

205 Live – August 2, 2017: No More Clowning Around

205 Live

Date: August 1, 2017

Location: Quicken Loans Arena, Cleveland, Ohio

Commentators: Vic Joseph, Corey Graves

It's back to the title scene now with a #1 contenders match between Ariya Daivari and Akira Tozawa, the winner of which will get the Cruiserweight Title shot at Summerslam. Other than that there isn't much of importance going on around here but I'm sure we'll see the midcard feuds built up as well. Let's get to it.

We open with a recap of the build to Daivari vs. Tozawa, both of whom want the shot at Neville. Daivari has injured Tozawa's shoulder but Tozawa is fighting through it like a true warrior. They're not exactly hiding the fact that it's going to be Tozawa getting the shot.

Opening sequence.

The announcers have a broken table due to Baron Corbin attacking Shinsuke Nakamura and getting Attitude Adjusted through the table.

Brian Kendrick vs. Jack Gallagher

Before the match, Kendrick says he's tired of talking about Gallagher, who belongs in the circus instead of in this match. Gallagher punches him in the face at the bell and fires off some knees in the corner before ramming him head first into the buckle. We can't even get a clean break out of the corner so you can tell Gallagher is serious tonight. Kendrick tries to crawl away so Gallagher stomps under the ropes for the DQ at 1:21.

Gallagher keeps up the beating until Kendrick bails into the crowd. This was a very different side of Gallagher and it was working pretty well for me.

Mustafa Ali and Rich Swann are playing WWE2K18 in the back when TJP interrupts. Ali leaves so more trash is talked, setting up a match next week in the name of friendly competition. For now though, they game. These young punk kids playing video games in the back all night.

Tony Nese vs. Gran Metalik

Nese gets in a lot of trash talk about his physique on the way to the ring. He's not done yet either as he brags about said physique, which no one in Cleveland could accomplish. It also caused his team to win the main event last week instead of Cedric Alexander and Rich Swann. As for Metalik, he must be covered from head to toe because his physique just can't measure up. Metalik has a pre-taped promo of his own, thankfully compete with subtitles.

Nese wastes no time in hitting the posing so Metalik handsprings off the ropes and grabs an armdrag. Now it's Metalik posing and hitting a dropkick to put Nese outside. Nese slides back in and tries a baseball slide but Metalik jumps up and hits a top rope Asai moonsault onto Nese the second he hits the floor. That's some insane timing. Back in and Nese gets two off a faceplant and it's off to a bodyscissors. Metalik breaks up a superplex and gets his own two off a high crossbody. The rope walk elbow is good for the same but Nese kicks his legs out. Tony's running knee in the corner is good for the pin at 6:29.

Rating: C+. I've liked Metalik since the Cruiserweight Classic and he still looked good here. I'm still not sure why he's stuck on Main Event far more often than not. Nese is a fine choice for a midcard heel with the whole physique thing being a really easy idea that is always going to work.

Neville doesn't care who he faces because they'll have to bend the knee and kneel before the King of the Cruiserweights.

Ariya Daivari vs. Akira Tozawa

The winner gets Neville at Summerslam. Daivari dedicates the match to the Iranian gold medalist to keep up his tradition. Tozawa drives him into the corner for a loud chop to the chest and it's time for some AH AH AH.

More chops set up the running backplash but it's way too early for the top rope backplash.

Instead Daivari cuts off a suicide dive with a crossbody and sends him outside for a good posting. Tozawa gets thrown up the ramp but he dives back in at nine. The slow beating continues back inside and it's finally off to the logical armbars. Daivari switches up to a Cobra Clutch Crossface before Daivari slams his shoulder first into the mat.

The frog splash misses though and Tozawa makes the fired up comeback, including a Shining Wizard for two. Daivari trips him off the top though, sending the bad shoulder into the ropes. The frog splash is good for two, only to have Tozawa kick him in the face. There's a suicide dive, followed by the top rope backplash to send Tozawa to Summerslam at 11:18.

Rating: C+. Pretty obvious ending aside, these two had a solid match. Daivari is trying as hard as he can and is FAR better than what he used to be, though there are far better and more interesting heels on the roster. At least it could have been worse though, which is actually a lot more positive thing than I would usually say about him.

Neville is watching in the back to end the show.

Overall Rating: B-. Good show this week as 205 Live is really starting to find its groove. Now the problem is very simple: they need to find an audience. We've been over the problems with this show time and time again so I'll spare you the details, but as long as they have one major story and a bunch of skippable minor stories, this show isn't going anywhere positive anytime soon.

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Main Event – July 27, 2017: Worth the Wait

Main Event

Date: July 27, 2017

Location: Verizon Center, Washington D.C.

Commentators: Vic Joseph, Corey Graves

It's the nation's capital edition of the show and that means...well nothing of note really as we have the random assortment of matches which could go anywhere on this show. That's a good thing though and hopefully the Raw highlights are better than what they do around here at times. Let's get to it.

Opening sequence.

Cedric Alexander vs. Tony Nese

Nese glares at him a bit and gets armdragged down for his efforts. That earns Alexander a hot shot onto the top rope and the springboard moonsault for good measure. It's off to the Tree of Woe so Nese can work the abs (both Cedric's with the kicks and his own with the crunches) and it's off to a bodyscissors. Cedric fights back with some shots to the face though, followed by the great looking springboard clothesline for two. Nese gutbusters him to stay on the ribs, only to get kicked in the head. The Lumbar Check gives Cedric the pin at 5:28.

Rating: C+. They had something going here with the rib stuff and that's a

lot more than you can ask for on a show like this. Alexander is one of the most consistently entertaining and polished performers on 205 Live...but it's still 205 Live. He hasn't been near the Cruiserweight Title and I have no idea why. Would Alexander vs. Neville really be the worst feud in the world?

From Raw!

Here's Kurt Angle to open things up. Angle talks about the weight being lifted off his shoulders since he's announced Jason Jordan as his son (Quick sidebar: why would having an illegitimate son from nearly thirty years ago cost him his family? Are Angle's wife and family so nuts that they can't accept him dating in college?).

As for the #1 contendership, Brock Lesnar will be defending against....someone we'll find out later as Braun Strowman interrupts to say he better be getting the title shot. Cue Samoa Joe to say he wants another shot at Lesnar because he knows he can finish him. Strowman and Reigns can finish each other but he better get his title shot. Roman comes out to say Joe and Strowman haven't done anything to earn a shot and lists off all of his accomplishments.

Angle changes his mind again and makes the four way for Summerslam. Joe isn't happy but the brawl breaks out anyway with Joe and Reigns hammering away on Strowman. That lasts all of thirty seconds before they start fighting each other. Strowman gets back up and beats on Reigns before dominating Angle's security. Joe gets the choke on Strowman until the locker room comes out for another failed save attempt. Reigns spears Strowman down but he pops right back up and sends Joe and Reigns outside.

And again!

Bayley vs. Sasha Banks

The winner gets Bliss, who sits in on commentary, at Summerslam. Feeling out process to start with Bayley grabbing a rollup but getting smacked in the face. Bayley gets in a kick and the charge in the corner, only to get knocked off the top as we take a break. Back with Bayley fighting out of a double arm crank and getting two off a facebuster. The Backstabber into

the Bank Statement has Bayley in trouble until she flips over into a rollup for two.

They slap it out with Banks getting the better of it, only to miss the top rope knees. Bayley knees her in the head but gets caught with a Shining Wizard to put both of them down. A fired up Bayley gets more aggressive than she's been in a long time and slugs away, only to have a superplex broken up. Sasha hits a frog splash but Bayley reverses the cover into a rollup for the pin and the title shot at 13:14.

Rating: B-. Good match here as Bayley continues her short road to redemption. Having Bayley win the title on the big stage could be interesting but it's more likely that Banks turns on her to cost Bayley her chance. At least they're building up the card in a hurry though as this is the second match announced in about two hours.

Kalisto vs. Apollo Crews

Crews doesn't waste time and grabs a slam to start, followed by the good looking dropkick. He's certainly athletic. A headscissors sends him outside though, followed by a hurricanrana to stagger Crews even more. Kalisto gets kicked out of the air though and we take a break. Back with Crews getting two off a slingshot senton and Kalisto's sunset flip getting the same.

The masked one gets in his variety of kicks, including the rolling kick to the head. The hurricanrana driver looks to set up the Salida Del Sol but Kalisto has to settle for a tornado DDT for two instead. A moonsault misses though and Crews' Toss Powerbomb is good for the pin at 7:36.

Rating: C+. They were flying around well enough here and Kalisto continues to look quite good. He's such a random former two time US Champion as this is about as high as he gets anymore. Well save for that time when he beat Braun Strowman for reasons that still aren't entirely clear.

Clips of Kurt Angle announcing Jason Jordan as his son.

And finally.

Dean Ambrose/Seth Rollins vs. Miz/Miztourage

Ambrose hammers on Axel to start and runs him over for some right hands and elbows to the head. Rollins comes in for a knee drop as we see Sheamus and Cesaro watching. That...could be interesting actually. Miz comes in and eats a Sling Blade, followed by the Miztourage being cleared out as we take a break. Back with Rollins in trouble as Miz cuts off a hot tag attempt.

Miz gets two off a neckbreaker and it's off to Axel for a dropkick (Axel: "HOW GOOD WAS THAT???"). Rollins fights off Dallas but it's still not enough as Miz grabs a DDT for two more. We hit the YES Kicks with Corey singing Miz's praises because he can. The good old double clothesline puts both Rollins and Miz down, followed by a quick roll over to Ambrose for the hot tag.

House is quickly cleaned, including a rebound lariat on Dallas. The top rope elbow is good for two as everything breaks down. Axel escapes Dirty Deeds and it's the Skull Crushing Finale for two on Ambrose. Stereo suicide dives put the Miztourage down though and it's Dirty Deeds to put Miz away at 17:47.

Rating: B-. They got along well enough but I can't imagine they'll put the Shield back together for real anytime soon. The match wasn't great or anything though it's not like this was supposed to be a classic of any kind. I liked the match and they did a good enough job of keeping the crowd going. I'm not sure where this is going at the end but it's got enough of my attention.

Post match Seth puts out the fist for the Shield pose but Ambrose leaves him hanging to end the show.

Opinion: B. One of the best shows they've had in a good while and for the first time in a long time it's because of the original content. The two matches were energetic and felt interesting, even if they don't mean anything either way. It's a very entertaining show and that's a rather nice surprise, which you don't get to say around here, pretty much ever.

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205 Live – July 25, 2017: I Knew Clowns Were a Bad Idea

205 Live

Date: July 25, 2017

Location: Richmond Coliseum, Richmond, Virginia

Commentators: Vic Joseph, Corey Graves

Tonight is more about the midcard as we have a “big” tag match between TJP/Tony Nese and Cedric Alexander/Rich Swann to advance the Swann vs. TJP feud. Other than that Ariya Daivari is facing Neville for reasons that I really don’t understand. If Daivari is the best they can do for an upper midcard heel going after the heel champion, they’re in bigger trouble than it seemed. Let’s get to it.

Neville is really not pleased with Daivari messing with people above his level. That was a critical error by thinking that Neville’s kingdom was open to a hostile takeover. Daivari did well last night but tonight he’s learning the difference between an injured animal like Akira Tozawa and

the King of the Cruiserweights.

Opening sequence.

Ariya Daivari vs. Neville

Non-title with Akira Tozawa on commentary. Daivari dedicates this to another Iranian Olympian and promises to hurt Tozawa later. Ariya heads straight to the floor to start and then does it again as there's no contact in the first minute. They do the same thing a third time until Neville goes after him, only to be sent into the barricade and LED ring skirt. The frog splash gets two back inside as Neville hasn't had any actual offense yet.

The hammerlock lariat is broken up though and there's a superkick to put Neville in control. A missile dropkick puts Daivari on the floor where Neville whips him into various things. Neville stops to yell at Tozawa so Daivari sends them into each other. Neville can't beat the count and gets counted out at 4:36.

Rating: D+. I was liking the match more than I was expecting to until we got to the lame ending. That ending doesn't make Daivari look like anything special but keeps him around Neville due to getting a win. Daivari did look better than he does otherwise but he's really not interesting enough to warrant this spot.

Neville and Tozawa are about to go at it but the referees break it up for the sake of Tozawa's shoulder.

We look back at Mustafa Ali vs. Drew Gulak's 2/3 falls match last week.

Here's Brian Kendrick for a chat. He's tried to help us over and over but all he gets are attacks, both physically and on social media. Why can no one see the difference between fighters like him and clowns like Jack Gallagher? Kendrick puts Gallagher's picture on the screen and talks about various features such as Gallagher's hair or eyes....which are replaced by clown features instead. Gallagher finally comes out to chase Kendrick off. This was really, really stupid.

Swann and Alexander are in the back with Cedric talking about how he's

glad that the crazy ex-girlfriend is gone. Nese and TJP come up to brag about how awesome they'll be with Nese saying Alexander is a consolation prize. A brawl is cut off by TJP's music starting up.

TJP/Tony Nese vs. Cedric Alexander/Rich Swann

Swann is now in long tights instead of trunks and starts with Nese. Actually hang on a second as Tony drops to a knee and poses, saying everyone can appreciate that for a second. They exchange leapfrogs until Swann flips over Nese and scores with a dropkick. Cedric comes in and spins Nese around by the arm before handing it right back to Swann. A double dropkick to the back gets two and it's off to TJP. That means a little dabbing, followed by a PLEASE STOP DABBING chant.

Cedric ankle scissors him into a dropkick and the villains are sent outside. You know two good faces aren't going to let that go, meaning it's a running flip dive from Cedric and a Phoenix splash dive from Swann. Back in and Cedric works on an armbar, which for some reason warrants a weak CM Punk chant. A Nese distraction lets TJP run Cedric over though, mainly because good guys aren't that bright at times.

Nese ties him into the Tree of Woe and drops to his back for some situps and kicks to the ribs. Tony isn't pleased with getting small packaged for two so he hammers away with quite the aggression. Back to TJP for a foot to the face and more dabbing. A chinlock sets up the spinning springboard forearm (no nipup though) for two. Alexander fights out of a double arm crank and takes TJP down, setting up the hot tag to Swann. Not that you would know it was hot as the fans barely react but take what you can get.

Swann and Nese strike it out until Rich jumps over a legsweep and kicks him in the head. It's already back to Alexander for a quick running C4 as everything breaks down. Nese throws Swann onto the announcers' table, leaving Alexander to hit his handspring enziguri for two more. Nese breaks up the springboard forearm though and TJP steals the pin at 12:21.

Rating: B. I liked this a lot more than I was expecting to as they were given time to set things up and go on to the ending. I could have gone for a few more minutes, which isn't something that I often get to say around here. Swann vs. TJP is a solid feud and the blowoff match should

be good, especially if TJP goes full heel on the way there.

Overall Rating: C+. That Gallagher/Kendrick segment aside, this was a rather solid effort from the smaller guys, though some of the talent involved still drags down what would be an otherwise better show. Daivari doesn't do much for me and Kendrick's stuff was just stupid. Other than that though, good show this week.

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Main Event – July 20, 2017: Finding Their Footing

Main Event

Date: July 20, 2017

Location: Bridgestone Arena, Nashville, Tennessee

Commentators: Vic Joseph, Corey Graves

I'm going to go on a limb here and assume that we'll be hearing a lot about the Kurt Angle/Jason Jordan story. On top of that, I'm digging this whole grab bag approach to who might show up around here. It's such a

nice change of pace and something that makes the show so much easier to sit through. Let's get to it.

Opening sequence.

R-Truth vs. Curt Hawkins

Hawkins is rather perplexed by Truth's gyrating and dancing, which Joseph attributes to Dance Dance Revolution. Curt takes him down and hammers away before we're in an early chinlock. Truth fights up with the clothesline and gordbuster, followed by the Lie Detector for the pin at 4:47.

Rating: D. This was actually weaker than most Main Event openers, which is covering a lot of ground. Truth is still a fun act and Hawkins is the kind of guy who can lose over and over like this and still be fine. Nothing to see here as far as wrestling goes but then again, this is the working definition of a dark match and it was fine in that regard.

From Raw.

Here's Enzo Amore for a chat. He knows he lost at Great Balls of Fire but he knows you have to keep getting up if you believe in what you're fighting for. He's not done with Big Cass, who may be much bigger and stronger but Enzo has the heart. Cass threw him fourteen feet to the floor but Enzo got back up and kept going. They were friends for years with Enzo making sure Cass stuck with it because Cass is S-A-W-F-T like a big comfy couch.

Cue Cass to chase Enzo off because Enzo says he's smarter than the average bear. Enzo grabs a seat in the crowd with an Enzo fan to watch this. Cue Big Show for a brawl but Cass kicks him in the face. The fight is on with Show getting the better of it via a hard chop to the chest. Cass sends him into the post twice in a row though and Show's ribs are hurt. Kicks to the ribs make them even worse and Show is down. Enzo tries to come in and eats a big boot for his efforts.

From Monday again.

Here's Angle for the announcement. Everyone is supporting him in this

decision and he's glad to get this off his chest. When he was in college he was dating a woman but then they broke up. Then nine months later, she had a child, which Kurt didn't find out until recently. It turns out that the kid was a very talented athlete who had several offers to play various sports.

Instead he went to college and earned a degree, followed by pursuing a career in professional wrestling. That son is now a WWE superstar and the newest member of the Raw roster. His name is.....Jason Jordan! Jason comes out and hugs Kurt several times but nothing is said.

Heath Slater/Rhyno vs. Anderson and Gallows

Rhyno and Anderson get things going with Karl being run over with a shoulder. Gallows comes in and eats a middle rope shoulder before it's off to Slater...who gets his head kicked off. Back from a break with Slater still in trouble (as always) via some stomping, followed by a chinlock. A leg lariat allows the hot tag to Rhyno as house is cleaned. Slater gets pulled off the apron though and Rhyno takes a kick to the back of the head. The Magic Killer puts Rhyno away at 9:49.

Rating: D+. Another match with nothing to see here but the fans loved Slater and Rhyno, as they always do. Sometimes you have a fun act like those two and they're going to get a reaction no matter what they're doing. Anderson and Gallows are starting to find their footing, which I assure you has nothing to do with getting rid of the horrible comedy segments.

From Raw one more time.

Samoa Joe vs. Roman Reigns

Winner gets Lesnar at Summerslam. They trade shoulders to start and it's Joe being knocked outside as we take an early break. Back with Joe hitting his enziguri in the corner and we're off to the neck crank. That eats up a long time until Reigns fights up and hits a running clothesline for two. That's some of Reigns' only significant offense so far as this has been almost all Joe in the first half.

They head outside with Joe clotheslining him so hard that Reigns lands on the apron. Reigns hits a clothesline of his own to put both guys down as we take another break. Back with Joe talking trash until Reigns comes back with a Samoan drop. One heck of a boot to the face drops Joe again but he's right back up and blocking a belly to back suplex.

The Rock Bottom is broken up and there's the Superman Punch for two. With both guys down, cue the returning Braun Strowman to pull Joe out and beat up Reigns for the no contest (though it should be a DQ victory for Joe, who was the first one to be touched) at about 19:00.

Rating: B-. This was definitely the kind of match where they were filling in time until the storyline ending and there's nothing wrong with that. Neither guy was pinned and it was pretty even when Strowman came in. This is likely setting up what could be a very interesting four way at Summerslam and I'm ok with that.

Reigns and Joe beat on Strowman but both eventually fall victim to powerslams.

Overall Rating: D+. The wrestling drags this one down a good bit as the Raw segments were only ok at best. It's odd as Monday's show was a lot more entertaining than this but trimming it down didn't do it any favors for once. Hopefully things pick up as we get closer to Summerslam. Watchable enough show but it's more skippable than usual.

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205 Live – July 18, 2017: When Wrestling Isn't the Answer

205 Live

Date: July 18, 2017

Location: Legacy Arena, Birmingham, Alabama

Commentators: Vic Joseph, Corey Graves

We have another showdown tonight as Mustafa Ali and Drew Gulak blow off their feud in a 2/3 falls match. This is all about high flying vs. mat wrestling and seems like the big ending. We also have Akira Tozawa vs. Neville II on the horizon but first, Tozawa has to get some revenge on Ariya Daivari. Let's get to it.

The opening video looks at all the great high flying around here before shifting to Gulak's No Fly Zone. We move on to a recap of Gulak vs. Ali, including their trading the first four matches, one of which included Gulak trying a top rope splash when he was pushed too far. This video makes the feud seem far more important and interesting than it probably is, which is exactly the point.

Opening sequence.

Drew Gulak vs. Mustafa Ali

2/3 falls and I guess this is how they keep the arena from emptying out to open the show. Gulak wristlocks him to start but gets caught in a hammerlock. Ali grabs a pair of rollups for two before he grabs both arms and spins Gulak around into a third rollup for the first fall at 1:53.

Gulak gets more aggressive to start the second fall but eats a dropkick for two. A monkey flip is broken up though and Gulak dumps him to the

floor for a big crash. Back in and Gulak grabs a chinlock while yelling a lot. Ali gets all fired up and doesn't mind the knees to his face. It's time for the comeback with a series of clotheslines and a kick to the head, followed by the rolling neckbreaker. They head outside with Ali hitting a hurricanrana but landing on the back of his head for a bad sounding thud. Back in and Gulak sends him head first into the middle buckle, setting up the Dragon Sleeper for the tap at 7:55.

Ali says he can continue so Gulak kicks him in the head. We hit the chinlock again before Ali fights up for a hurricanrana out of the corner. That doesn't work as well either though as Gulak plants him with a powerbomb to counter and knock Ali silly again. A reverse hurricanrana puts Gulak down and a big flip dive to the floor draws a one man HOLY S*** chant.

Back in and they do the high crossbody spot that ended one of their earlier matches with Gulak rolling through for two. Another enziguri sets up Ali's tornado DDT for two more, only to have Drew take his head off with a clothesline. Gulak takes WAY too long going up though and actually decides to come back down, only to get caught in another hurricanrana. The inverted 450 puts Drew away at 16:52.

Rating: B. That might be the longest 205 Live match to date and that's a good thing. This is the kind of match that needed more time to make things work. Ali winning is probably the right call, though again I would have liked to see Gulak keep going with this idea and gain a few followers. If Ali doesn't go anywhere from this, I don't see the point in having him win here but that's one of the least of this show's problems.

We look at Titus O'Neil throwing in the towel for Akira Tozawa. Post match, Tozawa got Titus to get him a rematch with Daivari.

Earlier today, Tozawa told Apollo Crews that he was fine but Crews reminded him that Titus stood up for him because he cares about the two of them.

Brian Kendrick vs. Devin Bennett

Before the match, Kendrick asks Bennett, who is from Manchester, England

ala Jack Gallagher, if the people of Manchester are proud of Gallagher. This is America and it doesn't work the same as things do over in England. Here you have to work hard and not be a clown like Gallagher so Devin can walk away now if he wants to. Devin is ready to go so Kendrick beats him down while asking if Bennett is a clown. Bennett's head is kicked into the ropes and Kendrick chops away in the corner. Kendrick offers him a free shot and is incensed when Bennett takes it. A boot to the face sets up the Captain's Hook for the tap at 1:35.

Video on last week's I Quit match between Cedric Alexander and Noam Dar with Cedric stomping on the arm with a chair wrapped around it to make Dar quit. After the match, Dar dumped Alicia Fox in what sounded like a major heel turn but was received like a face turn.

TJP doesn't think much of what he did last week and thinks it's only Rich Swann who has a problem with it. They still have issues from when TJP eliminated Swann from the Cruiserweight Classic so next week they can have a tag match with both of them picking a partner.

Akira Tozawa vs. Ariya Daivari

Daivari again dedicates the match to the Iranian gold medalist. He defeated a Japanese wrestler to win his medal and history repeated itself last night. Tozawa comes in with a very bad shoulder and starts fast with the fake out right hand to the face. Daivari makes things harder on himself by missing a charge into the corner, only to bail to the apron before Tozawa can try the top rope backsplash.

The bad shoulder is sent into the post and Tozawa is in big trouble. Tozawa tries a sunset flip but gets stomped in the shoulder, leaving Daivari to pose. Daivari takes a bit too long though and gets sent outside for the suicide headbutt (which probably should have hurt the shoulder too). Back in and Daivari is right back on the shoulder but a Shining Wizard gives Tozawa two. A Codebreaker on the arm sets up a top rope splash for another near fall on Tozawa, who grabs a quick rollup (and maybe the trunks) for the pin at 8:32.

Rating: C+. Good match here but again it's hard to get into Daivari as he's one of the most generic heels I've seen in a long time. He's just

kind of there with the “Iran is awesome” stuff and that’s not enough to work too well when he’s not the most interesting wrestler in the world. Tozawa would seem to be heading towards a rematch with Neville but they’re taking their time advancing things.

Post match Daivari posts Tozawa’s shoulder and stands tall to end the show.

Overall Rating: B-. This show had some better wrestling but the problem continues to be a lack of reasons to care about most of these people. They all feel very low level compared to everyone else on the roster and that makes for some difficult shows to sit through. There were two good matches on here and the show still felt especially long. I know there are a lot of reasons to dislike 205 Live but above all else, they need to give me a reason to care about or connect to the roster.

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Went to the Raw House Show

Last Night

I took in the Raw house show last night at Rupp Arena in Lexington, Kentucky. The featured attraction this time around was John Cena, who was making a rare house show appearance. However, this wasn't mentioned on TV commercials until the week of the show, despite the announcement being made on WWE.com over three weeks ago. The crowd was solid enough for a Sunday house show but I have to think advertising Cena as a major attraction would have helped.

The show was scheduled to start at 7pm and actually kicked off a minute or so early. It was a fairly strong turnout with the upper deck completely tarped off but that's standard for a place the size of Rupp Arena. It should be noted that Rupp Arena is the largest arena in the United States built for basketball with over 23,000 seats. Therefore, even a crowd that is only half full would be a solid showing elsewhere.

1. Apollo Crews/Heath Slater/Rhyno b. Curt Hawkins/Anderson and Gallows (5:50) C-.

This was exactly the opener you would have wanted with the faces being incredibly popular and everyone going nuts for Slater and Rhyno. Crews is a fine face with the athleticism and Titus makes for a solid manager who knows how to fire up a crowd. You don't come off as professional as he does and not have some kind of use, even if it's just a spot as a manager. The best note of this was Anderson beating Slater up and shouting that he has kids too. Rhyno hit a spinebuster on Hawkins for the pin.

2. Goldust b. R-Truth (1:18)

This was another good choice to fire the crowd up but the ending was really sudden. Truth beat the heck out of Goldust for about a minute but charged into a boot and got rolled up for the pin with feet on the ropes. After it was over, Truth promised to get back at Goldust. Nothing to see here but Truth's song fired up the crowd.

3. Akira Tozawa b. Brian Kendrick (8:26) B-.

This might have been the match of the night, which isn't really saying much on a show like this. Tozawa got the crowd going again (notice a pattern here) with the shouting and there was a great near fall off a kick to Kendrick's head. Tozawa won with the top rope backplash after escaping the Captain's Hook. No Titus here, despite Tozawa signing with Titus Worldwide. The problem here continues to be very simple though: no one cares about the cruiserweights and there's no real way around it.

4. Finn Balor b. Elias Samson (8:39) C.

I've said this before and I'll say it again: I have no idea why Finn Balor's isn't World Champion like, now. The guy is an absolute star and comes off exactly as such with the fans eating up everything he does. He has a good look, his matches are solid and his entrance is outstanding. Throw in the Demon King when the time is right and he's pure money. This was longer than it needed to be with Samson in control for the most part. Balor made the comeback you would expect him to make and finished with the Coup de Grace.

5. Dean Ambrose/Seth Rollins b. Miztourage (14:45) B-.

I love lackeys. They can help extend both a feud and a character so much just by having people there to fight instead of doing the same match over and over again. That was the case here as Curtis Axel and Bo Dallas said Miz was too busy for a town like Lexington and they were representing him instead. Axel got in a great line: "I'm not saying Kentucky sucks. I'm saying LEXINGTON, Kentucky sucks."

The place went coconuts for Rollins when he was the surprise (Kind of?) partner for Ambrose. I still think he could easily be the next Jeff Hardy and the reaction he received here only reinforce that theory. This was a longer match than you would expect and went about as you would have guessed. The Miztourage are fine heels and can go in the ring, making me all the sadder that Axel was wasted for so many years. Ambrose won with Dirty Deeds to Dallas in an energetic match.

Intermission. Two kids got to play the What Happens Next game and thankfully they didn't go with the Vince dying clip. After the kids got it right, they received a program, a WWE Top Ten book, the Best of the

2000s DVD, a shirt, every autographed poster for sale, and probably something else that I'm forgetting. Not bad at all for a single night.

6. Mickie James/Dana Brooke b. Alexa Bliss/Nia Jax (6:55) D+.

And then the crowd died when they realized Bayley and Sasha Banks weren't here. I'm a bigger Brooke fan than most but sweet goodness people did not care about these two against the top heels. The match wasn't even very good either with the lone highlight (aside from Alexa of course) being Bliss not being able to whip Jax into the corner for a splash and just giving up. Mickie kicked Bliss in the face for the surprising pin.

7. Sheamus/Cesaro b. Hardy Boyz (12:32) C+.

The Hardys got the pop of the night but unfortunately the match was about the same thing these teams have been doing for months now. Jeff had his facepaint back and Matt was doing the DELETE pose fairly often. The match was perfectly watchable and the crowd was WAY into everything the Hardys were doing all match long. Sheamus snapped Matt's throat across the top rope so Cesaro could grab a small package to retain the titles.

8. John Cena b. Bray Wyatt (14:08) C.

Much like the previous match, this was exactly what you would expect from these two. Cena got a great reaction and easily the second biggest of the night. Above all else though, I couldn't get over how sad it is that Bray has gone from an awesome cult leader to a homeless guy who swings a lantern around. He's completely lacking direction and it's been sad to watch for a good while now. The ref got bumped so there was no one to see Bray tap to the STF. A low blow gave Wyatt two (with the kids losing their minds on the kickout), followed by an AA for the pin.

A Smackdown Live taping was announced for November, though I had originally heard of this as a Raw. They put tickets on sale for one night so I picked up a similar seat for the exact same price as the house show. You would think the TV aspect and a more important show would raise prices/mean the house show should have been lower but not so much. There were probably 100 people in line to buy tickets but if there are four months before the show, the low pre-sale isn't a surprise.

Overall it was a fun night with a VERY hot crowd. The faces mostly won and it was more than entertaining enough. Two tickets in the lower arena (sixth row in the first set of seats off the floor) were \$75 total so it was hardly expensive as another nice perk. Good show and a lot of fun, which to be fair was helped by it being five minutes from my house.

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Main Event – July 6, 2017: The Latest Show I Forgot to Remember

Main Event

Date: July 6, 2017

Location: Talking Stick Resort Arena, Phoenix, Arizona

Commentators: Vic Joseph, Corey Graves

This show is starting to improve as I can't remember what happened last week. Far too often the shows would be almost interchangeable with the

same talent appearing over and over. Now though, things are being mixed up enough that I can't even guess what was on here last week. Therefore, hopefully we can have another show that I forget by Sunday again. Let's get to it.

Opening sequence.

Rich Swann vs. Ariya Daivari

Daivari misses a shot in the corner and Rich dances away as only he can. A dropkick gives Swann two but Daivari rolls away before the Phoenix splash can launch. Instead he sends Swann hard into the post and stomps away back inside. We hit the neck crank before Daivari puts on something like a Sharpshooter with his arms, only to have Swann make the rope. Shame too as that was a cool looking move. A big kick to the head knocks Daivari silly and a rollup gets two. Daivari grabs a reverse DDT and the frog splash gets two. Another kick to Daivari's head sets up the Phoenix splash to give Rich the pin at 5:41.

Rating: C-. As dull as Daivari is, Swann continues to be one of the most energetic members of the roster. Sure his big thing is dancing but that's become background information to the solid matches he's put on. The problem is he's stuck here on Main Event or in unimportant matches on 205 Live. At least the matches are still good though, which is a great reason to keep him around.

Long recap of Enzo Amore vs. Big Cass.

From Raw.

Here's Enzo to open the show. He lists off all the bad things that have happened to him in the last year and says that all happened while Cass was behind his back. Cass watched all that time because he never had Enzo's back. Cass wanted to take advantage of the silver tongue but now he has to face the fists that come with it.

Enzo is grateful for everything that's happened to him and he'd shove his dad down a wishing well before he joined the dark side. He's grateful to every kid out there wearing his gear. They're the people who help put

food on his table because he believes in the good that he's doing. It's something you just can't teach. He walks in and out of a room with confidence because he knows who he is and he knows where he's going. He's been in holes a lot deeper than seven feet before and Cass is nothing more than a catchphrase that Enzo wrote.

Cass said his mouth writes checks that he can't back up but no one goes harder than him. Next time, don't be surprised if that merchandise check is for ZERO DIMES. Unless he starts wearing a Casshole shirt. Enzo is ready to go but comes back to say he's ready to fight on his own because it's all him now.

Also from Raw.

Samoa Joe and Brock Lesnar are live via satellite for a sitdown interview. Joe rants about being tired of answering questions because he's ready to fight. Lesnar calls him a coward but Joe says Brock can never get his hands on him. Joe is ready to fight so Lesnar lists off all the names he's beaten. That's fine with Joe, who has a list of names he's choked out. Lesnar and Heyman chuckle so Joe walks out and goes to find Brock. Angle tries to talk him down but security pulls Joe away from Lesnar's room.

Kalisto vs. Scott Dawson

And Revival isn't on Raw...why? Dawson sends him into the corner to start so Kalisto slaps him in the face. A dropkick sends Dawson outside and that means a teased dive. Dash Wilder tries to offer a distraction but Dawson's rollup only gets two. A knee to the shoulder works a bit better and we take over with Kalisto in trouble. Back with Kalisto knocking him off the ropes and getting two off a middle rope crossbody. Dawson comes back with a slingshot suplex (ala Tully) but Kalisto counters into a small package for the victory at 8:10.

Rating: D+. Did I mention I don't know why Revival is here instead of on Raw? They were one of the big surprises on the post-Wrestlemania Raw and for some reason they can't get back on Raw no matter how much the tag division could use them. The match was nothing to see but Dawson isn't exactly known for his singles work.

We look at Braun Strowman threatening to hurt Roman Reigns on Raw.

From Raw one more time.

Apollo Crews vs. Braun Strowman

Crews does what he can to start but is quickly thrown outside as soon as Strowman gets his hands on him. We hit the neck crank before Crews is sent outside again. Titus fires him up enough that two enziguris stagger Strowman. The standing moonsault is broken up with Strowman kicking Apollo across the ring in an awesome block. Three straight powerslams finally put Crews away at 4:13.

Rating: D. This was just a step above a squash and that's all it needed to be. Strowman is gearing up for the second biggest match at Sunday's pay per view and it makes sense to have him squash someone. At least it was someone fresh and not the same stuff we've seen a dozen times.

Post match Titus tries to save Apollo from a worse beating but takes one himself. Apollo gets thrown into the ambulance but it won't drive away. Of course Reigns is the driver (Thanks for having Crews' back earlier you jerk) and he spears Strowman off the stage. Strowman is on his feet before the show is over.

Overall Rating: C. The Raw stuff more than saves the show from a pretty dull week of original wrestling. Dawson and Wilder being stuck here makes my head hurt and spin at the same time but until something changes, they're not going to be on Raw for whatever reason. I'm sure it's asking too much to push one of the top teams in the world when you already have so many heels on Raw. Clearly turning or depushing one of those teams (or moving American Alpha over to Raw) is out of the question so we're stuck with things like this for now. Dang I really get annoyed at the tag division.

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Main Event – July 13, 2017: Let the Women Have a Chance

Main Event

Date: July 13, 2017

Location: Toyota Center, Houston, Texas

Commentators: Vic Joseph, Corey Graves

It's back to the easiest show of the week. This week's Monday Night Raw had some big moments and it could be interesting to see what we get on this show. They really could throw multiple things at us and when you add in some original wrestling which could go several ways, there's potential for this show. Let's get to it.

Opening sequence.

Mickie James vs. Emma

I don't remember the last time we had the women on this show. Mickie works on a top wristlock to start before blowing a kiss and getting two off a dropkick. The hurricanrana out of the corner is countered with a powerbomb and Dana Brooke is watching in the back. Emma grabs a seated full nelson before putting her in the Tree of Woe and pulling at the hair. Mickie fights up without too much effort and hits the middle rope

Thesz press, followed by the MickieDT for the pin at 5:58.

Rating: C. This was a lot better than I was expecting as they beat each other up for a few minutes. If nothing else, I'm amazed by the fact that they actually used something like this for storyline advancement with Brooke watching in the back. Nice match here with Mickie showing that she still has it.

First time from Raw.

It's time for MizTV with the Mizzy Awards for last night's Intercontinental Title match. First up is Best Supporting Actor, which goes to both Bo Dallas and Curtis Axel in a tie. After they thank Miz for changing their lives, Maryse wins Most Gorgeous, Beautiful, Sexy Leading Lady. Maryse is honored and that leaves us with Greatest Man in WWE. Miz opens the envelope and is shocked to say Dean Ambrose....but he's kidding because Miz wins.

Miz saw a lot of people running their mouths last night but Seth Rollins, the Hardys and Akira Tozawa were all just full of hot air. Last night he beat the toughest man in WWE so what does that make him? Cue Ambrose to go after Miz but it's Rollins coming in for the real save. Hopefully this sets up Miz vs. Rollins as I can't handle Ambrose vs. Miz again.

Also from Raw.

Here's Kurt Angle to introduce Paul Heyman and Brock Lesnar for a chat. Angle congratulates Lesnar for his win last night and says Brock surprised him. Heyman gives a quick victory speech but here's Roman Reigns to interrupt. Roman says the three of them were all in the Attitude Era (No Roman, they weren't.) but Angle never learned how to handle Strowman and Lesnar is never around to do it.

Reigns thinks Angle owes him one and that should be Lesnar at Summerslam. Lesnar laughs this off because Reigns hasn't earned it. Cue Samoa Joe to say Lesnar escaped him last night instead of beating him. Joe throws in that Reigns has never beaten him and wants another piece of Lesnar. They go nose to nose but Joe stops to say Roman lost last night. Reigns: "Look at me, then look at Braun if you can find him." Angle makes Joe vs.

Reigns for the title shot at Summerslam for next week.

Lince Dorado vs. TJP

They trade wristlocks to start until Dorado grabs a hurricanrana and TJP bails to the floor. Lince throws in a dab before cranking on a hammerlock to slow things back down. We take a break and come back with Lince getting in a faceplant and a moonsault for no cover. A Stunner gives Dorado two more but he misses the shooting star. The Detonation Kick ends Dorado at 8:02.

Rating: C-. You can only get so much out of Dorado as he's not the most interesting character in the world and that's not exactly a secret. TJP is a fairly big name in the cruiserweight division and it's nice to have him around here instead of the same nothing matches all the time.

And the finale.

Seth Rollins vs. Bray Wyatt

Rematch from last night with Wyatt starting the mind games early. Seth hammers away but gets thrown into the corner for some forearms. Bray charges into a superkick for two and Seth takes him outside to start in on the hand. Makes sense after the eye poke last night. The hand gets rammed into various objects ranging from the barricade to the steps, only to have Bray counter a springboard into a release Rock Bottom.

Back from a break with Seth fighting out of a chinlock and getting in a dropkick. Bray grabs a DDT though and it's right back to the chinlock. Wyatt can't get in a suplex though and Rollins scores with an enziguri for a breather. The Sling Blade drops Bray again and there's the springboard clothesline for two more.

After a Blockbuster and Falcon Arrow give Seth two more near falls, Seth has to slip out of Sister Abigail. You don't see this much offense from a face a lot of the time and it's kind of cool to see for a change. Bray headbutts him in the bad eye though and Sister Abigail is good for the pin on Rollins at 17:04.

Rating: C+. The hand stuff didn't go anywhere but it was cool to see

Wyatt get a second win in two nights, especially over a major name. In theory this should send Seth on to a feud with Miz, because losing back to back matches is grounds for a title feud (Right Roman?) and that's going to be better for most people.

Post match Bray disappears and it's the Miztourage coming through the crowd for the beatdown. Ambrose makes the save with a chair and beats the fire out of Miz.

Overall Rating: C+. Not one mention of Angle's issues this coming week? Really? Anyway, good show otherwise with the women being a nice surprise and TJP doing as well as could be expected. I like this show so much more when they mix things up a bit and that's what we've gotten recently.

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205 Live – July 11, 2017: The

Small Problem

205 Live

Date: July 11, 2017

Location: AT&T Center, San Antonio, Texas

Commentators: Vic Joseph, Corey Graves

The big story tonight is the long (and I do mean LONG) awaited conclusion to Noam Dar vs. Cedric Alexander, who will be facing each other in an I Quit match. Other than that we're building towards Neville vs. Akira Tozawa II for Neville's Cruiserweight Title, which is all but confirmed at this point. Let's get to it.

Titus O'Neil is on the phone with Tozawa and telling him to not worry about beating Neville last night. He seems to have the rematch set up. Ariya Daivari comes in to hang up on Titus. Daivari goes on about the awesome history of Iranian wrestling and questions Tozawa's honor.

Opening sequence.

Akira Tozawa vs. Ariya Daivari

Daivari wastes no time in kicking at the ribs, meaning Tozawa grunts a lot. A knee to the back gets two but the chinlock doesn't last long for Daivari. Tozawa fights back and loads up the top rope backsplash, only to have Neville come in for the DQ at 2:17.

Neville massacres Tozawa like the good villain he is. A kick to the leg sets up the Rings of Saturn to knock Tozawa's mouthpiece out.

We look back at Mustafa Ali beating Drew Gulak when Gulak's anger got the better of him and he crashed coming off the top rope.

Gulak, in a press conference setting, apologizes for his indiscretion two weeks back when he dove. He sincerely apologizes and proposes a 2/3 falls match to end their feud next week.

We recap TJP turning heel, much to the chagrin of Rich Swann. This led to Swann beating TJP in a good match last week.

Rich Swann vs. Mario Connors

The referee calls for the bell and here's TJP to watch. Swann cranks on the arm to start before they run the ropes. Connors drops tot he mat and Swann hits a running stomp to the ribs, sending the referee straight over to check on Mario. Back up and Connors hits a running kick to the chest for two, followed by a running tornado DDT for the same. Swann pops up with a running Fameasser and a kick to the head for two. The Phoenix splash puts Mario away at 3:48.

Rating: C. This was better than you would have expected with Connors getting in a ton of offense instead of just being squashed. Swann gave up a lot more than usual, which is probably storyline development of some sort. TJP vs. Swann is more interesting than I guessed and it made for a good match.

TJP says that was impressive but he would have beaten Mario in half the time. Therefore, let's have another match right now.

TJP vs. Mario Connors

Running dropkick to the knee sets up the kneebar....which is countered into a rollup for two. TJP shrugs it off and finishes him with the Detonation Kick at 28 seconds.

Here's Brian Kendrick to make fun of Jack Gallagher again. Kendrick is in another suit and mocks Gallagher's Charlie Chaplain strut. Gallagher isn't unconventional but a clown and a third rate William Regal. He goes on a rant about how he's had to sacrifice so much to get here and now the fans would rather laugh at someone like Gallagher. Cue the real Gallagher to say he's been doing this since he was sixteen. He's earned the right to do things the way he wants to because he's a first rate Jack Gallagher. Jack punches him in the jaw but gets beaten down by the umbrella.

Long recap of Alexander vs. Dar. Cedric dated Alicia Fox but Dar stole her away, sending her into insanity. Alexander was out with an injury but now that he's back, he doesn't want to deal with them. That's not cool with Fox who has dragged Cedric back into it, setting up a big showdown.

Cedric Alexander vs. Noam Dar

I Quit. Cedric wastes no time and knocks Dar into the corner for some chops. They head outside with Dar going hard into the steps but Cedric won't even let him get in a yes or no. Dar comes back with a kick to the leg to knock him off the steps though and Alexander has a glazed look in his eye.

Back in and Dar starts in on the arm but standing on the arm isn't enough to make Cedric quit. With that not working, Dar takes the pad off the hook that attaches the buckle to the post, only to have Cedric put Dar's fingers through the hole and bend them against the steel (FREAKING OW MAN!). Back up and Cedric tries a moonsault to the floor but hurts his knee, which Dar immediately kicks out.

Cedric is fine enough to grab a Flatliner onto the ramp, followed by a running flip dive to drop Dar again. Dar sends him over the announcers' table but Cedric is right back up with a dive off said table. Back in and Cedric scores with another springboard clothesline, only to have his knee kicked out. Dar loads up a chair so Cedric hits a jumping enziguri and grabs the chair. Alexander wraps the chair around the arm and stomps away. Dar won't quit so Cedric gives him one more chance before stomping about ten times, making Dar quit at 11:09.

Rating: C+. The match was ok but there were multiple occasions where I forgot this was an I Quit match. It was a good enough fight but a lot of it felt like an intense match instead of something where the two of them wanted to hurt each other. The ending was good enough and looked like Dar was defeated, though I lost interest in this story weeks ago. In theory this should move Cedric up to the next level to challenge for the Cruiserweight Title but I still don't feel he's anywhere close to that point yet. There's a big gap between the top and middle of this show and it's very obvious most of the time.

Post match Noam says he quits Alicia, drawing a huge YES chant. He's the youngest member of the 205 Live and Monday Night Raw rosters and he's used Fox to get where he is. Does she really believe he doesn't have a woman in every city the WWE goes to? Dar got the attention he wanted from

her and now she needs to jog off. He won't even do the catchphrase as he leaves Fox in tears. I think that was supposed to make Dar a super heel but it came off like a face turn with the real heel getting what she deserved, despite Dar saying some rather horrible things.

Overall Rating: B-. It feels like we're actually moving somewhere here, especially with Alexander and Dar wrapping up. Other than that we have the Gallagher vs. Kendrick feud and Swann vs. TJP, though that brings up the problem with 205 Live: aside from Neville and whoever is challenging him, no one feels like a big deal. Everyone feels like a kid who is just starting out, which makes them feel like they would get mauled on the main roster. You could fix that in time but at the moment it's not looking good. The show is still watchable and entertaining at times but that's a big hole to get out of.

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205 Live – July 4, 2017: Bad

Old American Timing

205 Live

Date: July 4, 2017

Location: Talking Stick Resort Arena, Phoenix, Arizona

Commentators: Vic Joseph, Corey Graves

We're in the desert this week as the build towards Neville vs. Akira Tozawa for the Cruiserweight Title continues. It's hard to say what else we might be getting on this show, but there's a good chance that it's going to be more of Cedric Alexander vs. Noam Dar in the feud that won't die. Let's get to it.

Titus O'Neil is in the back talking to Akira Tozawa, who is over in Japan training. O'Neil runs into Ariya Daivari and Mustafa Ali, who he recruits and promises not to hit. Titus certainly has some great energy and he's a better fit as a manager than a horrible manager.

Opening sequence.

Announcers chat for a bit.

Here's Titus for a chat, including a clear podium and pictures of both Tozawa and Neville. Titus praises Neville but knows he'll be no match for the Power of Tozawa. This brings Neville out and we see the ending to last night's show with Braun Strowman destroying both Titus and Apollo Crews. Neville is cut off by a YOU'RE NOT STROWMAN chant but suggests that Titus take a seat and watch what happens when he's mad at someone.

Neville vs. Lince Dorado

Non-title and Titus sits in on commentary. There's something amusing about Dorado making his entrance while the ring crew takes the big carpet to the back. Neville powers him down to the mat to start but Dorado starts to flip around, including escaping a German suplex. A monkey flip drops Neville again as Joseph is now wearing Titus' sunglasses and hat. Neville gets pulled out to the floor in a heap for a hurricanrana off the apron but Dorado is sent knees first into the steps. Back in and Neville

powerbombs him into the Rings of Saturn for the tap at 3:59.

Rating: C-. Just a squash here but I get one heck of a kick out of watching Neville just mauling people. Dorado isn't going to lose anything by getting beaten down by Neville, who basically does this to everyone. Whenever someone finally takes the title off of Neville, it's going to be a huge deal and it's because of matches like this one where Neville looks great.

TJP has requested a match with Rich Swann to get back on track with some friendly competition. He seems to be turning back to the good side.

Jack Gallagher vs. Tony Nese

Nese poses at him to start and Gallagher makes the questionable choice to accept a test of strength. With that going nowhere, Jack takes him down for about five straight rolling crucifixes for the same number of near falls. Nese finally sends him hard into the ropes and hammers away to really take over. Jack gets tied in the Tree of Woe so Nese lays on his back and kicks away while doing situps at the same time. Sounds like the evolution of Scott Steiner.

Back up and Nese grabs a fireman's carry but bends Jack around his neck to grasp his hands, kind of like a reverse torture rack. Jack slips down and tries a cross armbreaker but Nese powers out again. Nese tries something like a Lionsault but tweaks his knee on the landing (Is anyone else getting tired of that?), setting up the headbutt and running dropkick to give Gallagher the pin at 6:09.

Rating: C. They had a story here with Nese getting a bit too flashy for the sake of showing off, allowing Gallagher to catch him in the end. All Gallagher needed was a single opening to get the win, which should help keep him strong in the feud with Brian Kendrick. That has some potential, especially after how good the feud with Tozawa was.

Post match here's Kendrick on screen, this time dressed like a stereotypical Revolutionary War Era Englishman. Kendrick lists off some dates in the American Revolution, all of which involve the English losing. Brian promises to rid 205 Live of the British scourge. Was this

really the right idea on THE FOURTH OF JULY? The USA chants while the good guy, from England, is in the ring would suggest otherwise.

We look back at Cedric Alexander beating Noam Dar (yet AGAIN) last night on Raw.

Dar is getting his neck looked at and is told to keep icing it. Alicia Fox comes in and Dar talks about wanting the Cruiserweight Title. That is NOT cool with Fox who wants Dar to deal with Cedric. This better get some votes for Worst Feud of the Year because it's lasting longer and is more unpleasant than a bad fungus.

TJP vs. Rich Swann

They grapple to start with TJP grabbing a wristlock but getting taken down into an armbar. That's countered into a headscissors on the mat, only to have Swann pop up and flip over TJP for a running dropkick. The threat of a dive to the floor sends TJP running and Swann dabs a bit.

Swann misses a charge though and crashes out to the floor for a nine count, followed by an armbar back inside. Rich gets kicked down for trying a comeback as Joseph keeps calling TJP Perkins. If that's allowed, why not just call him TJ Perkins? I'm going to assume it's something stupid and move on. We hit a Muta Lock on Swann until a rope is grabbed, meaning it's time for the real comeback.

Rolling Thunder and a modified Michinoku Driver get two each but TJP is right back with a springboard forearm into a nipup. That just earns him a spinning kick to the head (Swann's former finisher) but TJP pops right back up with the double chickenwing gutbuster for a near fall of his own. The kneebar is broken up so it's a double kick to the head to drop both guys. TJP's Detonation Kick is countered and we hit a pinfall reversal sequence with Swann reversing a sunset flip into a cradle for the pin at 12:17.

Rating: B. This was the kind of longer wrestling match you don't get often enough. They were playing up the idea that they knew each other so well and Swann just caught him in the end instead of really beating him. It's nice to see Swann getting a win here to get himself back on track,

even if it's just in the short term.

They shake hands to end the show.

Overall Rating: B-. Sometimes you need an episode that barely focuses on the title, which is what happened here. Neville had a squash but Tozawa wasn't around and the champion's match was by far the shortest match of the night. There was also a good main event and that makes for an entertaining hour, though the Cedric vs. Dar stuff needs to crawl in a fire somewhere soon.

Remember to follow me on Twitter @kbreviews and pick up the Histories of Saturday Night's Main Event and Clash of the Champions, now in PAPERBACK. Check out the information here:

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