked in the face to put the monster down. Kane easily slugs him down and pulls out a ladder. Van Dam manages to smash the end of it to drive the ladder into Kane's face, only to have Rolling Thunder caught by the throat.

RVD kicks out of the chokeslam but gets knocked out to the floor as the brawl continues. Kane sends him into the steps and is in full on monster mode. Back in and Van Dam scores with a kick and some shoulders to the ribs for two. Rob goes up top but gets shoved down onto the barricade to give Kane control again. A ladder to the face gets two back in the ring and a big clothesline puts Van Dam down again.

We hit the slow motion part of the match as Kane pounds on Van Dam very slowly to stop the crowd from being interested. Van Dam is backdropped to the floor but Kane badly botches the top rope clothesline, nearly falling on his head and dying. Kane avoids another ladder shot and DDTs Van Dam on the floor, only to have Rob catch a charging Kane in a drop toe-hold to send him face first into the steps. Kane is kicked into the crowd and crotched as he tries to come back to ringside.

Van Dam's spin kick off the apron puts Kane down again as this match just keeps going. Back in and Rolling Thunder onto the chair crushes Kane but Rob can't follow up. Kane sits up but gets caught by a Van Daminator. Rob loads up the Van Terminator but Kane rolls away at the last second. They head to the floor and Kane tombstones Rob onto the steps, killing him dead for the pin.

**Rating:** C-. This was an ok brawl but it went on WAY too long. At the end of the day this was just a rest stop on the way to Kane vs. Shane next month which was probably the more interesting feud anyway. The match was Van Dam trying his best but not being able to keep Kane down. It certainly wasn't a squash but it wasn't many steps above one.

Eric is annoyed that Terri is asking him questions. Linda comes in and slaps Bischoff in the face.

HHH looks at the world title.

The Chamber is lowered.

We recap the world title match. There isn't much to this other than HHH is injured and can't fight Goldberg one on one so we get an Elimination Chamber instead. Goldberg is in for obvious reasons, Jericho and Nash have been feuding lately, Orton is there to give HHH a hand and Shawn is there for past issues with HHH. This gets the music video treatment, set to St. Anger by Metallica.

Raw World Title: HHH vs. Kevin Nash vs. Goldberg vs. Chris Jericho vs. Shawn Michaels vs. Randy Orton

After about 12 minutes of entrances we start with Shawn vs. Jericho, who will go for three minutes. After that time is up, a pod will open to release another wrestler. Three more minutes and another pod opens. This repeats until everyone is in and it's last man standing wins.

Eliminations can occur at any time and have to take place in the ring, not on the cage floor outside the ring next to the pods. They trade hammerlocks to start until Jericho rolls through a cross body for two.

They trade chain wrestling moves into a pinfall reversal sequence as the fans chant for Goldberg. Back up and Shawn slaps him in the face before backdropping him down. Jericho's Walls attempt is countered into a small package for two but Jericho comes back with a bulldog to take Shawn down. JR screws up the world title continuity by saying the title has only changed hands once in Phoenix, but that's the other world title. Not that it matters to WWE but they make such a big deal about the continuity that it's worth pointing out.

Anyway Orton is #3 and gets two off a high cross to Shawn. Michaels is clotheslined to the cage floor but he comes back in to pound away on Jericho. Randy dropkicks him down and stomps Jericho down against the ropes but can't RKO Shawn. Instead Orton is sent to the cage floor by a combined effort, only to have Jericho put Shawn in the Walls. Kevin Nash is in at #4 to make the save and go after Jericho as Shawn and Orton brawl in the ring. Jericho's face is rubbed against the cage to give us our first blood.

Nash (with short blonde hair here for a movie) cleans house but walks into a superkick into a rollup for the pin by Jericho. Nash was in there about two minutes or so. HHH is #5 but Shawn superkicks him before he can get out of the pod to make sure the injured champion doesn't have to do much. Nash lays out Jericho, Orton and Shawn with Jackknives, leaving everyone down for a massive dead spot. Shawn is busted as well.

They finally get back up to slug it out as JR talks about Oklahoma for no apparent reason. Here's Goldberg at #6 to FINALLY wake the crowd up a bit. He cleans house and clotheslines Jericho and Shawn down before spearing Orton down for the pin, leaving us with four. Jericho hits a quick missile dropkick for two on Goldberg but he launches Chris into the cage to put him back down.

Goldberg sends Shawn into the corner before spearing Jericho through the glass pod. Goldberg is dazed though, allowing Shawn to drop the elbow to set up Sweet Chin Music. This is Goldberg though so the kick is blocked by a spear and the Jackhammer gets us down to three. A quick spear and Jackhammer to Jericho leaves us with HHH vs. Goldberg. HHH is still in the pod as he's been in the match for about six minutes now and literally hasn't done anything.

Flair shoves the pod door closed to save HHH so Goldberg kicks the pod door in so we can actually have a match. Goldberg pounds away in the pod before sending HHH face first into the cage. The champion is busted open but he FINALLY gets in a kick to the leg and sends Goldberg into the cage. Goldberg comes right back with a clothesline and they head into the ring. The spear is loaded up but hits the sledgehammer that Flair slid in, keeping the title on HHH.

**Rating:** C-. This didn't work very well and the ending sums up everything wrong with Raw in 2003. The fans were primed for a Goldberg title win, HHH was injured and had no business being in the match anyway, Goldberg dominated the match, HHH literally hit two offensive moves in ten minutes of match time, but HHH uses the sledgehammer to retain the title. Yeah Goldberg got the title a month later, but THIS is the match people remember because THIS is the big show. HHH wins at the big show, the monster wins the next month at the B show. Does this sound familiar to

fans in 2013?

As for the rest of the match, there's nothing going on here. It's less than twenty minutes long from bell to bell and the three minute intervals really hold this down. No one had time to do anything, making it more like the 1995 Rumble than anything else. It's just not very good and the ending sucked whatever life it had out of the match. Again, 2003 Raw just wasn't that good and this match sums up why.

Post match HHH and Evolution gets to destroy Goldberg again with the hammer to really pound in who is the star. Goldberg is handcuffed to the cage so HHH can shove the belt in his face and remind him who the champion is to end the show.

**Overall Rating:** C. There's some good stuff on here but the HHH factor drags it down again. I've said this a lot tonight but 2003 just wasn't a good year overall. It's a bunch of matches and feuds that people don't want to see but we have the same McMahon nonsense over and over again because WWE is their playground and they can do whatever they like. Over on Raw HHH gets to keep the title FOREVER despite being hurt and having beasts like Benoit and Guerrero waiting in the wings to be the next guys. Did they pan out in the end? No, but at this point no one knew that was the case and HHH got the title as a result.

#### Ratings Comparison

La Resistance vs. Dudley Boyz

Original: C

Redo: D+

A-Train vs. Undertaker

Original: D

Redo: D

Eric Bischoff vs. Shane McMahon

Original: D

Redo: N/A

Tajiri vs. Rhyno vs. Eddie Guerrero vs. Chris Benoit

Original: B-

Redo: B+

Brock Lesnar vs. Kurt Angle

Original: A-

Redo: B

Rob Van Dam vs. Kane

Original: C-

Redo: C-

Goldberg vs. HHH vs. Kevin Nash vs. Shawn Michaels vs. Chris Jericho vs. Randy Orton

Original: D

Redo: C-

Overall Rating

Original: D+

Redo: C

So I liked almost all of the matches more or the same the first time, but the overall rating is much higher this time. Not surprising.

Here's the original review if you're interested:

<http://kbwrestlingreviews.com/2011/08/06/history-of-summerslam-count-up-2003-brock-vs-angle-ii/>

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# Summerslam Count-Up – 2002: One of the Greatest Shows of All Time

## Summerslam 2002

Date: August 25, 2002

Location: Nassau Veterans Memorial, Uniondale, New York

Attendance: 14,797

Commentators: Michael Cole, Jerry Lawler, Tazz, Jim Ross

The main story coming into this show would be the Brand Split but that's not really an issue here as the main four PPVs weren't brand exclusive. As for the show itself it's another double main event with Rock defending his WWE (yeah E) Title against a beast named Brock Lesnar and the returning Shawn Michaels fighting his best friend HHH in a street fight. This is considered one of the best shows of all time so hopefully it holds up. Let's get to it.

There's no opening video this year for some reason.

Kurt Angle vs. Rey Mysterio

Rey beat Angle in a tag match and has been an annoyance for him lately. This is right after Mysterio debuted as part of probably the best year for new talent in company history. In 2002 WWE got Mysterio, Brock Lesnar, Batista, Randy Orton and a guy named Cena. This is when Rey's knees weren't held together by glue so it should be awesome. Rey comes in from behind and takes Angle down with a quick springboard dropkick but he has to go to the ropes to escape the ankle lock. An early 619 attempt misses and Angle pulls him to the floor. Very fast start.

Angle kicks at the leg as they come back in. An uppercut staggers Rey and a wheelbarrow suplex puts him down. Rey grabs the rope to avoid a German and gets a quick two off a rollup. Kurt gets two off a backbreaker and bends Rey's back around the ropes. The fans are all over Angle but he shrugs off some forearms and catches a headscissors into a side slam for two.

Off to a wicked half crab on Rey but he somehow sneaks out and gets two off a rollup. Kurt takes his head off with a clothesline, only to get caught in a jawbreaker. Rey tries to speed things up but walks into the overhead belly to belly. There go the straps but Rey armdrags out of the Angle Slam and sends Angle to the floor. Rey loads up a dive but the referee stops him, drawing the most heat of the night. Mysterio will have none of that and dives OVER THE REFEREE to take Angle out.

Back in and a springboard legdrop gets two as the crowd is on fire. Rey tries a victory roll but gets caught in the ankle lock. Mysterio rolls out and send Angle to the ropes for the 619. The West Coast Pop gets a VERY close two and a spinwheel kick puts Angle down again. Mysterio goes up top but Angle runs the ropes for the suplex, only to have Rey flip over him but he tweaks the ankle on the landing. He's fine enough to pop back up and dropkick Angle on the corner though and he loads up a hurricanrana. Angle falls forward on it though and the ankle lock is good for the submission.

**Rating:** A-. EXCELLENT opener here with Mysterio showing he could hang with anyone in the company. He really was amazing to watch when he wasn't banged up and bloated like he is today and this might be his best match ever. This was a great choice for an opener and both guys looked amazing.

Eric Bischoff (Raw) and Stephanie McMahon (Smackdown) agree to share the GM's office tonight.

### Chris Jericho vs. Ric Flair

Flair is a legend, Jericho is a young punk. This led to Jericho running down Flair over and over again so Flair destroyed a bunch of Jericho's band Fozzy's equipment as they were performing on Raw. Jericho takes him into the corner so Flair slaps him in the face. Feeling out process to start as Flair looks to be in a dancing mood tonight. A backdrop puts Flair down and a belly to back suplex does the same.

Back up and Flair hits some LOUD chops to take over. They head to the corner and it's Jericho firing off some chops of his own to set up a Flair Flip in the corner. A clothesline puts Flair on the floor and Jericho hits an elbow off the top to crush him against the barricade. Back in and Jericho fires off punches before doing a little dance. The Canadian gets two off a middle rope missile dropkick and chokes Flair with some tape. Flair fires off some chops but gets dropped by a single right hand.

Jericho goes up top but Flair pulls a page out of every opponent he's ever had to slam him down. Chris misses a charge into the corner and Flair backdrops him down. NOW we go to school but Jericho escapes a suplex and tries the Walls. Flair rolls out but Jericho hits an enziguri to put Naitch down again.

The Lionsault misses and Flair goes back to the chops to take over. Flair tries a half crab but Jericho escapes and puts Flair in the Figure Four. Ric makes the rope but taps out anyway, which isn't a submission apparently. There's a rule clarification if you ever need one. The referee goes to tell the timekeeper that the match is still going, allowing Flair to hit a low blow and put on the Figure Four for the submission. Don't bother setting up the move or anything Ric.

**Rating:** C. I'm sorry for not having much of note to say but it's almost impossible to add stuff to good matches. Nice match here as Flair gets to be the dirtiest player in the game again but it wasn't anything spectacular. Jericho was still awesome as a heel and it felt good to see



Flair make a comeback and beat him in the middle of the ring. This was at a point when Flair could still look decent in a pair of trunks so it wasn't an embarrassment at all.

Heyman gives Brock a pep talk for the main event tonight. Brock is in Rock's head and the next big thing arrives tonight. This is when Brock was the unstoppable monster instead of being HHH cannon fodder for a year. I still can't get over that it lasted that long.

### Eddie Guerrero vs. Edge

Edge is still finding his footing as a singles guy and the potential is through the roof, so the solution is the same as it was with DDP back in 97: put him with really talented people who can make him look awesome. This resulted in Edge vs. Regal, Angle and Guerrero for about six months, making everyone love Edge like few thought possible. Apparently Eddie is jealous of Edge's popularity and his status as a sex symbol. Cole's words, not mine.

Technical stuff to start until Edge suplexes Eddie to the apron but gets his neck snapped across the top rope. Edge comes back with a hot shot and a standing powerslam for two before tying Eddie up in the ropes. There's the spear to Eddie's ribs but Eddie avoids the second attempt to send the Canadian to the floor. Edge is holding his shoulder (the spear arm) and Eddie has something to focus on. The bad shoulder goes into the steps and Edge is in trouble.

Back in and Eddie DDTs the arm before driving some elbows into the shoulder. A jumping DDT to the arm off the top gets two and it's off to a keylock. Edge finally gets to a rope so Eddie stomps even harder on the shoulder. Now it's a cross face chickenwing of all moves shifted into a Fujiwara Armbar. Back up and Eddie belly to back suplexes him down but stays on the arm with a top wristlock. Edge finally slams him down to get a breather and fires off some clotheslines.

The half nelson faceplant gets two and Edge suplexes Eddie to the floor. A cross body off the top to the floor puts Guerrero down but Edge injures the shoulder again. Back in and Edge goes up but has to counter a superplex into a front superplex for two on Eddie. Edge loads up the

spear but Eddie dropkicks him in the shoulder to put him down.

The frog splash hits knees and there's the Edgecution for two. Another Edgecution is countered into a northern lights and Eddie hits the frog splash onto the bad shoulder for two. Some IDIOTS are chanting boring at this. Eddie goes up again but gets slammed down allowing Edge to hit the spear (with the bad shoulder with no problem) for the pin.

**Rating:** B-. This was chugging right along until the STUPID ending. You cannot have Eddie working over on the arm for ten minutes and then hit the finisher like it's nothing. What's the point in even working on the arm if that's how you end the match? It was going fine until that point but the ending just stopped it cold, much like the spear should have done for Edge.

The Un-Americans are ready to beat Booker T and Goldust to prove that America sucks. The only bad part though is they have to do it here in Long Island. This is a classic gimmick and would work at almost any point in history.

Raw Tag Titles: Goldust/Booker T vs. Un-Americans

The Un-Americans are Lance Storm and Christian (with Test) and they have the gold coming in. Goldust and Christian start with the Canadian being run over and uppercutted down for two. Off to Storm who gets caught in an atomic drop and it's Booker T in to fire off right hands. Booker drops a big knee for two and brings in Goldust, only to have Storm poke him in the eye to take over.

The fans chant USA like the true xenophobes they are. We get some classic heel cheating as the Canadians double team until Christian gets two off a backbreaker. Back to Storm who walks into a kind of Boss Man Slam but Christian distracts the referee so the hot tag doesn't count. The beating continues but Goldust catapults Christian into Storm to buy himself some time.

Goldust slaps the mat to try to fire up the crowd but Storm takes out Booker again so there's no one for Goldie to tag. The champions miss a Conchairto and NOW the hot tag goes through. Booker cleans house and lays

in the chops to Christian. A missile dropkick gets two but Booker accidentally superkicks the referee. Booker hits a double ax kick to take out both champions and there's the Spinaroooni. Christian is kicked down but here's Test with a big boot to lay out Booker, giving Christian the pin.

**Rating:** D+. This was a BIG step down from what we've had so far tonight. The match was just dull and nothing we haven't seen done better a hundred times. Booker and Goldust had chemistry and fan support so we had to wait four months for them to get the titles. The Un-Americans were a find midcard heel act but the titles should have changed here.

Nidia is at The World (WWF New York) and makes out with a fan for some reason.

Bischoff and Stephanie continue their stupid back and forth.

#### Intercontinental Title: Rob Van Dam vs. Chris Benoit

Benoit is defending and a Smackdown guy in this brand vs. brand match. Van Dam hits some quick kicks to send Benoit to the outside but Benoit takes him down back inside. Van Dam spins away from a kick in the corner and hits a spinning cross body out of the corner for two. Benoit ducks another kick and hits a great release German suplex to take over. An elbow to the face gets two more for Benoit and it's time to work on the back.

Benoit gets another near fall off a backbreaker and a snap suplex gets the same. Off to an armbar as Benoit wants the shoulder now. Rob gets some quick twos off rollups but Benoit runs him over with another elbow to the face. Benoit runs into a boot in the corner but the split legged moonsault hits knees. The Swan Dive misses but Benoit rolls away from the Five Star as well.

Now the Crossface goes on for a good while but Van Dam makes the ropes. The challenger goes up but Benoit shoves him off the top and shoulder first into the barricade. Back in and Benoit hits a shoulder breaker (see that people? It's called psychology. LEARN IT!) for two as the fans are distracted by something. Benoit wisely puts on a rest hold until their

attention is back again.

They trade cross arm chokes with Benoit taking over again. Van Dam kicks his leg out but misses Rolling Thunder, allowing Benoit to put on the Crossface again. Rob elbows out but gets rolled up for two. Benoit goes back to the arm and sends him shoulder first into the post. A northern lights suplex onto the arm has Van Dam....looking confused and two more don't really change that.

Back to the Crossface and Van Dam looks more annoyed than anything else. Rob (with his hair down for maybe the only time I ever remember) makes the rope and puts a Crossface on Benoit for a few seconds. A jumping kick to the face puts Benoit down for two and now Rolling Thunder connects.

Van Dam hits a shoulder to the ribs but injures the shoulder again (thanks for selling Rob). Not that it matters though as he kicks Benoit in the face for two. Rob gets crotched on the top but counters a belly to back superplex into a cross body to put both guys down. Van Dam pops up and hits the Five Star for the pin and the title. Extra points for Rob doing the finger point from the mat when he's announced as the new champion.

**Rating:** B. This bad shoulder selling is getting on my nerves. Benoit had RVD in one of the best submissions ever three different times and Van Dam looked like he had a five year old child on his leg. The rest of the match however was very solid with Rob hanging in there with Benoit who was his usual awesome self.

Stephanie, having just lost the IC Title to Raw (giving them all the belts I believe) laughs. This story continued to not make sense until they just gave up.

Video on the Un-Americans who hate American. Undertaker wasn't going to stand for this and turned face to deal with them. Well among other reasons but this was his first major feud as a face.

### Undertaker vs. Test

Feeling out process to start with Taker sending Test into the corner and

cranking on the arm. A big clothesline takes Test down for two but he shoves the referee into the ropes to break up Old School. Test sends him into the steps and into the turnbuckle to keep Taker in trouble. A running clothesline in the corner staggers Taker and it's off to an armbar. Taker suplexes out but misses an elbow drop as this continues to drag.

Test misses an elbow as well and now Old School connects. Snake Eyes connects but Test ducks the big boot. Taker shoves him off and hits the chokeslam for two. Christian and Storm come in as a distraction but take a chokeslam each, allowing Test to hit his big boot for two. Test tries a chair shot but hits the ropes, sending it back into his own face. The Tombstone finishes this.

**Rating:** D. This wasn't horrible but come on. It's Undertaker vs. Test at the second biggest show of the year with Test being as an Un-American. Did you really expect ANY other result here? The match was passable enough but it's definitely the lame match on the show. To be fair though it's not even nine minutes long and it's not a disaster.

Now let's get to the real reason this show rocks.

We recap Shawn Michaels vs. HHH. They were best friends back in the late 90s but Shawn broke his back and had to retire. Over the next four years, HHH rose to the top of the company and a higher level than Shawn ever achieved. Shawn came back to Raw and offered to reform DX, but HHH laid him out, saying they were never friends and he just used Shawn.

Then someone rammed Shawn through a windshield and HHH vowed to find out who it was. Shawn found security video revealing it was HHH, who said he did it to prove Shawn is vulnerable. Shawn's doctors said he'd make a full recovery. Say by, Summerslam? The match isn't sanctioned and is a street fight because it couldn't be anything else. This is a great example of a feud based on hatred instead of some convoluted idea and it made the match much better.

### Shawn Michaels vs. HHH

Shawn is in jeans tonight to hide the knee braces. Michaels comes out

with right hands but HHH sends him to the outside. Not that it matters as Shawn is right back inside with more right hands. HHH is tossed to the floor and Shawn hits a nice dive to take him out. Remember that this is Shawn's first match since March of 1998, or four and a half years ago.

A clothesline puts HHH down again and it's garbage can time. HHH gets in a shot to the ribs and drops Shawn face first onto the barricade to get a breather. Shawn comes back in and is tossed over the top again but he skins the cat to a big pop. A trashcan shot caves in HHH's head and a top rope fist to the head puts him down again. Shawn tunes up the band but HHH counters into a backbreaker to get to the meat of the match.

Another backbreaker has Shawn in agony and flopping like a fish as only he can. HHH gives a crotch chop and kicks Shawn down with ease. It's chair time but a shot to the back only gets two. Shawn escapes a suplex into an O'Connor Roll for two but walks into a facebuster. A DDT onto the chair is only good for two but Shawn is busted open. HHH takes off Shawn's belt and whips him in the back as the screaming continues.

And now it's sledgehammer time. Shawn gets in some shots to the ribs to escape and HHH drops the hammer. The fans are behind HBK but he gets whipped into the corner and it's off to the abdominal stretch. HHH gets caught holding the ropes and Hebner physically breaks the hold before yelling HHH into the corner. They slug it out again and HHH loads up a superplex but Shawn shoves him off, only to get crotched. HHH blasts Shawn's wide open back with the chair and the crowd is somber.

A backbreaker onto the chair has Shawn lying motionless but HHH only gets two. He covers a few more times and HHH is very frustrated. A side slam onto the chair gets another two as JR screams for a fast count. Shawn counters a Pedigree onto the chair with a low blow and both guys are down. The HBK chant starts up again and HHH has the chair superkicked into his face. Now HHH is busted open too and Shawn slugs away before hitting the forearm and the nipup to blow the roof off the place.

Shawn backdrops him down and cracks HHH in the head with the chair. HHH is whipped over the corner and out to the floor where Shawn gets to beat on him with the belt. Shawn knocks him onto the announce table and hits

him in the head with Hugo Savinovich's shoe (Lawler: "A heel for a heel!"). HHH is sent into the steps and here's a ladder being slammed into HHH's face.

Some shots to the ribs have HHH screaming and the ladder is placed against the post with HHH being catapulted face first into the steel. That's only good for two so Shawn heads outside again to get the ladder. HHH baseball slides the ladder into Michaels and pounds away at the cut head. For some reason HHH tries to come in off the top and gets caught in a superplex for two.

The crowd is losing their minds off these kickouts. A sunset flip gets two for Shawn but he gets caught by the knee to the face for two. HHH brings in the steps but Shawn drop toeholds him face first into the steel. A clothesline puts HHH on the floor and Shawn pulls out a table. Well why not since we've used everything else.

Shawn puts him on the table and splashes him from the top rope in the big spot of the match. Both guys are DONE and the fans are in awe. Shawn sends the ladder back inside, says he loves us all, and drops the elbow from the top. Michaels has that look in his eye and tunes up the band but HHH catches the kick coming in. He loads up the Pedigree but Shawn sweeps the legs and rolls HHH up for the pin to blow the roof off the place again.

**Rating:** A+. Anyone who has read my stuff over the years knows I do not like a lot of things about HHH. For tonight, forget all that because this is one of the best matches of all time. I've seen this match several times and it still had me smiling to see Shawn make comeback after comeback and give HHH every single thing he deserved. It goes to show how great Shawn is as he came in after being gone nearly FIVE YEARS and does this. That's remarkable when you think about it and is one of the greatest performances of all time.

Let's talk about the match a little bit. It's an excellent example of how to book a comeback, which is probably Shawn's greatest strength. Shawn had the people believing that he was DEAD but he kept hanging in there time after time and made the huge comeback just like the crowd wanted.

The other thing that works so well is the ending which a lot of people overlook.

The crux of this match was the destruction of both guys and seeing how far they could take it. At the end though, Shawn uses a basic wrestling counter and a cradle to win, totally shifting gears and beating HHH, the Cerebral Assassin, by thinking. That's INCREDIBLE psychology and the perfect way to end this match. All in all, it's a masterpiece and arguably the best performance of all time, all things considered.

Post match HHH becomes the universal evil by hitting Shawn square in the back with the sledgehammer and leaving him laying. Shawn is taken out on a stretcher.

Now that we've had that amazing match, it's time for something completely stupid. Howard Finkel of all people has something to say. He's been here forever and while Major League Baseball may be going on strike, he'll be here forever. This brings out Trish Stratus who slapped him in the face recently. Howard insults Long Island women and Trish says he has a sexy voice. He makes various references and they hug but it's a ruse to have Lillian Garcia come in and kick Howard low.

We recap Rock vs. Lesnar. Brock is the new monster and Rock is the warrior champion and there isn't much more to it than that. The videos of Rocky going through special training (actually for The Rundown) were pretty awesome.

#### WWF World Title: The Rock vs. Brock Lesnar

Lesnar has his agent Paul Heyman with him. Rock charges into the ring and walks into a belly to belly suplex for two. Lesnar hits a pair of backbreakers for two and we head to the floor with Brock clotheslining him into the crowd. Apparently Rock has bad ribs coming into this match. Back in and Brock hits another overhead belly to belly suplex for two before dropping some elbows. A powerslam puts Rock down for two as this is one sided so far. Brock fires off some shoulder in the corner but misses a charge and hits the post.

Rock hits a belly to back suplex of his own and both guys are down. Both



guys nip up at the same time and Rock isn't sure what to think. Rock hits some clotheslines but it takes three of them to finally drop Brock. The champion hooks a Sharpshooter and Brock is in trouble. Heyman throws in a chair which distracts Rocky, allowing Lesnar to get out and blast Rock in the ribs with the chair. Off to the bearhug which ended Hogan and takes Rock down to the mat here.

The fans are entirely behind Lesnar here which is very strange to hear. Rock doesn't let his arm drop a third time and now we get a Rocky chant. The champion finally escapes the hold but gets a hard shoulder into the ribs to slow him down again. Rock comes out of the corner with a running clothesline and the crowd reaction is mixed at best. A series of right hands knocks Lesnar out to the floor and Rock loads up the announce table. After scaring Heyman to death, Rock launches Lesnar face first into the post.

There's a Rock Bottom through the table for Heyman and the announcers couldn't be happier. Back in and the Rock Bottom hits Lesnar for a VERY close two. The fans shift affiliation again, now cheering for Brock. Their current hero hits a Rock Bottom of his own for two and both guys stagger to their feet. Rock hits the spinebuster but as he loads up the Elbow, Brock pops up and hits a HUGE clothesline. Here comes the F5 but Rock escapes and tries the Rock Bottom. That and another attempt at the same move are both countered and the F5 gives Lesnar the title.

**Rating:** B-. The match was just ok until the very hot finish, but the last two minutes or so made up for a lot of the earlier problems. This was a great example of how to make a guy like Lesnar look like a monster. Rock left to film The Rundown immediately after this so Lesnar was the only one left standing. Great way to put Brock over here and a pretty solid match overall.

Lesnar celebrates to end the show.

**Overall Rating:** A+. As I said this is considered one of the best shows of all time and it's easy to see why. The main event was the start of a new era in the company, there's a masterpiece of a match, the upper half of the card is stacked and the worst match is passable. I can't put it as

high as Wrestlemania X7 on the all time scale but the fact that it's even in the conversations speaks volumes. This is absolutely worth seeing though and HHH vs. Shawn is must see.

### Ratings Comparison

Kurt Angle vs. Rey Mysterio

Original: A+

Redo: A-

Chris Jericho vs. Ric Flair

Original: B

Redo: C

Eddie Guerrero vs. Edge

Original: C+

Redo: B-

Un-Americans vs. Booker T/Goldust

Original: C-

Redo: D+

Rob Van Dam vs. Chris Benoit

Original: B

Redo: B

Undertaker vs. Test

Original: D

Redo: D

Shawn Michaels vs. HHH

Original: A+

Redo: A+

The Rock vs. Brock Lesnar

Original: C+

Redo: B-

Overall Rating

Original: A+

Redo: A+

Still a masterpiece.

Here's the original review if you're interested:

<http://kbwrestlingreviews.com/2011/08/05/history-of-summerslam-count-up-summerslam-2002-best-summerslam-ever/>

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# Summerslam To Run Four Hours

[Major Update: WWE SummerSlam Officially Moves to Four Hours](#)

Because the solution to having too much programming every single week is an extra hour at the second biggest show of the year.

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## Reviewing the Review: Battleground 2015

This is going to be an interesting one as I was up late watching Battleground and had to leave to get on a plane about half an hour after the show ended. I saw the whole show, but I had a lot on my mind at the time. Now that I've had some time to think about the show, my opinions on it have shifted a bit. Let's get to it.

Starting on the pre-show, King Barrett retained the Crown against R-Truth. Oh sweet goodness I hated this feud, I hated this match and I hated how Barrett was treated during the whole thing. Yeah Barrett won, but that's like giving someone a sticker for not getting arrested this week: it's exactly what he was supposed to do and not something he really should be praised for doing. I don't know what WWE's obsession is with treating Barrett like a joke but I'm hoping (yet again) that they'll treat him seriously this time around.

Randy Orton vs. Sheamus was interesting, which goes against the main thing holding it back: the match didn't change anything. Orton won, but would it really have been different if Sheamus won? No one has anything

to lose and Orton is just kind of floating with nothing to do. I don't want to see these two fight again because it's not that interesting. Both guys were fine in the ring and the match was a good choice for an opener with the hometown boy winning, but there was nothing important here.

However, there is something interesting about how the match was worked. They definitely picked up the pace in the second half, but it felt like a long TV match minus the commercial instead of a pay per view match. It's very telling that they're basically working pay per view style matches on TV today, which takes away from something like this. You can see that they rarely change from the same formula, and that's something that makes pay per views feel a lot less special. Anyway, good match but nothing I'm ever going to think of again.

After a recap of Stephanie's awesomeness, Stephanie made a triple threat between a member of each Divas trio later. I've ranted enough about Stephanie hijacking this story to stroke her own ego, but can we at least make it clear if she's a face or a heel? She associates with the heel, but does face things when she's on her own and we're just supposed to accept it because this is the REAL Stephanie as opposed to the Authority Stephanie. Or do I have that backwards?

The Prime Time Players beat New Day to retain the Tag Team Titles in another Raw match. The only thing of note here was Xavier Woods being an obnoxious jerk during the match, making him more entertaining than he had ever been. The Players are fine as champions, but New Day has the potential to be one of those long running acts in the midcard that stays entertaining with or without ever doing much. That's a good thing, and given that the oldest member is Kofi at 33, it's not like they have to rush anything. Let these guys grow into something special instead of just breaking them up after a few months.

Bray Wyatt and Roman Reigns beat each other up for a long time until Luke Harper reunited with Wyatt to give him the win. This was the old school HIT EACH OTHER REALLY HARD style and these two nailed it as you kind of knew they would. It seems like we're heading for a showdown with the Wyatts vs. Ambrose/Reigns, which is probably the best idea all around. Wyatt has been floating for a bit so putting him back with the guy that

helped make him the biggest he's ever been is a good idea.

Sasha Banks, Charlotte had a good match with Brie Bella in there too. The idea here was to let the two newcomers show off but they have to make it a three way to play up the three way feud that Stephanie has graced us with. They did a good job of keeping Brie away from the action and that's the right move here as Brie just can't keep up with these two. However, the stuff she did was acceptable as they kept it in small doses. There's nothing wrong with that as Brie isn't great in the ring, but she's certainly passable and that's a much better result than some of the disasters the Divas have had before.

This was meant to be a big showcase and it didn't get there, but it was certainly good, which is a step in the right direction. Once we can get past praising Stephanie for setting this up and giving them a fighting chance to get the title off Nikki, things could pick up. I dig the idea though and they worked the match the best way they could have, which gives me a lot of hope for the future.

Oh and screw Cole's "TEAM BELLA IS MORTAL!" line when Brie tapped out. They're the Bellas, not Moolah in the 80s. Then they're faces on Raw because.....well because they're the Bellas.

Now we get to the big match of the night as John Cena defended the US Title against Kevin Owens in their rubber match. This is the most controversial match of the show and while I started absolutely hating it, the more I think about it, and after I heard Owens' promo on Smackdown this week, the more I can live with it. Yes Owens tapped out, but as he said on Smackdown, it's his nature to live to fight another day. It came off more as Owens saying it's not worth it anymore so he'll just fight Cena again later.

However, the tap out came after Owens survived every single thing Cena threw at him, including the super AA, which, as far as I can remember, no one has ever kicked out of before. I would have gone the other way with it: Owens survives the STF and then goes down to the super AA, putting him on a short list of Cena opponents.

At the end of the day though, Owens debuted about two months ago, went

1-2 against Cena in three classics, and is going to have an awesome match against Cesaro at Summerslam. That's quite the debut, but as usual I think it's a case of people (myself included) wanting someone to go straight to the top after they did the same in NXT. I loved what Owens did and while I would have loved to see him take the title, I understand why they went the way they did.

Big Show punched Miz out because Ryback has a staph infection. There wasn't much else they could do here.

Finally we had Brock Lesnar challenging Seth Rollins for the World Title. Much like the opener, this was basically a Raw match with Brock beating him up for nine minutes and then Undertaker showing up to get his revenge on Brock for breaking the Streak a year and a half ago. Keeping the title on Rollins makes sense here, but I really didn't like how they made him look like an afterthought. That's the World Heavyweight Champion, not Santino. Treat both him and the title with the respect they deserve. On top of all that though, it looked like they were trying to make Undertaker heel, and if that's the case they're stupider than I thought.

Overall, Battleground exceeded some very low expectations and kept up the WWE's streak of having good pay per views. There was nothing that blew me away, but the show as a whole was entertaining enough and the whole show was more than acceptable. Now we get to go to Summerslam though, where things can get really big for a change.

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# Battleground 2015: Burn It To The Ground

## Battleground 2015

Date: July 19, 2015

Location: Scottrade Center, St. Louis, Missouri

Commentators: Michael Cole, John Bradshaw Layfield, Jerry Lawler

It's time for the show that is here to fill time until it's Summerslam, which usually isn't the most interesting thing in the world. The main event tonight is Seth Rollins defending the World Title against Brock Lesnar in Brock's return title match after Rollins stole the title at Wrestlemania. We also have Owens vs. Cena III for Cena's US Title which has the potential to steal the show again. Let's get to it.

### Pre-Show: King Barrett vs. R-Truth

For the crown in one of the worst feuds I can remember in a long time. Truth takes him into the corner to start and bunny hops out as we hear a very brief history of the King's Crown Title from the 1980s. Barrett shoves him away but gets a pelvic thrust and dropkick. A slingshot dive drops Barrett as Lawler makes big nose jokes. The announcers babble about BB King, Stephen King and Burger King as we take a break.

Back with Barrett stretching the arms and JBL talking about working on a rap album with Truth. This goes about as far as you would expect until Truth fights back and gets two off an ax kick. Lawler: "He's got the whole world in his nose!" Winds of Change gets two on Truth and the Bull Hammer FINALLY gives Barrett the pin at 9:10.

**Rating:** F. The wrestling sucked, but this fails due to the jokes and the story. This has been a lame story since the beginning and they've made no secret about the fact that no one cares what happens here. Barrett is right back where he started and that's not something you want from



someone who is supposed to be a big deal after winning the tournament. Awful stuff and please let him do anything new, as long as it's serious.

The opening video talks about how the matches tonight have led to a battleground to decide their final fate. This isn't exactly making up for the lame build.

### Randy Orton vs. Sheamus

This is due to Sheamus helping Kane beat Orton a few weeks back, triggering a feud that most people aren't all that interested in seeing. Big pop for the hometown Orton, even though he isn't billed from St. Louis here. Feeling out process to start with Sheamus bailing to the floor, only to have Randy follow him outside to start the beating. The fans get behind Orton but the match immediately gets back to its boring pace.

Sheamus comes back with a kick to the ribs and Orton is in trouble. Three straight Irish Curses put Orton down again for two and a knee drop gets the same. It's time to hit that chinlock as this is normally the time where we would be coming back from a commercial. Back up and they slug it out with Orton getting the better of it (duh) before they head outside to keep up the fight.

Orton drops him onto the table and snaps off the powerslam for two more back inside. The elevated DDT is countered with a necksnap across the top and a tilt-a-whirl powerslam gets another two. Can we please get to the pay per view level stuff and drop this TV style? I know it's the most important thing but it's still nothing I want to see. Both finishers are countered so Sheamus plants him with White Noise for two.

Sheamus goes up but eats a bunch of right hands, setting up the superplex for, say it with me, two. The elevated DDT connects this time and the place goes nuts for the RK0 set up but Sheamus rolls him up for two. The Brogue Kick connects out of nowhere but Sheamus can't cover. Instead it's the Cloverleaf with Orton having to crawl to the ropes twice. Not that it matters as the RK0 finishes Sheamus at 16:46.

**Rating:** C+. This took its time to get going but the second half was far

better than the first. In other words, it was another good TV match formula transferred over to pay per view. Orton going over here, while annoying in a way, was the right choice for an opener, even though I hate Sheamus losing as Mr. Money in the Bank. Good back and forth stuff here though and I got a lot more into it after that chinlock.

Cole talks about the revolution in the Divas' division setting social media on fire. Therefore, it's time to recap the Stephanie segment from Raw because that was the focus of the entire thing. Stephanie saying she set the table was horrible and made Paige's whole story look worthless because Stephanie had to be there to get the credit for everything.

Stephanie, playing a total face instead of the heel authority figure, sucks up to the live crowd. Tonight there's a triple threat match between each Divas' trio and Stephanie will accept nothing less than the house being torn down.

#### Tag Team Titles: Prime Time Players vs. New Day

New Day is challenging after losing the belts to the Players at Money in the Bank. Before the match, New Day talks about staying positive because they know they have to reap the rewards of their sacrifices soon. Woods is on the floor as Kofi starts with Darren. Kofi is a bit too fast for Young so it's off to Titus for some VERY loud chops in the corner. A New Day conference leads to a tag to Big E., who eats a legdrop from Titus. Woods: "WORST LEGDROP EVER!"

It's back to Darren who gets thrown outside as the champs take over, allowing Xavier to be an even more obnoxious (meaning AWESOME) cheerleader. We get the alternating stomps, capped off by a running basement dropkick. Woods: "OH IT'S SO GOOD!" An apron splash gets two on Young (that looked good) and we hit the abdominal stretch.

Woods shouts about tricep meat and Darren scores with an enziguri, setting up the hot tag to Titus so house can be cleaned. Titus' dominance doesn't last long though as it's quickly back to Young. The Midnight Hour is broken up and the Gut Check sends Kofi to the floor. O'Neil comes back in for the Clash of the Titus on Big E. to retain at 8:53.

**Rating:** D+. Well that's a surprise. I'm not sure how I feel about the result as the Players are little more than adequate and New Day is still one of the funniest acts in wrestling. The match was nothing to see but the Players retaining is an acceptable result. It's more of a surprise than anything else, and that's not the worst thing in the world.

Paige is with Charlotte and Becky Lynch in the back and makes sure to praise Stephanie for starting the revolution. They're going to tear the house down tonight and rebuild the division brick by brick.

We recap Reigns vs. Wyatt, which started with Bray using Reigns' daughter to get inside his head, before saying anyone but Reigns. The idea seems to be that Reigns hasn't earned the hero role and Wyatt wants anyone else there, but as usual it isn't clear with Bray.

#### Bray Wyatt vs. Roman Reigns

The fireflies continue to look awesome. They lock up to start with Bray hammering him down in the corner for a bit of a surprise. The fans are WAY into Wyatt here, though it might be more anti-Roman instead. An uppercut sends Wyatt to the floor but he pops Reigns with one of his own to take over again. The cross body block takes Reigns down again but Reigns Samoan drops him out to the floor.

Wyatt is fine with the violence of course and sends Reigns into the steps as this has been almost all Bray so far. They slug it out on the apron for something different, setting up a Wyatt DDT on the apron for something painful. We hit the chinlock and get a creepy Wyatt smile as he pulls back. That's the kind of thing Wyatt does very well and it's a great addition to the whole package. Reigns finally powers up with a belly to back suplex to break the hold.

It's time for the comeback, thankfully with only one standing clothesline. Another belly to back drops Wyatt but he clotheslines Reigns out of the air to break up the apron kick (now the Drive By apparently). Bray adds a backsplash on the floor but takes too long putting Reigns on top, allowing Roman to Batista Bomb him out of the corner for a very close two. The Superman Punch misses but Reigns drops him on the apron again.

The apron boot (screw that Drive By nonsense) connects but Bray shakes it off and Rock Bottoms Reigns (appropriate) for two. Fans: "THAT WAS THREE!" I know they've been talking about making Wyatt face for a long time now and the fan support seems to be there. Sister Abigail is countered into the Superman Punch (with Bray falling before it connected) for two. This is surprising, despite that almost never being a finisher. Reigns gets all fired up and tries the spear but eats a boot, followed by getting all fired up again but charging into a right hand. You have to change it up a bit you see.

Sister Abigail is broken up (obvious due to being a slow kiss) so Reigns hits ten clotheslines in the corner and another Samoan drop. Both guys are spent so Bray grabs some chairs. Reigns knocks them away just as quickly though and grabs chairs of his own. All four chairs wind up in the ring but someone in a hood superkicks Reigns, allowing Bray to hit Sister Abigail for the pin at 22:10.

**Rating:** B. I liked this more than I thought I would and Bray getting the win is a very nice sign. Reigns is going to be a big deal and Wyatt could be as well, but at some point you need to win matches like this one. The interference is a good sign as well with Bray's best days being as a cult leader, so why not let him try it again?

The guy gets in the ring and it's....Luke Harper, so maybe the reunion is on.

Naomi, Tamina and Sasha Banks (collectively known as B.A.D., meaning Beautiful and Dangerous, as well as the fact that they're doomed because that's a horrible name) are ready for the triple threat.

#### Sasha Banks vs. Charlotte vs. Nikki Bella

All nine are here. Nikki and Sasha have a staredown before the match and it's going to be Brie instead. Oh yay.

#### Sasha Banks vs. Charlotte vs. Brie Bella

Thankfully Brie is sent outside early on, leaving the two that know what they're doing in the ring. Charlotte gets her throat snapped across the

top rope, leaving Brie to come in with her catfight style Thesz press. That's fine with Sasha, who sends both of them to the corner for the double knees to the ribs for two each. It seems that they're keeping Brie out of the action for the most part here and it's no secret that that's a good idea.

Sasha headscissors Charlotte down for two and hits a pair of running knees in the corner for the same. Brie makes a save as the fans want Becky. Charlotte clotheslines both of them down but Brie comes back with her own screaming clotheslines. A double bulldog kind of works but Brie just gets two on both. Back up and Sasha sidesteps a charge, sending Charlotte into Brie instead. They're doing a really good job of keeping Brie limited here while the talented ones do their thing.

Brie comes back in with a double missile dropkick (with the camera barely catching it), setting up the BRIE MODE running knees to the chest. The Bellas huddle on the floor but are quickly surrounded, setting up a BIG staredown. Sasha dives through the ropes to take out a lot of them, followed by Charlotte diving on the rest. Back in and Brie breaks up the Bank Statement on Charlotte, only to have the Bella Buster countered into the Figure Eight for the submission at 11:31. Cole: "TEAM BELLA IS MORTAL!" Oh shut up Michael.

**Rating:** C+. This was as well booked as they could have made it. You want to keep Nikki away from these newcomers as long as you can and Brie is about as perfect of a sacrifice as there is. It was clear that Brie couldn't hang with the other two and it would have been crazy to imply she could. This was better than I was expecting and it's clear that they want the Divas to mean something, which is a great sign.

The preshow panel recaps the night, including Barrett beating Truth.

Long recap of Cena vs. Owens. They traded wins in their first two classics but tonight Cena's US Title is on the line. Owens claims that Cena keeps disrespecting him but Owens has never been the kind of guy that says what he really means.

US Title: John Cena vs. Kevin Owens

Cena is defending and gets the JOHN CENA SUCKS song. Cena: "RAIN IT DOWN!" Owens gets in the first big shot to start and slugs Cena down with forearms to the back. More big shots put Cena down and the backsplash (just wait until Owens or Bray have to drop that one) gets two. Cena tries a comeback with a dropkick but Owens puts him down one more time, only to miss a swanton. It's really impressive that a guy his size can do something like that.

Owens busts out Cena's finishing sequence but the AA is countered into Cena's STF. The rope is quickly grabbed as Cena starts his comeback, only to Kevin catch the top rope legdrop into a sitout powerbomb for two more. An AA gets two for the champ, thereby fulfilling the quota for the match. The sunset bomb gets the same but Owens busts out the swinging superplex for the same.

Back up and the Pop Up Powerbomb is countered with a hurricanrana, setting up an AA to Cena, followed by an STF to really fire up the crowd. John finally makes the ropes and dives for a tornado DDT, which still doesn't put Owens away. The Springboard Stunner does better than usual but Owens stays going and takes Cena's head off with a clothesline. No cover though, as Owens goes with the brainbuster onto the knee for two instead.

Another AA gets another two on Kevin and the Pop Up Powerbomb gets the same on the champ. Owens heads up top again and gets caught one more time, setting up the super AA for two. I don't think anyone has ever kicked out of that one before so well done. Cena has the same face he had when the Rock beat him at Wrestlemania so it's off to a rematch that no one wanted to see. Actually it's the STF instead and Owens taps at 22:14.

**Rating:** B+. I didn't like this one quite as much as the other two and I have no idea why you don't put the title on Owens here. Owens kicked out of the super finisher and then just taps out to the regular finish? That's some backwards booking to put it mildly, despite a great match to get there. Owens will be fine, but this really should have been his big moment. As a sidebar, they really didn't put Cesaro and/or Rusev on this show somewhere? Really?

Here's Miz for a chat instead of the Intercontinental Title match. Miz rips on Ryback for bailing on the match because it's messed up his branding team's plans for talk show appearances as the new champion. He knows he's the toughest man in St. Louis and thinks Big Show should retire like everyone wants him to do. Big Show comes out and lays Miz out with one punch as you would expect him to do.

Long recap of Rollins vs. Lesnar. Seth stole the World Title by cashing in Money in the Bank at Wrestlemania, but tonight Lesnar is out for revenge and his title. Brock has also broken Kane's ankle and put the Stooges out of action to make this one on one. Also something about breaking a car for some product placement.

#### WWE World Heavyweight Title: Seth Rollins vs. Brock Lesnar

Seth is defending of course but Brock drives him into the corner for some shoulders to the ribs. An early German attempt sends Seth outside and the champ gets Brock to chase him. Back in and some kicks to the leg have Brock staggered, but Rollins dives into the first German. Three more send Rollins flying and it's out to the floor. He tries to run but Brock just hurdles the barricade and throws him back to ringside. Well that's one way to get him back.

German #6 has Rollins in even more trouble and Brock looks livid. Rollins backflips out of #7 and hits a superkick (way too common a move tonight), followed by three straight low superkicks. Another regular superkick means Rollins can apply to be a Young Buck, but the Pedigree is easily countered. Rollins hits a pair of suicide dives but Brock charges in and throws Rollins with a belly to belly.

Brock rolls three more Germans (10), followed by a release for #11. We're up to thirteen and Rollins looks dead. The F5 connects.....and we've got Undertaker. Brock looks terrified but escapes a chokeslam. The F5 is countered and Undertaker kicks him in the face. We'll say the match was thrown out at 9:00.

**Rating:** C+. I really didn't like this one as I'm getting tired of all the suplexes. I know Brock is capable of doing other stuff but he's basically a popular Royal Rumble 2003 Scott Steiner in this formula. It's still

entertaining enough but Brock can do more stuff than just throw Germans everywhere all the time. This was probably their best idea, but I'm not sure who goes after the belt next.

The chokeslam works the second time and Brock gets tombstoned for good measure. Rollins is nowhere in sight during any of this. A second Tombstone has Heyman freaking out and Undertaker poses to end the show. The fans were behind him so I think it's face vs. face at Summerslam.

**Overall Rating:** B-. This was a really tricky one to grade as it's much more a collection of good to quite good matches instead of a great show. The Undertaker stuff could go a bunch of ways, but it's cool to see him doing ANYTHING other than his usual Wrestlemania appearance. The show was better than I was expecting and for a Summerslam warmup, I'll call it a big success. Just keep the scale in mind when you consider that big success.

### Results

Randy Orton b. Sheamus – RKO

Prime Time Players b. New Day – Clash of the Titus to Big E.

Bray Wyatt b. Roman Reigns – Sister Abigail

Charlotte b. Brie Bella and Sasha Banks – Figure Eight to Bella

John Cena b. Kevin Owens – STF

Brock Lesnar vs. Seth Rollins went to a no contest when Undertaker interfered

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# Reviewing the Review: Money in the Bank 2015

Money in the Bank was always going to be a different kind of show as they had to fly through the build due to the lack of time. However, it was also helpful as we didn't have to sit through a month of people just fighting each other for no reason other than they would be in a contest determined by completely different means of winning. Let's get to it.

We'll get the biggest deal out of the way first: this show took place just a few days after the passing of the American Dream Dusty Rhodes. The show opened with a touching tribute as the roster came on stage to have the bell rung ten times, followed by Dusty's famous theme music being played one last time. This is one of the few wrestling deaths that actually got to me, which is surprising as I never cared much for Rhodes over the years. However, it's always good to see WWE give their heroes the kind of treatment they deserve.

However, there's also some really stupid stuff to get through, starting with the pre-show match. R-Truth beat King Barrett because that's what almost everyone does to Barrett. In theory this leads to Truth as the self-proclaimed King and Barrett running around saying "NO! I'M THE REAL KING!", because he hasn't been embarrassed enough yet. I'm not sure when we reach that point, but I'm scared to think of how bad it could get for him.

They started the regular matches off fast with the Money in the Bank ladder match, consisting of Sheamus, Randy Orton, Dolph Ziggler, Kofi Kingston, Roman Reigns, Neville and Kane. Sheamus won in what was actually a pretty big surprise, meaning it was time for people to criticize it. However, let's take a quick look at why Sheamus was at

worst the second best option to win.

Neville – Not ready

Kane – Will you be serious?

Kofi Kingston – The longest of long shots but never a real contender

Dolph Ziggler – Dead in the water for months if not years now and potentially leaving in the near future. This would have been the weakest choice imaginable as Ziggler isn't a main event guy anymore.

That leaves us with three options.

Randy Orton is always a possibility, but we've seen Orton vs. Rollins how many times now? He would have been a good fall back option, but it feels like something we've seen so many times now that there's nothing to rehash.

Roman Reigns was definitely the heavy favorite but let's imagine the reaction if he wins. "Man, WWE never mixes things up anymore." "Reigns wins, just like everyone knew he would." "Can we get a surprise for once?" Well that's what we got, as Bray Wyatt remembered he had a reason to be mad at Reigns and interfered to cost him the match.

That leaves Sheamus, nearly through process of elimination. He may not be the most exciting option, but at least he's a former World Champion and has been doing well enough in the new heel role. If this leads to him taking over the Authority enforcer role from Big Show/Kane, it's certainly a plus. If Sheamus wins he'll be little more than a transitional champion, but he gets a recharge out of it. I see little problem here, but I'm sure I'll be told why he's so boring and all that, meaning I'll point out why doing the obvious Reigns win wouldn't have been much more interesting.

The match itself was the expected good Money in the Bank match, but as usual there were too many people in there. It lead to a bunch of sitting around for people, with Ziggler especially taking long rests outside on the floor instead of going for the briefcase. I could go for taking this down to five people or so and letting there be some drama instead of just

piling the same spots we see every time. It's still entertaining though.

Nikki Bella beat Paige to retain the title with that big forearm after the referee caught the Bellas cheating because that's how the match was scheduled to end instead of having the ending that actually follows the rules of wrestling. The match was actually good stuff as they had the longest title match since 2006 and the match worked accordingly. That's a telling sign going forward, but that being said, how many Divas would be able to survive a five minute match, let alone over eleven? Nikki is getting better but this Bellas storyline is long past its expiration date.

Ryback and Big Show did an average power match until Miz ran in to make it a three way feud, which is clearly what they've wanted to do the entire time. Why they didn't just MAKE IT THAT IN THE FIRST PLACE is anyone's guess, but I'd assume it has something to do with wanting to stretch feuds out for the sake of stretching them out because they think just waiting means building a story.

Cena vs. Owens II was outstanding, just as you would expect it to be. I liked it better than the first match but I won't put up much of an argument if you liked the first one better. The key here though was Owens' post match attack on Cena, as he continues to be the best heel in the company by just being a jerk that thinks he's better than everyone else. Yeah he'll run when it's not his time, but when the bell rings, he'll go toe to toe with anyone.

That's what makes all the chicken heels annoying: it's clear WWE knows how to book another style but they just don't. Owens could be in the title picture tomorrow if they wanted him to be, but I'm sure it's time for a gimmick match with Cena because that's what they do.

The Prime Time Players took the Tag Team Titles from the New Day in a surprising upset. However, the more you think about it, the more you think about it, the more it makes sense. This was the first time New Day was in a standard tag match (due to Kofi's injuries in the ladder match) and they lost the belts. It makes sense, which is why it's so surprising that WWE actually went with it.

The main event saw WWE World Champion Seth Rollins beat Dean Ambrose in a very, very long ladder match. This was a very solid option for a main event, but I'm hoping they take a break from Ambrose vs. Rollins for a while. It was a long, brutal match but the comebacks got a bit too much to handle near the end. They could have cut five minutes out of the match to make it a bit better, though it was still an excellent match with some great drama. When you can make me believe that something I know won't happen might happen, you're having a good match.

Overall, Money in the Bank was exactly what I was expecting it to be, which made for an entertaining show. The ladder matches were always going to be fun, meaning they were more than carrying the show. That leaves you with anything else as a bonus, which consisted of a fun Divas match and an outstanding rematch between Owens and Cena. For a show thrown together in two weeks and the third in seven or so weeks, that's quite impressive.

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# Money in the Bank 2015: Living The Dream

Money in the Bank 2015

Date: June 14, 2015

Location: Nationwide Arena, Columbus, Ohio

Commentators: Jerry Lawler, John Bradshaw Layfield, Michael Cole

It's already time to crown a new Mr. Money in the Bank, just two and a half months after Seth Rollins cashed in during the main event of Wrestlemania XXXI. In addition to the ladder match, the main event is....another ladder match! Seth Rollins will defend his WWE World Title against Dean Ambrose after saying he doesn't need the Authority's help. Let's get to it.

#### Pre-Show: King Barrett vs. R-Truth

Before the match, Truth says dressing up is fun and he's going to become King What's Up. Barrett comes out with a new silver outfit which he says was tailor made in London. Truth starts fast with a headscissors before sending the King to the floor as we take a quick break. Back with a boot to the face putting Truth down as JBL name drops all the famous British women that have been trying to get together with Barrett.

Cole: "R-Truth has every bit as much right to call himself King as Barrett." No Cole, he doesn't. Truth jumps over him in the corner but takes a kick to the ribs for two. Back up and the Winds of Change is countered into a crucifix for the pin at 5:49. Cole treats this as a huge deal because he has the memory of a drunken elephant.

**Rating:** D+. Just a Raw match here with Barrett losing again. I don't know if this makes Truth the King, but why not at this point? Barrett needs to get far, far away from WWE because it seems that he tortured and murdered Stephanie's pet Feline Animal Champion (pick a hashtag for it) who was destined to revolutionize our industry one day with groundbreaking forms of entertainment at a WWE Pay Per View Event which everyone would be talking about on social media, thereby earning WWE a very prestigious award due to Stephanie's leadership. How else can you explain the way he loses so much?

Truth gets the crown but throws it at Barrett and leaves.

As expected, this show is dedicated to Dusty Rhodes. We also get a ten bell salute with the roster on stage, complete with Dusty's theme song

playing as everyone claps along. Dusty deserves this and so much more.

The opening video focuses on how there can only be one, meaning a briefcase holder and champion. Wouldn't that be two? Also, I'm sure that theme is in no way connected to last night's UFC 188 theme of "there can only be one." There's actually no sarcasm there. It really is likely just a coincidence.

Randy Orton vs. Roman Reigns vs. Neville vs. Sheamus vs. Kane vs. Kofi Kingston vs. Dolph Ziggler

Money in the Bank. Kofi is one third of the Tag Team Champions. Everyone brawls to start and Kofi goes for the ladder but everyone stops to look at him in a funny spot. We get the rapid fire climbs with almost everyone getting a hand on the case until almost everyone is knocked down. Kane stops Sheamus from climbing but eats the running DDT from Ziggler.

It's Sheamus back up first and cleaning house with ladder shots on the floor but having to run back inside to shove Kofi off a ladder. Neville comes back in but takes Trouble in Paradise, followed by Sheamus taking the same. Kofi's next climb is broken up by Neville and Reigns takes Kingston down as well. With right hands not working, Reigns blasts Neville in the face with the ladder but has to deal with Kofi.

Reigns powerbombs Kofi onto a ladder bridged over the bottom rope and then powerbombs Neville onto Kingston for a big pileup. Kane is back up to stop Roman but Orton remembers that he's in this match and pulls Kane down by the business pants, followed by an RK0. The second RK0 puts Kingston down but Neville springboards over Randy onto the ladder, only to get pulled down into RK0 #3. Sheamus can't get over Orton to grab the briefcase either and a backbreaker puts him down.

That earns Orton a Brogue Kick but Ziggler (where has he been?) runs up the ladder for a save. Ziggler and Sheamus slug it out on top of the ladder with Sheamus teasing White Noise from way up there, only to have Ziggler counter into a sleeper. That changes into a Zig Zag for a massive crash. The Red Arrow drills Sheamus but Neville comes up holding his hand or wrist. He's fine enough to knock Ziggler off the top of the ladder but Kane pulls Neville's leg to break it up.

Kane hits Neville and Ziggler with the ladder and throws everything outside, only to turn around into a Superman Punch. Reigns, ever the genius, dives onto the pile instead of climbing a ladder. Cue Big E. and Xavier Woods because this match needs more people. They get Kofi most of the way up but Reigns makes a save and powerbombs Kofi over the top and onto everyone at once.

Orton comes back in and takes a spear, leaving Reigns all alone. He goes up but we've got Wyatt! Bray lays out Reigns with Sister Abigail (remember that Reigns cost Wyatt a match against Ambrose a few weeks back) and leaves, allowing Sheamus to climb up the ladder but Neville is there for the save. Sheamus rips at his face and shoves Neville down to win the briefcase at 20:33.

**Rating:** B-. This was one of the more entertaining Money in the Banks in a few years, but the standard problems hurt it. At the end of the day, this needs to have five or six people instead of seven. The extra people makes this a rotating triple threat with guys like Orton and Ziggler just laying around for long stretches and some, mainly Ziggler, just being there to fill in a spot instead of really adding anything. Fun stuff, but they need to cut the roster down.

Paige talks about the Bellas dominating the Divas division for years and how they do it all for themselves. Tonight Paige is going to change all that and she's going to do it for Dusty.

Divas Title: Nikki Bella vs. Paige

Nikki is defending. Paige is ready to go but Nikki wants to do jumping jacks. That's fine with Paige as she takes it to the floor and slams Nikki down, only to get dropped face first onto the barricade. Nikki takes it back inside for some pushups as the rest of the Divas are watching in the back. Paige comes back with a knee to the jaw for two but eats a slingshot suplex. JBL calls this creative but thankfully credits it to Tully Blanchard.

We hit the bodyscissors and a chinlock on Paige for a bit before she kicks Nikki in the face. Why make things more complicated than they need to be? Something like PTO (minus pulling on Nikki's arms) has Nikki in

trouble but she grabs the ropes. Because no one was pulling on her arms you see. An attempt at the actual PTO is kicked away and Nikki hits her spinning kick out of the corner to the....side?

The Rack Attack is countered into the Rampaige for two because All Hail The Bellas. They fight to the corner and fall outside for some Twin Magic, but Paige reverses Brie's small package for the pin. They don't even bother ringing the bell though as Brie rips the stuffing out of her top, allowing Nikki to come back in with the forearm and Rack Attack for the pin to retain at 11:17. JBL wants to know how that's not a DQ (fair question) and points out that Paige has alienated all the other Divas so no one wants to help her.

**Rating:** C+. Annoying Bella finish aside, this was one of the better Divas matches in a long time, and one of the reasons is the time. That was the longest Divas/Women's Title match on pay per view since 2006 and only the second female singles match to get over ten minutes in that time span. However, I'm beyond tired of Nikki keeping the title as they try everything they can to make us accept the Bellas as top stars on Lita and Trish's levels. Either that or they're making us wait until Nikki is the longest reigning Divas Champion ever so we forget about AJ.

We recap Ryback vs. Big Show, but here's Miz with something to say. He sucks up to his home state fans but reminds them that they don't count if they live in Los Angeles or New York. His team is working on giving us the Intercontinental Title feud that we deserve, but tonight he's creating an audio visual masterpiece.

#### Intercontinental Title: Big Show vs. Ryback

Miz is on commentary and Ryback is defending. Ryback hits a spinebuster and Meathook in the first 20 seconds but Shell Shock is broken up. That's fine with Ryback who knocks Show over the top rope but stops to beat up Miz. Back inside and Big Show gets in a shot to the ribs to slow things down. Ryback throws on an armbar of all things before nailing a suplex. The Meathook is countered into a chokeslam for two and the KO Punch knocks Ryback to the floor. Show goes to get him but Miz attacks with a microphone for the DQ at 5:30.



**Rating:** C. Not bad here and now they can go to the triple threat that they clearly wanted to do all along and didn't do here for reasons I don't quite understand. Miz interfering and ending the match makes sense and hopefully leads to Miz rising up the card a bit more. I've always (well almost always) liked the guy and he'd be great as a shorter form Honky Tonk Man: he gets a title from more deserving people and brags about how awesome he is.

We recap Owens vs. Cena. Owens beat Cena two weeks ago in his WWE in ring debut and talked about how this made him a better wrestler than Cena. John countered by saying he was still a better man because he fights for the right causes. Tonight is the rematch for bragging rights.

#### Kevin Owens vs. John Cena

Owens' NXT and Cena's US Titles aren't on the line. Cena grabs a headlock to start as they're trying to make this feel as big as they can. A wristlock earns Cena a right hand to the face but Cena blasts him with the big clothesline. The fans are WAY into this and it's really helping things out. Owens dropkicks him down and hooks a chinlock before busts out Cena's finishing sequence, including the Shuffle.

Cena escapes the AA (that's a weird one to type) and puts on the STF. That goes as far as the first STF is going to go so Cena busts out a reverse suplex for two. A Codebreaker of all things staggers Cena but Owens has to escape an AA of his own and hits a release German suplex, followed by the Cannonball for two more. The big man goes up top for a Swanton (but he's big! I thought big guys couldn't wrestle a fast paced style.) but Cena gets the knees up. Again, shouldn't that hurt his knees?

The AA gets two (why is Cena even surprised at this point?) and Cena spends way too much time arguing with the referee. Cena takes him to the corner for a super AA but gets countered into an electric chair, which Owens spins into a Batista Bomb for a very close two. The Pop Up Powerbomb is countered with a hurricanrana but Owens nails him with a superkick for an even closer near fall, causing Owens to headbutt the mat in frustration. There's a tornado DDT for two for Cena as frustration is really setting in.

Cena misses the top rope Fameasser and eats the package slam for two. Owens keeps things even by missing the springboard moonsault and another AA gets another two count. They head up top again with Cena's superplex being countered into the swinging fisherman's superplex for an even closer fall.

With nothing else working, Cena slaps on the STF but Owens gets the ropes again. In a very unique move, Cena tries a sunset flip but can't get all the way over, so he pulls up and flips Owens down into a sunset bomb for two more. The Pop Up Powerbomb out of nowhere gets another near fall and both guys are spent. Back up again and the springboard Stunner sets up the third AA for the pin at 19:19.

**Rating:** A+. Yep. This was one of the best matches they've had in a long time and these two were just trading bombs for nearly 20 minutes. Cena respected Owens the entire way and could barely hang in there with him. This is one of those matches where Owens doesn't lose a thing by getting pinned so everyone comes out looking great.

Post match Cena offers a handshake to a real champion but gets kicked in the ribs and tastes the first apron bomb in WWE. Owens walks off with the US Title but throws it down because "The real champ is here!" and laughs like a villain. He calls for a stretcher which is probably match #3 for them. Cena limps off, not being able to put much weight on the knee.

Ambrose talks about getting ripped off by Rollins and Kane last year at this very event but he knows he's earned this title. It was about respect last month but now it's about a payday. Of note here: Ambrose called Rollins an errand boy, which was an old Dusty insult.

We get a video dedication to Dusty Rhodes. This felt like something very special, just as it should have.

#### Tag Team Titles: New Day vs. Prime Time Players

Xavier/Big E. are defending for New Day here and Kofi is off recovering from the ladder match. Woods refers to Kofi not winning as a travesty and Big E. rips on Ohio State for their NCAA sanctions a few years ago. However, Kofi needs some power of positivity right now, so the Clap

Nation needs to give him the clap therapy that he needs. Woods tells Columbus that they really suck but Big E. says nothing will deter them. Xavier looked like he was about to explode.

Darren flips out of a Woods wristlock to start but it's quickly off to Big E. to slam Young down. A double splash gets two on Darren and Big E. puts on an abdominal stretch, complete with New Day Rocks slaps to the ribs. There's a belly to belly for two before it's off to Woods for a cobra clutch. Darren's sunset flip to Woods isn't quite as good as Cena's was earlier and it's a blind tag to bring in Big E. for the save. Big E. comes in but goes into the post, finally allowing for the hot tag to Titus to clean house. Everything breaks down and the Clash of the Titus is enough to pin Woods at 5:48 to give us new champions.

**Rating:** C-. This was in a very tough spot on the card as they were coming after the Owens vs. Cena classic and the Dusty video, but at least we saw a finish that made sense: New Day was down a man and finally in a fair match and lost the belts as a result. I don't picture the Players as a long term team on top but it's cool to see them get a run.

The pre-show panel does their thing.

We recap the ladder match. Reigns vs. Wyatt is already confirmed for Battleground.

We recap the World Title match. Ambrose pinned Rollins at Elimination Chamber but wound up winning by DQ, meaning it's time for a ladder rematch.

Rollins walks past the Stooges in the back but runs into Kane. The big man says this is what he's been waiting for since Wrestlemania and tonight the future is history. The Authority comes up and says a loss is all on Seth. HHH gives Rollins a pep talk and wants Rollins to show the fans why he chose Rollins to be the man. Show them all.

WWE World Title: Dean Ambrose vs. Seth Rollins

Ladder match. Rollins is defending and comes out all alone. We start with some wrestling as Dean takes him down to the mat and works on the legs in

a smart move. A kick to the back has Rollins crawling to the corner but he snaps Dean's throat across the top. Dean is able to stop Seth from getting to the ladder and drops him with a big clothesline.

They head outside for the first time with Dean taking a slam onto the floor. We get the first ladder brought in (not exactly a dramatic introduction) but Seth springboards onto it and goes inside, only to have the suicide dive hit the steel. Both guys go for a climb but Dean is smart enough to ram Seth into the ladder to take over again. A butterfly suplex sends Rollins into the ladder in the corner and Dean goes up.

We get the spot that we've been waiting on all night as Dean does the Flip Flop and Fly before diving into the standing elbow drop. Lawler seemed genuinely happy to see that. Rollins is in trouble but blasts Dean in the knee to stop a climb. Dean's knee gets crushed in the ladder as we get some rare psychology in one of these things. Seth slaps on the Figure Four around the post and Dean is in even more trouble as Rollins shouts that Dean can't climb with one leg.

The champ follows it up with a regular Figure Four in the middle of the ring before tying Dean up in the Tree of Woe. You know that's not all he's doing as he cracks Dean in the knee with a chair. He adds a double stomp to Dean's chest but Ambrose is still caught in the Tree of Woe. Somehow Dean is able to shove the ladder over and knock Seth down for a huge crash.

The rebound clothesline is countered with a ladder to the face though and both guys are down. Rollins goes to the top for some reason and gets a chair pelted at his head, followed by a clothesline to knock Seth back down to the mat. A Cactus Clothesline puts both guys on the floor and everyone is down. It's Rollins back in first and chucking a ladder at Dean, only to eat the rebound clothesline instead.

They fight into the crowd with Dean being knocked into a wall. Rollins heads back to ringside but can't lift a ladder up, allowing Dean to charge back (while limping) and knock Seth down. The ladder is bridged between the ring and announcers' table and Seth is quickly backdropped (mostly) through the ladder to leave Dean all alone in the ring. Dean is

spent and takes a long time to set up the ladder, plus he only has one good leg. Rollins gets back up and tries a powerbomb, only to be hurricanranaed out to the floor.

They crash over the announcers' table and Seth tries a Pedigree, only to be countered into Dirty Deeds (THUD). The table doesn't break so the fans want one more time but Dean can't get up. Eventually Ambrose does the slow climb but Rollins comes back in with a monitor to crush the knee one more time. The champ climbs but Dean grabs the leg, only to eat a Pedigree, allowing Rollins to....not quite retain as Dean grabs the leg again. Ambrose pulls him down and sidesteps a charge to send Seth outside one more time.

Rollins pulls Dean out as well and sends him face first into the bridged ladder, following a running powerbomb against the barricade. That's not enough as he does it again against the other barricade to knock Dean out. Seth still isn't done as he piles a bunch of chairs onto a ladder for a running sitout powerbomb. Rollins makes sure to bury Dean under a bunch of metal objects but Ambrose gets up AGAIN. Both guys climb on the same side and they pull it down at the same time with Rollins coming up with it to retain at 35:53.

**Rating:** A-. I really liked the match for the most part but they got a bit ridiculous with Dean getting up over and over so many times. They nailed the drama part though with Rollins never being able to put Dean away until the very end. Very entertaining match here and hopefully the end to the feud.

HHH congratulates Rollins but Jojo comes up for an interview where Seth gets to say he told us so. He declares himself the greatest champion of all time as Dean looks defeated to really end the show after 11pm, which might be a first.

**Overall Rating:** B+. This followed the Money in the Bank formula with the ladder match headlining things and then two other big matches filling out the card. Unfortunately the supporting matches aren't as good and held this back from being a great show. That being said, you had six matches and half ranged from good to great so it's hard to say this wasn't a very

good show. WWE has found the pay per view groove again and haven't had a bad one in a very, very long time.

### Results

Sheamus b. Roman Reigns, Kane, Neville, Kofi Kingston, Dolph Ziggler and Randy Orton – Sheamus pulled down the briefcase

Nikki Bella b. Paige – Rack Attack

Big Show b. Ryback via DQ when Miz interfered

John Cena b. Kevin Owens – Attitude Adjustment

Prime Time Players b. New Day – Clash of the Titus

Seth Rollins b. Dean Ambrose – Rollins pulled down the title

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## **Cena vs. Owens II**

Was better than the first. I'm as shocked as you are.

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# Mr. Money In The Bank Is.....

Delayed by a spoiler warning..... Sheamus. Roman Reigns had it won but Bray Wyatt started his next feud by breaking it up. Remember a few weeks back on Smackdown (yes, Smackdown) when Reigns Superman Punched Wyatt to cost him a match against Ambrose? I doubt that's the reason but it's actually there.

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## Elimination Chamber 2015: The Future Is Here

### Elimination Chamber 2015

Date: May 29, 2015

Location: American Bank Center, Corpus Christi, Texas

Commentators: Michael Cole, Booker T., Jerry Lawler

It's another pay per view just two weeks after Payback but the card has been put together fairly well this time. The main event this time is WWE World Champion Seth Rollins defending against Dean Ambrose, plus the Tag Team Titles and Intercontinental Title being decided inside the Chamber, both for the first time ever. Let's get to it.

### Pre-Show: Zack Ryder vs. Stardust

Bonus match. Ryder had a decent match against Cena on Monday so it's nice to see him get a PPV spot, even if it's something like this. Stardust hits some shoulders to start but Zack punches him to the floor for a quick baseball slide. Back in and the announcers talk about the World

Title match as Stardust cranks on the arm. That goes nowhere so let's talk about Love Boat.

Ryder fights back up as the announcers transition into a discussion of Arrow's Stephen Amell wanting to fight Stardust at some point. JBL promises us a new move from Stardust called the Queen's Crossbow (Arrow reference), which winds up being Cross Rhodes and it puts Ryder out at 5:53.

**Rating:** D. Well so much for Ryder. He had a nice little comeback and the fans liked him, but we need to keep Stardust strong for a match with a celebrity which is probably coming at Summerslam. Nothing match here and that's the problem with pre-show matches. Ryder could be very good in a midcard role but this is what we're stuck with instead. Joy indeed.

It's time for MizTV with special guest Daniel Bryan. We look at Bryan vacating the title and Miz said that was hard even for him. In his time away, Bryan has written a book but his career isn't over. Miz thinks he can help Bryan with marketing and merchandising and it's only going to cost him 10% of the profit.

Bryan passes but promises he'll be back. Miz wants to slap him in the face but knows he can't so he has some advice for Bryan....which we don't hear as Bryan thinks it's going to be boring. Therefore, he's brought someone who also thinks Miz is boring: Axelmania and Macho Mandow. House is quickly cleaned and the good guys celebrate. Nothing to see here as it was just a big commercial for Bryan's book.

The opening video sets up both Chamber matches with a focus on the structure itself. Owens vs. Cena gets some hype as well.

Tag Team Titles: Lucha Dragons vs. Ascension vs. Los Matadores vs. Prime Time Players vs. Cesaro/Tyson Kidd vs. New Day

Inside the Elimination Chamber, no tags required, New Day is defending, all three champions will be allowed in and we have four minute intervals. Two teams start and one more enters every minute. As the name suggests, it's elimination rules and the last team standing wins the titles. Lucha Dragons and Ascension get things going (these teams can never escape each



other) with the Dragons hammering on the power guys as fast as they can but Ascension starts slugging Cara down in the corner.

Sin escapes and throws Kalisto up onto the New Day pod but they try to pull him down inside. Cara gets slammed down but Kalisto kicks both Ascension members down, allowing Sin Cara to get up and hit a HUGE Swanton off a pod to crush Viktor. Kalisto loads up a dive of his own but New Day pulls him down to break it up, giving us New Day doing the LUCHA dance. Cesaro and Kidd are in next and Cesaro starts busting out the European uppercuts, including Tyson launching Konnor into Swiss Death for two.

Kalisto is still on top of the pod until Cesaro superplexes him down and Kidd adds a springboard elbow drop for two with Cara having to dive in for a save. Only Kidd and Cesaro are on their feet and Kidd slaps the Sharpshooter on Viktor but Konnor breaks it up. The La Mistica mat slam plants Konnor as Lawler calls JBL JR by mistake. Cara powerbombs Kidd as Kalisto is on top of the Prime Time Players' pod.

Los Matadores, with Torito on top of their pod, are in third with the bull hitting a good looking hurricanrana on Konnor. During the entrance, Kalisto has climbed to the top of the Chamber itself and drops down onto everyone for one of the biggest crashes (or at least the highest) I've ever seen.

Torito gets thrown into Fernando, setting up the Fall of Man on Diego for the first elimination. Did anyone buy Los Matadores as a real threat anyway? Kalisto, thankfully able to walk, climbs the corner but gets pulled down as well for another Fall of Man to get rid of the Dragons. There goes my pick of course. So we have Ascension vs. Kidd/Cesaro at the moment but the Prime Time Players are added...with Ascension nailing them as soon as their pod opens.

Titus fights back and throws both guys into the ring so Young can hit his gutbuster on Viktor for a quick elimination. Things settle down a bit with Titus suplexing Young onto both guys for two, but Cesaro pops up and drills O'Neal with a clothesline. Cesaro loads Young up for a gutwrench superplex but Titus adds a powerbomb to make it a Tower of Doom for two.

New Day comes in to complete the field but Cesaro and Kidd are all over them with a triple suplex.

Things get smart in a hurry as Cesaro and Kidd throw Woods into the pod and shut the door to even things up. The Swing into the dropkick knocks Kofi silly but Young sneaks in to roll Cesaro up for the elimination. It's the Prime Time Players vs. New Day for the titles and Big E. gets Woods out of the pod to make it 3-2. New Day stomps Titus against the chamber wall and get his head through the chain.

Young fights back and sends Big E shoulder first into the pod with his head hitting the pod for good measure. Everyone is down but Titus frees himself and starts throwing Big E. into the wall. Xavier gets the same treatment and the gutbuster takes out Kofi for two. Big E. is back up and suplexes Darren on the cage floor, only to walk into a powerslam from Titus. Not that it matters though as Trouble in Paradise sets up a triple pin to retain the titles at 19:34.

**Rating:** B. This was a lot of fun and the best choice they had on the card for an opener. New Day winning will be worth it for the victory promo alone and the more I think about it, the more I like the booking. Any team can say they haven't gotten a fair shot at them since it was 3-2 so this doesn't close all the doors for challengers. I love this protecting the losers booking they've had lately and it helps so much in places like this.

Rusev is out of the Chamber with a broken foot. No replacement has been announced yet.

Ziggler is getting ready when Lana comes up. Tonight isn't about showing Rusev up but about getting the title around Ziggler's waist. Dolph says that after he wins the title, maybe it can be about them.

Divas Title: Nikki Bella vs. Naomi vs. Paige

No one is allowed at ringside. Nikki is defending after Paige won a battle royal a few months back but was laid out by Naomi. The champ is quickly taken to the floor and thrown into the announcers' table, leaving Paige to hit her clotheslines on Naomi. Nikki is quickly back in with a

facebuster for two on Paige. The Alabama Slam plants Paige again but Naomi rolls Nikki up for two.

Naomi starts cleaning house and loads Paige up for a belly to back superplex, only to have Nikki come in for a Tower of Doom. The Rack Attack to Paige is broken up with a Rear View for a near fall with Paige making the save. Naomi heads to the corner but gets caught in an electric chair from Paige, only to be countered into a reverse hurricanrana. It didn't go smoothly but it could have been a lot worse. Not that it matters as Nikki Rack Attacks Naomi to retain at 6:05.

**Rating:** C. What was I thinking to question Nikki's title reign of awesomeness that is TOTALLY better than Trish and Lita's reigns combined? The match was fairly good but again, there's only so much you can do other than cram in spots with just six minutes. I have no idea where they can go next with Nikki aside from another Brie feud or facing an NXT callup.

We recap Kevin Owens vs. John Cena. Owens answered a Cena open challenge a few weeks back but said he already had the prize he wanted in the NXT Title. He got in a surprise powerbomb on Cena and stepped on the US Title to show how big of a jerk he was. This set up a showdown tonight in a champion vs. champion match.

### Kevin Owens vs. John Cena

Alright WWE. This is your chance. You can elevate someone or go with the same old stuff. Owens is very fired up to be in there and actually doesn't drop to the floor at the bell as is his custom in NXT. A quick shoulder puts Owens down but he takes Cena into the corner and puts a boot in his face. Cena gets punched to the apron so Kevin can rip at his face like a villain should.

The fans chant for NXT and we hit the chinlock. Cena powers up into an AA attempt but Owens calmly escapes and hits a DDT for two. Owens opts to just punch Cena in the face (I love it when people do that) for a bit before a backsplash connects for two more. Back up and Kevin tries a swinging Rock Bottom but Cena counters into a crucifix, only to have Owens slam him down in a kind of Samoan drop for another near fall. The

Cannonball gets the same and Owens says it's time for Johnny boy to give up.

The pop up powerbomb is countered with a leapfrog and Cena initiates his finishing sequence. Cena loads up the AA but gets countered into the pop up powerbomb for a close two, stunning Owens. Kevin gets crotches on top but headbutts Cena down, only to miss a moonsault of all things. The AA gets two (take a shot!) and both guys are down. Owens nails a superkick and tries his own Five Knuckle Shuffle (because he's that awesome) but Cena pulls him down into the STF.

Cena tries to pull him back to the middle but Owens kicks him away and hits an AA of his own (good one too) for another near fall. Both guys are down again and it's Cena up first for the two off the top rope Fameasser. Cole calls that patented, but I'm not sure Cena ever filed that paperwork. Back up again and Owens loads up the package piledriver (his pre-WWE finisher) but slams Cena to the side instead of dropping him on his head.

Kevin starts talking more trash before winning a slugout, only to get caught in the springboard Stunner for two. Frustration is setting in so Cena takes him up top for a superplex, only to have Owens counter into a spinning superplex of his own for two. Owens runs to the top for a Swanton for two more and now Kevin is frustrated. Cena nails that big running clothesline and Owens is rocked. John goes for another but walks into the pop up powerbomb for the completely clean pin at 20:03.

**Rating:** A. My jaw dropped on the pin. This is EXACTLY the way they should have gone as Cena hit him with the best and Owens pinned him in the middle of the ring. The key thing here is Cena isn't going to lose a thing out of this as he'll be fine in about two minutes. Owens on the other hand looks like the biggest new deal in years and couldn't get a bigger rub if they tried. Great, great stuff here and I loved the booking so much.

Owens says he debuted on Raw a few weeks back and started a fight, but tonight he finished it. He has some veteran advice for Cena: it's time for him to go because his time is way up and THE CHAMP IS HERE!

Pre-show panel chat.

### Bo Dallas vs. Neville

Neville has a bad knee coming in, partially thanks to Dallas. The knee is fine enough for Neville to do his flips out of the corner before sending Bo to the floor to avoid a Red Arrow attempt. That's fine with Neville as he hits a huge moonsault to the floor. Back in and Neville puts on a chinlock (rare sight for a good guy) but Bo gets to the ropes ("LET ME GO!"). He offers peace but starts elbowing Neville in the face and gets two off a running forearm.

Off to a cravate on Neville to slow things way down as the announcers talk about football from the 1960s. Back up and Bo elbows him in the head, only to be sent out to the floor. Bo's stunned look is great. Neville comes back with kicks to the head and a running forearm, followed by a standing shooting star for two. The Bodog is countered and the Red Arrow connects for the pin at 9:07.

**Rating:** C-. Nothing great here as it was basically a long TV match. Neville winning was the right call as Bo can be back off another cheesy promo, but Neville gets a nice push with a win he should have gotten. The knee didn't go anywhere, but at least there was a story coming into the match.

Reigns and Ambrose are in the back when HHH comes in and bans Reigns from ringside. If Reigns interferes, Ambrose will be disqualified. You mean like in any match?

The Chamber is lowered.

### Intercontinental Title: Sheamus vs. Ryback vs. Dolph Ziggler vs. King Barrett vs. R-Truth vs. ???

The title is vacant coming in due to Daniel Bryan vacating it due to injury. There are four minute intervals again and Rusev's replacement is.....Mark Henry. Bray Wyatt had been rumored but I like this better as Wyatt isn't likely winning so why give him another loss? Ziggler and Barrett get things going. They trade rollups to start but Barrett shrugs

him down and puts Dolph on the top rope for a kick to the ribs.

We hit a chinlock on Dolph for a bit before he realizes this is the freaking Elimination Chamber and fights back with his dropkick and neckbreaker for two. Barrett sends him into the cage and talks a lot of trash until R-Truth is in third. The King is smart enough to jump Truth before he can get out of the pod and stomps him down. He kicks Truth and Zigler in the face to keep control but Truth gets back up for the spinning forearm and ax kick.

Barrett rolls away from the cover but Zigler is back up with a kick to the face for two. Back up and Barrett drives Zigler through a pod wall, freeing Mark Henry to come in before his entrance. There's nothing the referee can do because it's no disqualification, and likely because the show is threatening to run long and they need to save some time. Ryback comes in a few seconds later and runs Henry over for two. Henry stands around as Barrett plants Zigler with Wasteland, only to break it up at two like the schmuck that he is.

Back up and the parade of finishers eliminates Barrett first because OF COURSE IT DOES! The four in the ring pair off with Ryback stomping Zigler into the corner and Henry doing the same to Truth. Sheamus is supposed to be in last but the door won't open. Ryback, Truth and Zigler trade rollups as they try to fix the door before Henry gets triple teamed. Shell Shock gets rid of Truth and a very delayed suplex plants Zigler.

Ryback's Meat Hook is countered by a superkick and all three are down. With all three down, Sheamus takes out the Celtic cross that he had put in the door to keep the door stuck shut. Well that was smart. A Brogue Kick gets rid of Henry in a hurry and we're down to three. Zigler counters a suplex into a small package for two but Sheamus counters the running DDT. The second attempt gets two but a quick Brogue Kick gets us down to Sheamus vs. Ryback.

They trade powerslams with Ryback getting the better of it and driving shoulders to the ribs in the corner. The Meat Hook doesn't work and Sheamus tries to get back in his pod. Ryback picks him up before he can

get in, only to have Sheamus counter into White Noise on the cage floor for two. The ten forearms are countered but Sheamus hits the Regal Roll on the cage again. A Brogue Kick is countered into a powerbomb into the ring and Shell Shock gives Ryback his first title at 25:06.

**Rating:** C+. Well that was a surprise. I didn't like the action as well as I liked the first one but it was still a fun match. They've set up Ryback as never having won a title so this was a good way to pay that story off. Ryback has been pushed pretty strong since returning (ignore the loss at Payback) and this was the right call for a step up.

Daniel Bryan congratulates Ryback and presents him with his new title.

We look at Owens pinning Cena earlier tonight. The rematch is official for Money in the Bank.

Dolph Ziggler, Neville, Roman Reigns, Randy Orton, Kofi Kingston and Sheamus are official for the Money in the Bank ladder match. More will be announced later.

We recap Ambrose vs. Rollins. The theme is that Ambrose made a bad decision by trusting Rollins in the Shield but tonight no one can help him, including his mommy and daddy.

#### WWE World Title: Seth Rollins vs. Dean Ambrose

Dean is challenging but has to deal with Kane and the Stooges at ringside. Rollins grabs a headlock to start but Dean counters into an armbar. Back up and the champ stomps away in the corner until Dean goes back to the arm to take over again. Dean drapes him over the middle rope for a Fameasser but the Stooges offer a distraction so Seth can crotch him into the Tree of Woe.

A huge top rope double stomps gets two on the challenger and Rollins takes over. We hit the chinlock for a bit followed by a clothesline to put Dean back down. Dean comes back with a sitout Tesshocker (belly to back suplex but he slams Rollins face first instead of dropping him back) for two. The Stooges pull Rollins to the floor but Dean dives through the ropes to take everyone out. Back in and Rollins tries to counter a

superplex into a sunset bomb, only to have Dean nail a Cactus Clothesline to put both guys outside again.

More Stooges interference lets Rollins take over again and the top rope knee (really a shin) to the head gets two. Dean finally comes back with a tornado DDT (second person tonight to use that) and the running dropkick against the ropes. A clothesline turns Rollins inside out for two more and the flying standing elbow gets the same.

The Rebound clothesline is countered by a clothesline from the champ and a suicide dive puts Dean down again. Back in and the buckle bomb is countered with a clothesline (we get it) out of the corner but Dean opts to dive on Kane and the Stooges. The referee gets bumped and Dean nails Dirty Deeds, drawing in another official for the pin at 21:48. Lawler: "This may start a new Attitude Era." Oh shut up.

**Rating:** C. I don't buy for a second that this is going to stand so I'm not going to bother treating this very seriously. This felt like a long Raw match instead of something worth watching, and the ending is clearly there to set up a rematch at Money in the Bank. The match was decent but it had the recurring problem of all WWE pay per views: you don't bother caring about the meat of the match because you're just waiting on the wacky finish.

And of course it doesn't count because the first referee says the Stooges pulled him to the floor for a DQ. Dean gets beaten down but Reigns comes down the ramp for a surprise and beats everyone up. Dean and Roman leave with the belt to end the show.

**Overall Rating:** C+. I liked the show for the most part but this could have been put in a different order to make things flow better. Swapping the Chamber matches would have helped a lot and having Owens vs. Cena later in the card would have been a good move. Still though, for a thrown together show to get people to watch for free and then hope they forget to cancel in the next hour so you get some bonus buys is a decent enough idea. Owens vs. Cena II doesn't need to happen but you know it's going to and will likely set up a big showdown at Battleground. Good enough show but mostly nothing worth seeing again.



## Results

New Day b. Prime Time Players, Ascension, Los Matadores, Lucha Dragons and Tyson Kidd/Cesaro – Trouble in Paradise to O’Neal

Nikki Bella b. Paige and Naomi – Rack Attack to Naomi

Kevin Owens b. John Cena – Pop up powerbomb

Neville b. Bo Dallas – Red Arrow

Ryback b. Mark Henry, King Barrett, Dolph Ziggler, R-Truth and Sheamus – Shell Shock to Sheamus

Dean Ambrose b. Seth Rollins via DQ when Jamie Noble and Joey Mercury interfered

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