

Main Event – September 16, 2017: The Short Term Holding Pattern

Main Event

Date: September 14, 2017

Location: Honda Center, Anaheim, California

Commentators: Nigel McGuinness, Vic Joseph

It's been a busy week for WWE so let's make sure we have one more show in there, just to fill in some space of course. Hopefully the matches are a bit more interesting this week, though last week's show was one of the better ones they've done in a good while. Then again it's not like there's much continuity around here. Let's get to it.

Opening sequence.

Rhyno vs. Dash Wilder

Feeling out process to start with Rhyno smacking him in the face a few times. Wilder charges into an elbow but is able to shove Rhyno off the top and down onto the floor in a heap. Back in and we hit a quickly broken chinlock, followed by Rhyno's running shoulder in the corner. The Gore misses but Rhyno settles for a spinebuster and the pin at 5:45.

Rating: D+. Just a match here with Rhyno still being over for reasons I can't quite pin down. Maybe it's just how simple his character is and you know exactly what you're going to get from his matches. It's also nice to have Wilder at least making an appearance here or there while Dawson recovers.

From Raw.

Roman Reigns vs. Jason Jordan

Reigns won't shake hands to start and John Cena is shown watching in the back. Feeling out process to start until Jordan charges into a right

hand. The corner clotheslines are countered with the belly to belly and Jordan has a breather. One heck of a running clothesline lets Reigns hit the corner clotheslines but the Superman Punch is countered into the Crossface.

Back from a break with a headbutt dropping Jordan again, followed by a suplex to do the same. We hit the chinlock for a bit before another suplex (granted a different variety) sends Reigns flying. That great dropkick puts Reigns down again and it's still another suplex for two more.

The running shoulder in the corner sets up some rolling northern lights suplexes for another near fall. We hit the Crossface but Reigns finally makes the rope (after nearly tapping on his face). Back up and Jordan's shoulder goes into the post, setting up the Superman Punch. The spear is enough to put Jordan away at 15:18.

Rating: B. Jordan is getting better and the more time he spends away from Kurt Angle, the better this push seems to be going. He just doesn't need the Angle connection and I'm glad that they're doing something like this instead of having them be paired on screen. Reigns looked good here too and is starting to look a bit more comfortable in recent weeks.

Reigns shakes his hand post match. Post break here's Cena to call out Reigns for almost losing. He'd like an explanation, but recommends that Reigns keep it at about one sentence in the form of a catchphrase. Roman says he was out here having a great match, which Cena can't do. Reigns has had more great matches in the last two years than Cena has had in his career. Reigns: "What do you think about that?" Cena: "You can't pin this one on me guys. Reigns is burying himself."

Cena talks about how Reigns has never been put in check before but Cena is going to show him what real failure is. The way things are going, No Mercy is going to be a cake walk. Cena goes to leave but Reigns calls him back in and says he finds it interesting that Cena wanted to fight him. The reason Cena is back is because Reigns is selling the tickets that Cena hasn't been able to sell in five years. It must be because he can't break into Hollywood. Reigns: "If you need help, I know a guy." Cena says

No Mercy is going to be like a drug test: Reigns isn't passing.

And again from Monday.

Here are Brock Lesnar and Paul Heyman for a chat. Heyman knows that we're coming up on a pay per view called No Mercy where Braun Strowman is going to have to do everything he can to take the title away from Brock. That's interesting though because Braun is reminding Heyman of what Lesnar did in 2002, when he beat people like the Rock, Hulk Hogan, Rob Van Dam and the Undertaker. So is Strowman going to be ready to cross the line from sports entertainment into Suplex City?

Heyman doesn't think so, but here's Braun to interrupt. The fight is on and Brock grabs a German suplex (I believe the first time he's ever done that to Strowman) but Braun no sells it, drawing a stunned look from Lesnar. That's a great spot, though ignore the fact that Cena did something similar in 2014. Strowman lays him out with a chokeslam and the running powerslam as Heyman is terrified.

Mustafa Ali/Lince Dorado/Gran Metalik vs. Noam Dar/Tony Nese/Ariya Daivari

Daivari and Dorado start things off and it's a hurricanrana and springboard moonsault press for two on Ariya. Dar comes in and it's time to start in on his arm, sending him outside for a break. Back with Daivari grabbing a chinlock on Metalik and shouting a lot. Dorado grabs the handspring Stunner and it's off to Ali and Dar. Ali grabs his rolling neckbreaker as everything breaks down. The villains are sent outside and of course that means a triple flip dive with Ali barely grazing Nese. Back in and the 054 ends Daivari at 8:49.

Rating: C-. This was every six man tag you see out of the cruiserweights and that's not the worst thing in the world. Dar has really fallen off the map since the Alicia Fox split and I can't say I'm surprised. He never was anything great in the ring (not that he's bad) but really, he's just kind of there at this point.

Video on Big Show vs. Braun Strowman in the cage.

From Raw, one more time.

John Cena vs. Braun Strowman

Graves says Cena is trying to take Strowman out like Reigns could never do. So Cena is out to put him on the shelf for several months now as Reigns already pinned Strowman and put him out for weeks. Cena gets thrown out to the floor to start and then whipped hard into the corner for good measure. Strowman hits a dropkick of all things and the announcers are stunned.

Cena's right hands have no effect but he gets the feet up in the corner. A fall away slam sends Cena flying and we take a break. Back with Strowman being sent outside but running Cena over again. They head back inside with Cena getting him up for the AA but falling forward from the weight.

The Shuffle is broken up just as easily with a spinebuster giving Strowman two. Cena manages an AA, only to have Braun roll out to the floor. A run around the ring is cut off with Strowman picking up the steps and bouncing them off Cena's head. That's not a DQ for no apparent reason so Strowman throws the steps inside for a powerslam, which is enough for the DQ at 13:58.

Rating: C. This was a squash with a screwy ending as Cena makes someone else look like a killer. You know, because he hasn't done it yet this month. Strowman looks like a monster and it was a heck of a performance. I'm actually believing he could win the title at No Mercy, only to lose it to Reigns before he beats Lesnar to retain at Wrestlemania.

Overall Rating: C-. Just a show here with nothing standing out. We're kind of in a short term hold pattern at the moment as we get closer to No Mercy, meaning a lot of this stuff doesn't mean a lot. Strowman vs. Cena being run on free TV with no build bothers me more each time I think about it but at least the ending was the right call. Not much of a show this week but that's Main Event for you.

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205 Live – September 12, 2017: Deck Chairs on the Cruiserweight Show

205 Live

Date: September 12, 2017

Location: Thomas & Mack Center, Las Vegas, Nevada

Commentators: Nigel McGuinness, Vic Joseph

This is a slightly delayed episode as it's taking place after the Mae Young Classic Finals and since we can't just cancel the show for a week, let's have WWE going for three hours and fifteen minutes on back to back nights. Tonight's big match is Rich Swann vs. TJP in what should be their big blowoff. Let's get to it.

Rich Swann is in the back to talk about beating TJP in their first match. TJP comes in to show a video of their second match where he beat Swann. This included TJP acting quite a bit more heelish, which didn't sit well with Swann. Tonight, TJP can't handle this.

Opening sequence.

Rich Swann vs. TJP

You can see the empty seats throughout the arena. Swann headlocks him down to start for a good while, which isn't the best move in the world for a crowd that is rapidly dwindling. Back up and Swann tries his flip over TJP but gets pulled down into a quickly broken kneebar. Instead TJP is sent outside for a flip dive from the apron, followed by a hard kick to the back.

TJP takes him down without too much effort though and rips at Swann's face for a bit. A basement dropkick gets two and we hit the chinlock on Rich. That goes nowhere so it's a hard belly to back suplex into a slingshot hilo for two more. Swann fights back with his series of kicks but TJP catches him with the springboard forearm.

Back up and a double kick puts them both down again as we have another breather. The second kneebar works a bit better but TJP has to settle for the chickenwing gutbuster for two instead. The weakest THIS IS AWESOME chant you'll ever hear doesn't change much so they hit a pinfall reversal sequence. Swann's Fantastic Voyage gets two but the Phoenix splash puts TJP away at 12:05.

Rating: B-. Good match with a nice story of them knowing each other so well and being pretty much even until the ending but the dead crowd hurt them a lot. Throw in the fact that neither of them is going near what's soon to be Enzo's title and this didn't have any meaning to it. At least it was good though.

TJP eventually shakes his hand though it's not a long one.

We look back at Enzo becoming #1 contender with Cedric Alexander cleaning house until Enzo stole the pin.

Mustafa Ali asks Alexander how he can be so calm after last week. Cedric wants to rip Enzo's head off but it doesn't do anything because Enzo caught him sleeping. Brian Kendrick comes in to ask where Cedric wants to be. Cedric's attitude reminds Brian of Jack Gallagher: spineless and

lacking what it takes.

Drew Gulak is in the ring and it's time to complete the PowerPoint presentation! Last week he was cut off by Akira Tozawa, who isn't even here tonight. Since there's no chance of him being interrupted, we get to slide #3 (of 277): no chants. Gulak: "Even Mr. McMahon's music says no chants!" Drew demands complete silence before moving on to slide #4: no elaborate ring gear (with the picture clearly being inspired by Kazuchika Okada).

Slide #5: no interruptions! They're very rude...and here's Breezango for a cameo. That certainly wakes the crowd up with a loud BREEZANGO chant. They bring up the Captain Underpants nickname and you know what the fans are chanting now. Gulak denies it so Fandango threatens to treat him like the perp that he is. He gets rather close to Drew's face and Gulak seems a bit disturbed.

They've received complaints about someone walking around in underpants. Breeze: "We like underpants." He lists off a variety of them with Fandango liking this discussion far too much. Gulak goes to leave so Fandango cuffs him. Breeze lists off his rights (to remain stylish, to have everything you wear seen in a mirror, to a fashion consultant) but Gulak escapes to the floor for a chase. Fandango trips him down and Breeze declares the case closed. Breezango instantly looked like bigger stars than anyone not named Enzo and show just how badly this show is lacking charisma.

We look back at Miz destroying Enzo both verbally and physically last night. I can't believe they would actually show that on this show.

We look back at Brian Kendrick beating up Jack Gallagher two weeks ago.

Cedric Alexander vs. Brian Kendrick

Kendrick knocks him into the corner to start so Cedric dropkicks him away. The springboard clothesline gets two and a back elbow sends Kendrick outside. A big flip dive takes Brian down again but he sends Cedric throat first into the bar between the turnbuckle and post. Cue Jack Gallagher with William III though...and he attacks Alexander for the

DQ at 3:42.

Rating: D. This didn't have time to go anywhere and was all about the heel turn anyway. In theory this sets Cedric up against Kendrick and Gallagher, which is yet another feud for him where he's not fighting for the title. Gallagher turning might do good things for him but he's going to need something a bit more than that to really make it work.

Gallagher destroys Cedric as Brian is stunned. They shake hands to end the show.

Overall Rating: C. This show going so late into the night hurt things and the fans were clearly leaving before the show started, with even more of them being gone by the end. It still doesn't help to have everyone aside from the champion and #1 contender feel like deck chairs being rearranged and that's what the whole place feels like most of the time. The first match was good but they need something more than just a bunch of people running around until the next #1 contender shows up.

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Mae Young Classic Finals: Ladies Month (Includes a Bonus Match)

Mae Young Classic Finals

Date: September 12, 2017

Location: Thomas & Mack Center, Las Vegas, Nevada

Commentators: Jim Ross, Lita

We're already set to wrap up what feels like a very fast tournament. Things have been good so far and the finals have the potential to be a heck of a match. Tonight it's Kairi Sane (the awesome pirate) vs. Shayna Baszler, the mixed martial artist who could knock anyone's head off. Let's get to it.

Before we get into the show, I'm going to throw in a bonus. This is a six woman tag that aired on the special preview and was originally announced as airing on this show. I took a look at it last night but it did NOT air on Tuesday's show, just in case there's any confusion. Tom Phillips, Nigel McGuinness and Beth Phoenix are on the call from the original tapings.

Santana Garrett/Sarah Logan/Marti Belle vs. Jazzy Gabert/Kay Lee Ray/Tessa Blanchard

Jazzy gets a great reaction and the fans chant for her as Tessa and Sarah start things off. Sarah hiptosses her down to start and gets in a knee to the face for no cover. Instead it's off to Garrett to take a forearm, allowing the tag off to Ray. Santana wristdrags Ray and Tessa down at the same time as we're waiting for Jazzy here.

Marti comes in and you can hear the fans lose some energy. A not great headscissors sends Ray into the corner but she stops a charging (not really as she had already pulled up) Belle with a forearm to the jaw. It's off to Jazzy and the fans ROAR as she comes in. Oh yeah I think they've got something here. Three spinning backfists set up a torture

rack before Gabert just tosses her into the corner with a good looking crash.

Tessa comes back in for a running elbow to the back but a jawbreaker puts her down. That means it's off to Garrett vs. Gabert for the main event of the match. Garrett gets in a hurricanrana out of the corner followed by a superkick to put Jazzy down to one knee. Ray Stuns Gabert by mistake (erg) and Tessa plants Logan with a hammerlock DDT. Jazzy is back up though and it's a heck of a Dominator to put Garrett away at 6:05.

Rating: B. Total and complete star making performance here for Gabert, who they'll likely have to sign at this point based on the reaction alone. Tessa and Garrett looked great as well and if Garrett is interested in signing, she'll be there in a heartbeat. Belle was her usual nothing self and Logan just didn't get time to do anything. Ray was fine too but this was ALL about Gabert with Santana being an easy second.

The winners pose and it's a PLEASE SIGN GABERT chant. HHH comes out and listens to the cheers but says they did this at the Cruiserweight Classic and he has a budget. He puts over the tournament and says it's time for the women to have a pot of gold to chase after just like the men. The tournament was for the fans so thank you all very much.

Now we're on to the main show.

As you might expect, we open with a long recap of the tournament with a focus on Sane and Baszler.

Renee Young is in the arena to hype up the finals and throw us to a package of people arriving earlier. Stephanie McMahon, Charlotte, Bayley and Becky Lynch among others were here to see the finals in person.

Video on Shayna Baszler.

Beth Phoenix, Dana Warrior, Alundra Blayze and Mauro Ranallo are all here.

Video on how Sane and Baszler both got here.

[Mae Young Classic Finals: Shayna Baszler vs. Kairi Sane](#)

We get the Big Match Intros with Lillian Garcia doing a special introduction. Baszler grabs a quick rear naked choke to start but gets rolled up for two and a break. A walk up the corner into a headscissors drops Shayna again but one heck of a kick to the head sends Sane outside. Shayna gets in a running knee from the apron, followed by a kick to the arm for good measure.

The rolling gutwrench suplexes give Shayna two and it's time to crank on the arm again. Shayna smacks her in the face so Sana chops away, only to get caught with a running knee to the chest. A spear has Shayna's ribs in trouble though and it's a basement dropkick to keep Baszler in trouble. Sane grabs a bodyscissors but misses the sliding forearm in the corner. Instead it's Sane going up top and diving into the rear naked choke to put her in real trouble.

Elbows to the ribs break her out though and a spinning backfist drops Baszler again. It's still too early for the elbow as Shayna catches her on top for a slugout. A Kimura on top is broken up with shoulders to the ribs, followed by a top rope double stomp to the chest for two. Now the running forearm to the ribs knocks Baszler down, setting up the elbow for the pin and the tournament at 11:50.

Rating: B. Good match, though this really felt like it was a match that they had to rush through due to time. It never hit that great level that they felt capable of hitting and it felt kind of disappointing as a result. Granted putting this in front of the general WWE crowd wasn't the best idea but putting it down at Full Sail or in Brooklyn would have just been too logical. Still good though.

HHH, Stephanie (I guess her dad is fine already) and Sara Amato come out for the trophy presentation.

Overall Rating: B. We'll go with that for the entire tournament too. I did like what I saw and I like the much faster release schedule than the Mae Young Classic. They never quite hit that level they were shooting for though and it made things feel a little bit disappointing. That being said, this was about restocking the shelves and there's a ridiculous amount of talent ready to take over the women's division. It's worth

checking out as you're in and out with nine rather short shows and you'll get some good action. Solid tournament, but it's not as good as the cruiserweights.

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Main Event – September 7, 2017: I'll Walk With You

Main Event

Date: September 7, 2017

Location: CenturyLink Center, Omaha, Nebraska

Commentators: Vic Joseph, Nigel McGuinness

We're in a new era here because a change in the commentary team is enough to warrant calling it a new era. Corey Graves has moved up to Smackdown so this show falls to Joseph and McGuinness, who probably aren't going to change all that much. Hopefully the show is good, though as usual it depends on what you get from Monday. Let's get to it.

Opening sequence.

TJP/Brian Kendrick vs. Mustafa Ali/Lince Dorado

Dorado enziguris Kendrick to start and gets two off a dropkick. Ali comes in with a neckbreaker for the same but it's off to TJP for a headscissors into some dabbing. A double slam drops TJP and Kendrick charges into a double flapjack. TJP gets in a clothesline from the apron to drop Ali and the villains take over for the first time.

It's off to Brian for an armbar with a neck crank but TJP can't get the kneebar. Kendrick can get a superkick to his jaw though and the hot tag brings in Dorado. A moonsault press gets two on TJP and everything breaks down. Dorado dives onto Kendrick and it's the 054 from Ali to put TJP away at 6:32.

Rating: C+. These cruiserweight tag matches have been getting a lot better in recent weeks. They're flying all over the place and showing what they're capable of doing, which makes them great choices for opening matches like this one. TJP has grown on me considerably and Ali is getting better every single time. Good, fun match here.

From Raw.

John Cena vs. Jason Jordan

Before the match, we look at Cena answering an open challenge from Kurt Angle fifteen years ago in his debut match. The fans are actually behind Cena, which should tell you a lot about Jordan's future. Jason grabs an early takedown and grabs a waistlock. Cena can't do much with him to start until a hard clothesline drops Jason without much effort. A suplex gets two on Jordan, followed by a hard whip into the corner for the same as we take a break.

Back with Jordan hitting his own suplexes and that's enough for Cena, who initiates the finishing sequence. Jordan's rollup is countered into the STF but he reverses into something like a Crossface. Cena powers out (because he's Cena) and reverses another suplex into a crossbody. That's enough for Cena though as he grabs the AA for the pin at 11:38.

Rating: B-. These performances make Jordan look like a star but the whole

being Angle's son thing is really not doing him any favors. It's not an effective story and I think WWE is starting to get that. Hopefully they build Jordan up and then do something to get rid of the Angle connection because it's not doing much for him.

Post match Roman Reigns comes out for a chat. Back from a break with Roman asking why it took a veteran twenty minutes to beat a rookie. I don't think Reigns knows A, what a rookie is or B, how to tell time. Cena says Roman is starting to ask questions and that's the worst thing he could do. They're distracting him and he's out here with his zipper down. Reigns: "I busted it actually. Big dog."

Cena promises that Reigns will get his answers at No Mercy, either by a guy who has lost his steps or someone who has been stringing Roman along. Roman is going to learn that he's an entitled golden boy while people like Chad Gable, Jason Jordan and even the Miz have had to fight and claw their way to get where they are. Point being, Cena doesn't respect Reigns because Roman is the only one living a lie. Reigns wants to fight right now but Cena doesn't seem interested. That makes Roman think he's all talk, which is why Reigns doesn't respect him.

From Raw again.

Intercontinental Title: The Miz vs. Jeff Hardy

Miz is defending. Jeff gets three near falls in the first minute before a clothesline puts Miz on the floor. A dive is teased but Jeff pulls back as Miz moves, sending us to a break. Back with Jeff getting two off his sitout gordbuster but mostly missing the Whisper in the Wind. Dallas offers a distraction so Axel can break up the Swanton, leaving Matt to take care of both of them. All three are ejected and it's Jeff grabbing a rollup for two.

Miz's DDT gets the same but he misses the running clothesline in the corner. Miz hits a running knee ala Daniel Bryan for two and we hit the YES Kicks. Jeff is right back with a dropkick but his dive off the apron is broken up. We hit the Figure Four for a bit with Jeff getting out without too much trouble.

The Twisting Stunner has Miz in trouble so he heads outside, only to get caught by Poetry in Motion against the barricade. Back in and the Swanton misses thanks to Maryse telling her husband it was coming. Another Twist of Fate is countered into the Skull Crushing Finale to retain the title at 13:02.

Rating: B. Better match than I was expecting and Miz retaining clean (the Maryse thing wasn't interference) is a good idea. The fact that they're pushing Miz's total days as champion is interesting too as he's only about six months away from setting the all time record for combined days with the title. That's easily something he could reach, along with most title reigns. They would be crazy not to push the heck out of that and it seems to have started.

Elias vs. Kalisto

The fans seem interested in walking with Elias. After a little ditty about how there's nothing cool about Omaha, we're ready to go. Kalisto starts fast with a bunch of kicks to the leg and we take an early break. Back with more kicks, followed by the hurricanrana driver. Not that it matters as Elias nails Drift Away at 5:55. Not enough shown to rate but it felt like they were very rushed.

Video on Big Show and Strowman breaking the ring back in April.

Big Show vs. Braun Strowman

Inside a cage with pinfall/submission/escape to win. Strowman splashes him up against the cage to start but runs into the KO punch as we go to a break. Back with both guys down again until Show slams him into the cage over and over. Show tries to climb for some reason and gets crotched, only to shove Strowman off again.

That means a top rope elbow for two and a THIS IS AWESOME chant. Show goes for the door but gets pulled back, only to have Strowman get the door slammed on his head. A double shoulder puts both of them down but Show's chokeslam is countered into a DDT for two. The chokeslam is good for two and Show escapes the powerslam. Strowman misses a charge and goes into the cage wall but is still able to catch Big Show escaping. The big

old superplex plants Show and it's the running powerslam for the pin at 16:58.

Rating: B. These two continue to surprise me as they haven't actually had a bad match. WWE has a bad tendency to turn these battles of the big men into really boring matches but this was another great power match with both guys looking good. It's also proof that having an obvious winner isn't the worst thing in the world. Strowman was obviously winning (Big Show isn't Kalisto after all) and it didn't make the match any less entertaining.

Post match Strowman says that's nothing compared to what he'll do to Lesnar. Now it's time to put Big Show out to pasture, so Strowman powerslams him through the cage (a section of which breaks and falls to the floor) to end the show.

Overall Rating: C+. Pretty standard episode this week, though I really like that cage match. The Reigns vs. Cena stuff is still entertaining and I remain stunned by how well they're treating Elias. He's barely lost aside from Finn Balor and that's quite the record for someone who shouldn't be that big of a deal. Hopefully things go well for him and he can get back on Raw soon enough.

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205 Live – September 5, 2017: If You Don't Like It...At Least There's Not Many Of You

205 Live

Date: September 5, 2017

Location: Denny Sanford Premiere Center, Sioux Falls, South Dakota

Commentators: Nigel McGuinness, Vic Joseph

It's a big night here as we have a new commentator to replace Corey Graves, but more importantly we have a fatal five way for the #1 contendership to the Cruiserweight Title. The survivor of tonight's main event will be facing Neville for the title at No Mercy 2017 in what could be a very interesting match depending who gets the show. Let's get to it.

All five of the participants in the five way (Cedric Alexander, Tony Nese, Enzo Amore, Brian Kendrick and Gran Metalik) say they'll win.

Opening sequence.

TJP vs. Ariya Daivari

Rich Swann, with popcorn in hand, comes out for commentary. By that I mean he puts a chair on the table and has a seat. Daivari takes advantage of the distraction and stomps away in the corner, only to have TJP swing through the ropes to avoid falling to the floor. Back in and a kick to the leg ties TJP in the Tree of Woe, allowing Daivari to grab a reverse DDT for two.

We hit the double arm crank for a bit before TJP hits the spinning spring forearm into the nipup. They finally head outside with Daivari glaring at Swann for no apparent reason (must be a popcorn hater). Daivari misses the frog splash and gets caught with the Detonation Kick for the pin at

4:10.

Rating: D+. Just a step above a squash here as TJP vs. Swann continues. They're likely setting up a big blowoff match though I'm not sure how interesting that really is. There's no real hatred between the two of them and it's just likely to be a good match rather than an interesting one.

Post match Swann tells TJP he wants a match next week and throws in a dab.

We look back at last week's No DQ match with Kendrick beating Jack Gallagher to a bloody pulp.

Here's Drew Gulak for a chat before his match. After the CAPTAIN UNDERPANTS chant, Gulak talks about not being pleased with being left out of the main event. To explain his issues, he's got a PowerPoint presentation! He has a plan for a better 205 Live, starting with #1: no jumping off the top rope. Point #2: no jumping off the middle rope. #3: never mind as it's time for a match.

Drew Gulak vs. Akira Tozawa

I guess Tozawa is more of a notepad guy. Gulak headlocks him down to start before a dropkick sends Drew bailing to the corner. Tozawa follows him out but gets sent hard into the barricade as Gulak is being far more aggressive here than usual. A bow and arrow hold stays on Tozawa's back before a bottom rope stomp to the back (not the top or the middle mind you) keeps him down. Tozawa fights up and sends him outside for the suicide dive. A rollup gives Drew a breather, only to have Tozawa kick him in the head. The top rope backplash gives Tozawa the pin at 6:39.

Rating: B-. Gulak was WAY better than usual here, partially due to some extra aggression. Or maybe because he had an upgraded opponent with Tozawa, who is certainly better than most of the cruiserweights with the resume to back it up. I liked this one quite a bit and again, if Gulak gets enough of a push, he could be something around here.

Enzo Amore says he has the gift of gab and will work "shmarter" to win

the title shot tonight. Neville comes in to say he still doesn't think much of Enzo. Amore promises to win the title at No Mercy. Why are we bothering with the five way again?

Cedric Alexander vs. Tony Nese vs. Enzo Amore vs. Gran Metalik vs. Brian Kendrick

Elimination rules for the title shot at No Mercy. Everyone looks at Enzo so he hits the floor, which should already tell you how this match is going to end. Cedric launches Metalik into a double dropkick to send both villains outside, leaving Alexander and Metalik to jump over each other. Metalik walks the ropes to dropkick Cedric but Nese pulls Gran outside for a staredown with Cedric.

That's fine with Alexander who scores with a dropkick as everyone else continues to vanish for long stretches at a time. You can still hear Enzo running his mouth though, just in case you were worried about his absence. Nese catches Cedric in a backbreaker but Enzo runs in to roll Tony up for two. Kendrick suplexes Enzo to the floor and FINALLY gets back in the ring to help Nese double team Enzo. You know, the real threat in this match.

A double superkick knocks Enzo outside so it's Metalik and Alexander diving back in. Cedric catches Metalik in a C4 to put everyone down. Alexander heads up top and of course that means it's a Tower of Doom with everyone not named Enzo involved, including Metalik adding a sunset bomb to really add some impact. Enzo's dive onto Kendrick and Nese is pulled out of the air and he's tossed over the announcers' table for a crash. Kendrick decks Nese from behind, setting a new record for fastest broken alliance.

Metalik dives onto Kendrick and we get the ultra rare (as in probably for the first time ever) 205 chant. Back in and Cedric hits a quick Lumbar Check to get rid of Nese and get us down to four. Metalik tries a handspring but dives right into another Lumbar Check to make it three (note that Alexander missed most of it but got a very deep cover to make up for it in a nice touch). Kendrick comes in with Sliced Bread and the Captain's Hook but Cedric FINALLY makes the rope for the break. The third

Lumbar Check is good for the third elimination...and here's Enzo to roll Cedric up with a handful of trunks for the pin at 14:48.

Rating: B. This was exactly what you would expect. It's still entertaining but Enzo is the most recent obvious winner in the history of obvious winners and there's...well there probably is something wrong with that but I think you get the idea at this point. Alexander was really shining here and while I still think he would have been a great choice to face Neville for the title, it's clearly Amore's time and there's no reason to not give him the shot.

Overall Rating: B-. I'm not sure what else you were expecting here as we move full steam ahead into the Enzo Amore era. The old system didn't work so this is probably the right course. You won't like this if you were a fan of the focus being on the in-ring product but it's not like many people were watching it in the first place. These changes were required and there's just no way around it.

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Mae Young Classic Episode Eight – Someone Has to Lose

Mae Young Classic Episode #8

Date: September 4, 2017

Location: Full Sail University, Winter Park, Florida

Commentators: Jim Ross, Lita

It's semifinals time and that means we should be in for some nice, long matches. It wouldn't surprise me if we didn't get a bonus match thrown in as well and that wouldn't be the worst idea in the world. Hopefully they can live up to the expectations as the matches have been good but nothing great. The extra time should help a lot so let's get to it.

We open with a recap of last week.

JR and Lita offer a preview.

Video on Shayna Baszler, who held that choke longer last week to send a message.

Video on Mercedes Martinez, who says this is the culmination of her career. We also see clips of Martinez training Baszler, which offers a very nice bonus aspect to the match. Why wasn't that mentioned before?

Semifinals: Shayna Baszler vs. Mercedes Martinez

Baszler shakes hands this time. Martinez isn't as polite and slugs away at Baszler with right hands and chops in the corner. A kick to the ribs is blocked but Martinez just lets it go, seemingly in an attempt to get inside Baszler's head. The threat of a running kick sets up a chinlock, which isn't a rear naked choke no matter how much JR seems to think it is.

Baszler sends her into the corner and hammers away before getting two off a gutwrench suplex. A kneebar has Martinez in trouble until she finally kicks away. This time it's Martinez grabbing a hold of her own with something like a Regal Stretch before they forearm it out from their

knees. Baszler gets the better of it but Mercedes fights up into a fisherman's suplex to put Baszler down. The fisherman's buster is countered into the rear naked choke and Mercedes finally taps at 8:10.

Rating: B. Baszler winning is the absolute right call, especially with the Four Horsewomen battle coming up. Martinez doesn't have a background in WWE but they've treated her as a major deal, which makes it more impressive to have Baszler beat her. Good match here, which is becoming the trend around here.

They hug post match with Stephanie McMahon (well duh), HHH and Sara Amoto out to congratulate Baszler.

Video on Toni Storm, who is here to win.

Video on Kairi Sane, who promises to win. I was hoping she was here for a flagon of rum and a treasure hunt.

Semifinals: Kairi Sane vs. Toni Storm

Sane takes Toni down and rides her for a bit until Storm slips out of a chinlock. That's fine with Kairi who hits a running dropkick and starts smiling. Storm goes with a shot to the face for two, only to get pulled to the floor with her back landing on the apron. Kairi adds a big dive to put Storm down again and it's off to a Boston crab.

The sliding forearm is blocked with some raised boots though (smart) and it's the running hip attack rocking Kairi. Storm tries another one but takes a clothesline to the ribs (not quite a spear) to cut her off again. They slug it out with Kairi getting the better of it but she gets caught on top. Storm gets two off a fisherman's suplex.

It's off to a flip over armbar (ala Tommaso Ciampa) with Toni CRANKING on that thing. Kairi finally rolls over to the other side for two but can't follow up. Toni's top rope legdrop hits the back but she bangs herself up at the same time. Kairi kicks her down again and hits the top rope elbow for the pin at 12:24.

Rating: B+. This might have been the best match of the tournament so far, or at least the hardest hitting. Kairi winning was pretty obvious and

there was no secret to the fact that it was going to be her vs. Baszler, almost from the beginning. Storm looked great again here and if they don't sign her, they're dumber than I thought.

Sane gets the victory celebration as well. Baszler comes out for the showdown with JR getting in the usually awesome summary line: the one with the biggest fight in the dog is fighting the biggest dog in the yard.

Overall Rating: A-. I'm ready for the finals and that's a good thing. The two matches were both quite good and I want to see the winners beat the heck out of each other next week. They've built both of them up as unbeatable, which is what makes for an awesome showdown in the end. Really good good show here and the best thing they've done so far.

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Mae Young Classic Episode Seven: New Orleans on April 8

is a Place and Time

Mae Young Classic Episode #7

Date: September 4, 2017

Location: Full Sail University, Winter Park, Florida

Commentators: Jim Ross, Lita

We're down to the final eight and that means four quarterfinal matches tonight. You can probably guess what's coming for the final four but that's what makes these rounds exciting: there's the chance of a big upset and that could change everything. Things were a lot better in the second round and hopefully that's the case here too. Let's get to it.

We open with a recap of how all eight made it to the quarterfinals.

No bio videos here, though to be fair you should know who they are at this point.

Quarterfinals: Abbey Laith vs. Mercedes Martinez

Abbey takes her down in a test of strength to start until a hard palm strike to the jaw slows Laith down. Mercedes headlocks her for a bit before a heck of a slap staggers Abbey again. A spinning kick is countered so Abbey just does the splits instead of getting dropped again. Laith kicks at the arm a bit and JR brings up the two years off that Mercedes needed for a shoulder injury. That little background information often helps things so much and I wish we got more of it in WWE.

Abbey chops her back and kicks Mercedes in the head for two. That just earns Abbey a hard whip into the post and they fight to the apron with Lita joining the IT'S THE HARDEST PART OF THE RING club. Abbey kicks her out to the floor (which hasn't been the case very often in the tournament) for a crossbody to leave both of them laying.

Back in and Abbey tries to get fired up but Mercedes sends her outside for a breather. That goes nowhere so Abbey grabs a bridging German suplex for two, drawing a heck of a scream out of Laith on the kickout. Mercedes grabs the fisherman's buster for the pin at 8:57 in another fast finish.

Rating: B. These finishes coming out of nowhere aren't doing much for me and they're becoming a pattern around here. Mercedes advancing is the right call as she's been treated as a veteran killer so sending her to the semifinals makes sense. Good match here too, which is all you can ask for.

Johnny Gargano is here and you know what that means.

Quarterfinals: Candice LeRae vs. Shayna Baszler

The winner gets Martinez in the semifinals. Shayna wastes no time with a hard knee lift and looks like she's toying with Candice to start. A kick misses though and Shayna crotches herself to give Candice a breather. Shayna gets sent outside for a suicide dive into a DDT (cool) to drop her on her head. Back in and we hit an Octopus hold on Baszler, followed by the Gargano Escape for a nice touch. Baszler calmly powers her up for a side slam and tries a super gutwrench suplex. Ms. LeRae's Wild Ride is easily countered into the rear naked choke for the tap at 3:11.

Rating: C+. They were getting going here until the very sudden ending, though this was the right idea. The idea behind Baszler is that she can finish you in the blink of an eye and that's exactly what they should be going for with her. LeRae is going to be fine wherever she goes and that suicide DDT was freaking sweet. Throw in the submission tease and they had me going a few times here. Give this more time though and it's instantly better.

Baszler won't let go of the hold, to the point where I thought they were going to reverse the decision for a second. She even kicks at LeRae as the doctors check on her. Now that's how you book a heel.

Quarterfinals: Piper Niven vs. Toni Storm

Storm takes the far bigger Niven into the corner and gives her a playful tap on the jaw. For some reason Toni thinks a test of strength is a good idea with Niven taking her down. Storm bridges up and Niven can't break it for an impressive strength display. Like, a very impressive one as Toni isn't that big. They bridge up at the same time and shake hands upside down for a cute bit.

Niven powers her down and gets two off a splash, followed by Toni getting the same off a crossbody. Two more splashes give Piper the same so Toni grabs a Backstabber (popular move in this tournament) for a breather. A German suplex is countered into the Michinoku Driver for two and Piper is stunned. She tries the Vader Bomb, only to get caught in a German superplex. A top rope legdrop sends Storm on at 7:36.

Rating: C+. I don't think anyone was buying the idea that Niven was anything more than a dragon for someone to slay. Storm is as good of an option as anyone else as she has a great look and feels like someone they want to push the heck out of, especially over time. Good enough match here and while Storm isn't making it to the finals, she's getting noticed, which is often more important.

Baszler's fellow Four Horsewomen are proud of her win but here are Bayley, Charlotte and Becky Lynch for the staredown. Rousey: "Anytime, anyplace." Say....New Orleans perhaps? Maybe early April?

Funaki is here.

Quarterfinals: Kairi Sane vs. Dakota Kai

Kairi headlocks her down to start and the fans seem pleased at an early standoff. A spinning backfist misses and Kai gives her a martial arts pose. Kairi takes her into the corner for some hard chops as this is getting physical. The fans are behind Kairi but get quieted down with a running kick to the jaw in the corner. Kairi is tired of getting hit in the face so she spears Kai down for a breather.

Kai hits another running kick in the corner but gets sent into the corner. Kairi can't hit a superplex but can avoid a top rope double stomp with Kai tweaking the knee on the landing. A top rope Phenomenal Forearm gives Kairi two but Kai kicks her down again. Another running kick in the corner misses though and it's an Alabama Slam it's the top rope elbow to send Sane to the semifinals at 7:42.

Rating: B. I'm starting to get the appeal of Sane and a lot of it is due to having her do stuff like this. Kai was very game here and that made for a more entertaining match. People like Sane are going to get more out

of this than by squashing someone so it's definitely the right call. Kai will have a job in WWE if she wants one but this is Sane's tournament to win. Maybe.

The semifinals are set:

Kairi Sane

Toni Storm

Mercedes Martinez

Shayna Baszler

Overall Rating: B. I'm not sure what it says that I'm more interested in the Four Horsewomen battle than the tournament but that was definitely one of the big draws of this whole thing. The final four are interesting and while you can almost pencil in Sane vs. Baszler for the whole thing, that's not the worst result in the world. Good show here and I'm fired up for the last two shows.

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Mae Young Classic Episode Six – This is What I Signed Up For

Mae Young Classic Episode #6

Date: September 4, 2017

Location: Full Sail University, Winter Park, Florida

Commentators: Jim Ross, Lita

It's time to finish up the second round and get us down to the final eight. That means we have some big names facing some other big names on this show and that should be a lot of fun. I've managed to avoid as many spoilers as possible and it's amazing how much more entertaining a show like this can be when that's the case. Let's get to it.

We open with the standard recap of the previous show and tonight's preview.

Opening sequence.

We see Ronda Rousey and the Four Horsewomen arriving earlier. Gee I wonder who is making the finals.

Video on Toni Storm, who wants to fight and win.

Video on Lacey Evans, who is everything a modern woman is supposed to be.

Second Round: Toni Storm vs. Lacey Evans

They fight over a headlock to start with Toni getting the better of it. Lacey grabs one of her own with a fairly serious look on her face until a kick to the chest puts her down again. Storm tries a bit too flashy hip attack and gets rolled up for two for her efforts. A legsweep from the apron into a slingshot elbow gives Lacey two and it's time to work on the arm.

Storm goes back to the strikes to get a breather and it's a Backstabber

(not a Codebreaker JR) to put Lacey down in the corner. Lacey comes back with a good looking swinging neckbreaker, only to walk into Strong Zero (modified White Noise onto the knee) to send Storm on at 5:08.

Rating: C-. I'm digging Storm (good look, strong enough work) so far as she's got a bit of a charisma that is helping her stand out. Hopefully she's sticking around for awhile as I could see her going somewhere with the right coaching. Evans' gimmick is kind of odd as she has the serious military background but looks like one of the Andrews Sisters in the ring. I liked her when I saw her live but it's not quite working this time.

Video on Mia Yim, who has been working specifically to be the best.

Video on Shayna Baszler, who has combat experience.

Second Round: Mia Yim vs. Shayna Baszler

Of note: Baszler, one of MMA's Four Horsewomen, walks past Charlotte, Becky Lynch and Bayley with only a passing glance. An exchange of kicks naturally goes to Baszler (JR: "Some people enjoy going to the mall. I think she'd go to the mall just to beat people up.") but Mia knocks her outside for a heck of a suicide dive. Back in and Baszler rolls some gutwrench suplexes for two but gets caught in the Tarantula (with JR calling Tajiri a handsome rascal).

An ankle lock cuts Mia off again but she's right back with some strikes to the face for two. Not that it matters as Baszler knees her hard in the face for a knockdown and it's right back to the ankle lock. Mia kicks her way to freedom and is able to powerbomb Baszler for two because ankle injuries aren't a thing. Just in case you thought it was a thing, Mia tries a 450 but gets caught in a rear naked choke for the tap at 5:36.

Rating: B-. Lack of selling aside, I'm sad to see Mia go out so early. For a long time I never got her appeal but she grew on me a lot during the tournament. That being said, Baszler is someone they're going to push very hard in this thing due to the Four Horsewomen affiliation. It would surprise me if we didn't see a four on four match at Wrestlemania and that would be just fine.

Post match Shayna celebrates with her friends before going over to the wrestling Horsewomen to throw up the hand signs. Fans: "YES! YES! YES!"

Video on Dakota Kai, who is a fast striker. A striker? In a women's wrestling tournament?

Video on Rhea Ripley, who is big and strong but young.

Second Round: Dakota Kai vs. Rhea Ripley

The much bigger Ripley works on a headlock before diving over Kai, who snaps off some armdrags. A dropkick sends Ripley into the corner before a running kick to the chest makes things even worse. Ripley gets sent outside and drops her face first onto the apron for another two. Some running knees to the chest give Ripley the same and frustration is setting in.

The full nelson slam is broken up by a kick to the head, followed by a running dropkick. One heck of a running kick to the face in the corner gives Kai two, only to have Ripley superkick her away. A northern lights suplex drops Kai for two more and Ripley looks stunned. They head up top with Ripley getting caught in the Tree of Woe for the top rope double stomp to send Kai on at 7:03.

Rating: B-. Another good match, though this only sends Kai on to be Sane's latest victim. Ripley has every tool you could possibly need to be a huge star and I'm sure she's going to be just fine down in developmental. Kai looked great as well and should be just fine if she sticks around with NXT. Good match here as Ripley continues to impress.

Video on Candice LeRae, who will give everything she has to win this.

Video on Nicole Savoy, who loves to suplex people. She must have been miserable in the first round then as she didn't do a single one.

Johnny Gargano is here. I love how these wrestlers are ushered in and out every match.

Second Round: Candice LeRae vs. Nicole Savoy

JR talks about PWG and my head threatens to explode. Lita on the other hand slips up a bit by saying Savoy's previous match was last night. Savoy kicks away a handshake offer and we're ready to go. The fans, with a decidedly female sounding voice, are behind Candice. Savoy sends her into the corner for a crash but LeRae comes right back out with a jumping Downward Spiral for two.

The first suplex drops LeRae for two and they trade modified surfboards. Candice elbows her way out of trouble and hits a Codebreaker for a breather. Savoy rolls some butterfly suplexes but can't get a cross armbreaker. Another kick to the head gives Candice a breather and it's off to something like a Black Widow to slow Savoy down. For some reason Savoy takes her up top and even old man JR knows it's a bad idea to put LeRae up top when her finisher comes from there. As you might expect, Ms. LeRae's Wild Ride ends Savoy at 5:54.

Rating: C+. Savoy looked better here but you knew LeRae was winning here, especially with the idea of her being massacred by Baszler in the next round. This was some good storytelling with LeRae fighting from underneath and being willing to go the extra mile to beat the fighting machine. Good match here.

Again, no brackets are shown for the next round but here you are:

Mercedes Martinez

Abbey Laith

Shayna Baszler

Candice LeRae

Toni Storm

Piper Niven

Dakota Kai

Kairi Sane

Overall Rating: B. Now this is more like it. The wrestling was good from

top to bottom and while a lot of the endings were obvious, there's nothing wrong with having some good wrestling where you know who's winning. I'm digging this more and more every single episode and the fact that they've done this all in two major content drops is a great idea. Best show of the tournament so far with ease.

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Mae Young Classic Episode Five: No Mercy Lives!

Mae Young Classic Episode #5

Date: September 4, 2017

Location: Full Sail University, Winter Park, Florida

Commentators: Jim Ross, Lita

The fast paced shows continue as we have four more episodes being released today before we get ready for next week's live finale. We're down to sixteen competitors to go and for the most part, I'm coming into this blind on the spoilers. It's hard to say where some of these matches are going to go so let's get to it.

Mauro handles the opening recap again.

The remaining entrants are on stage.

Video on Abbey Laith, who has wrestled for years and is here now.

Video on Rachel Evers, who was originally scheduled to lose in the first round but Marti Belle was so horrible that they changed plans mid-match.

Kassius Ohno is here.

Second Round: Abbey Laith vs. Rachel Evers

The fans sound split here as Rachel shoves her down to start, only to get wristdragged to the floor. Back in and a Stunner of all things puts Abbey down but they hit stereo bicycle kicks for a double knockdown. Abbey sticks with the kicks, including a high one off the side of Evers' head to send her straight down. She's up fast enough to catch Abbey on top with a super powerslam of all things for two. Cool looking move if nothing else. Evers tries another kick but gets dropped with a powerbomb, setting up the Alligator Clutch for the pin at 4:51.

Rating: C-. This started off a bit awkward but got better as things went on. Laith feels like someone they're ready to push pretty hard, especially given her background on the indy scene. Evers just needs a lot more ring time, though she has the look and pedigree to make a pretty nice run for herself one day.

Video on Serena Deeb, who is very aggressive and will work hard.

Video on Piper Niven, who wants to be tough but with a big smile.

Second Round: Serena Deeb vs. Piper Niven

Niven powers her into the corner to start and falls on Deeb in a slam attempt. Well to be fair that was just kind of dumb. A hard belly to back suplex breaks up Serena's headlock and there's a splash for two more. With the holds not working, Deeb opts for just punching her in the face for a change. A middle rope Codebreaker (or maybe something like a monkey flip) drops Niven and a neckbreaker gets two.

Deeb is right back up with a modified Diamond Cutter for two more as the fans are split again. A charge misses in the corner though and Niven drops a Vader Bomb...for two. Dang I would have bet on that one. Niven heads up top (uh oh) and misses a splash, only to grab the Michinoku Driver to put Deeb away at 7:12.

Rating: C. What in the world was that ending? Niven missed the splash to seemingly give Deeb a hope spot but she was up less than five seconds later and hit the finish for the pin. I looked away for a second and my head swung back because I thought the video had skipped. They were trying to get into the Sting vs. Vader formula here but that ending REALLY knocked them back.

Video on Princesa Sugehit, who may be a veteran but needs to win this tournament.

Video on Mercedes Martinez, who has waited a long time for this opportunity.

Kalisto is here.

Second Round: Princesa Sugehit vs. Mercedes Martinez

Sugehit, in Wonder Woman themed gear, takes her down by the arm and tries a quick rollup for two. Another rollup, this time into the corner, gets the same on Martinez but she's right back with Two Amigos into a draping swinging neckbreaker. Princesa grabs a Codebreaker but has to block a superplex attempt. Instead it's a tornado DDT (now a big spot on the indy Bingo card) for two on Martinez and both of them are spent less than five minutes in. One heck of a Fujiwara armbar has Martinez in more trouble but she pops up and hits a fisherman's buster for the pin at 5:09.

Rating: C. What is with these sudden endings? Sugehit was dominating and then got caught by one move, seemingly out of nowhere, for the pin. Mercedes winning certainly isn't a surprise but they could have done a better job of laying the match out. You have almost all the time you want and there's no need to cut them down this fast.

Video on Bianca Belair, whose hair whip thing is still stupid.

Video on Kairi Sane, who is perhaps the most awesome thing ever.

Second Round: Bianca Belair vs. Kairi Sane

Kairi gets taken down to start and we hit a headlock as JR continues to brag about how awesome of an athlete Belair is. Back up and Belair blows her a kiss, only to have Sane grab it out of the air and stomp it on the mat. One heck of a forearm drops Belair but she hits the hair whip (So you can use it to whip people but get yelled at for pulling it?) to take over.

A delayed vertical suplex with some squats gets two and we hit a seated full nelson. So she's a No Mercy fan? Some ground and pound of all things has Kairi down but she gets her knees up to stop a splash. Kairi does those rapid fire chops in the corner that probably don't hurt much but they're done in Japan and therefore they must be awesome.

A seated double arm choke (another No Mercy move) has Belair in trouble until she fights up and gets in a double chickenwing slam. One heck of a 450 gets a red hot near fall on Sane and Bianca is stunned. Kairi kicks her down and hits a running corner clothesline, followed by the top rope elbow (which she almost completely misses as her hip makes contact instead) to eliminate Belair at 10:00.

Rating: B. I'll give this one a higher rating for the No Mercy based offense and the hair thing being gone. Sane is clearly the top star in this whole thing and I'd be surprised if she doesn't win the whole thing. Belair is a heck of an athlete and that 450 looked awesome. She'll be a big deal in NXT for a good while and then on the main roster assuming she has any kind of talking ability.

A recap wraps things up.

Overall Rating: B-. Now we're getting to the fun part where they're having big names face other big names. The wrestling is getting better too and that can make for some sweet matches. I'm looking forward to where things go from here and the rest of the tournament, assuming it's given time, should be a lot of fun.

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Main Event – August 31, 2017: I Still Can't Get Over That Promo

Main Event

Date: August 31, 2017

Location: FedEx Forum, Memphis, Tennessee

Commentators: Vic Joseph, Corey Graves

It's a shame that this can't be your classic Memphis style show as it would give things a fresh blast of energy. That being said, I can live with dull wrestling if it means we get to see the Roman Reigns/John Cena promo again, which was easily one of the most entertaining things I've seen all year. Let's get to it.

Opening sequence.

Dana Brooke vs. Alicia Fox

They lock up to start with Fox sending her into the corner but getting rolled up for two. A handstand splash gets two on Alicia but she comes back with some knees to the back. We hit the chinlock as it's pretty clear they don't have much to do here. The northern lights gives Alicia two but Brooke makes her comeback with some slams and a cartwheel splash for the pin at 5:20.

Rating: D. Thank goodness they didn't have her job here in a meaningless match. I'll never understand how someone can get back out there so soon after the kind of loss Brooke went through (her boyfriend died less than a week before this was taped) but it's quite impressive that she's back out there performing. The match was exactly what you would expect from something like this but I'm not going to hold anything against Dana at this point.

We look back at Braun Strowman laying out Brock Lesnar two weeks ago.

From Raw.

Here are Brock Lesnar and Paul Heyman for a chat. Heyman talks about what happened last week with Braun Strowman, who is the kind of monster that his parents warned him about. Strowman had an historic night at Summerslam when he, as Corey Graves said, monster handled Lesnar by powerslamming him through two tables. We see a clip of last week's attack on Lesnar, which Heyman says made him know Strowman is a monster. At No Mercy, Lesnar is going to be ready for Strowman. Heyman explains what's going to happen but Brock takes the mic. Brock: "What he's trying to say is Suplex City b****."

From Raw again.

Kurt Angle is in the ring for the contract signing between Cena and Reigns. Cena is out first to say that he's on Raw to face one man and Angle has made that happen for No Mercy. He's seen Reigns being treated as the untouchable star and we'll see how he can hang at No Mercy. Cena signs and here's Reigns. Roman says that as great as Cena is, there's one thing that he's done that Cena can never do: retire the Undertaker at Wrestlemania.

Cena kneels before him and says some people are still trying to figure Reigns out. We hear about the fans wanting to see Cena change his ways (with the term heel turn being dropped in a rare moment) before Cena says Reigns is just a guy trying to fill shoes he can never fill. Cena isn't a man at the end of his career with a bad hip. The reason Reigns won't sign that is because the Roman Empire is done if he does.

Reigns says Cena sucks so Cena puts his arm around Angle and says the fans think he does too but he won a gold medal. Roman seems a bit shaken and lost for what to say. Cena: "Go ahead find it. I'll wait. It's called a promo and if you want to be the big dog you're going to have to learn how to do it. SEE YOU FOURTH WALL!" Reigns gets fired up and goes on a rant that sounds straight off a message board, talking about how hard he works on the weekend so Cena can be on the Today Show.

Then Cena gets on his tour bus and shows up at a show if they pay him enough with the big shovel to bury people around him. Reigns is the one guy he can't bury or see. Cena calls him out for being repetitive and says "it took you five years to cut a halfway decent promo but now I'm about to cut you down to size." He talks about the mythical golden shovel but it's always the fans who hold the keys and they always will.

Cena is tired of hearing the same thing for ten years by a lot tougher people. Here's the thing: Cena hasn't main evented Wrestlemania in five years and he was the opening match at Summerslam. He won the US Title and used it to introduce new stars to the WWE including Kevin Owens and AJ Styles (I believe he means Sami Zayn as AJ debuted way later). Reigns took the US Title as a demotion and now stands there blaming Cena for not being able to hang with him.

Cena has seen a lot of people trying to hang at this level and he's heard about one guy getting to do it. Now he sees Roman face to face and gets the line of the night: "You're lucky I'm a part timer because I can do this part time way better than you ever could full time." Reigns signs and turns over the table...and the clip ends before Anderson and Gallows' ridiculous cameo appearance can be mentioned.

[Ariya Daivari vs. Mustafa Ali](#)

Daivari takes him down without much effort and we hit an early armbar. A dropkick sends Daivari outside and we take a break. Back with Daivari eating a jumping knee to the face for two but grabbing a spinebuster for the same. Not that it matters as Ali's rolling neckbreaker and tornado DDT set up the 054 for the pin at 8:20.

Rating: C. It didn't have much time to do anything (remember the long break) and that's kind of a shame. Ali has become one of the more consistent cruiserweight performers and Daivari isn't the worst, as long as we don't have to hear his lame promos. This was your standard Main Event cruiserweight match though and that's not a good thing.

We'll wrap it up here.

Women's Title: Alexa Bliss vs. Sasha Banks

Banks is defending and gets rolled up for an early two. Sasha sends her hard into the corner and grabs an armbar. They're starting with a slow pace and Bliss bails to the floor for a breather. There are the double knees from the apron and we take a break. Back with Bliss holding an armbar of her own before starting in on the back.

It's off to a bow and arrow hold but Banks fights up without too much effort. The Bank Statement doesn't work so Sasha goes with the running knees in the corner, only to miss a second attempt. Bliss goes with a hard right hand and a Code Red for a pretty close two. Banks gets in a few more knees and some aggressive forearms in the corner.

Back up and Alexa catches her in the corner by sending her face first into a buckle. A top rope superplex connects to bust up the back even more. Bliss is slow to cover and gets caught in the Bank Statement. That's reversed into a rollup for two and there's the DDT to give Bliss the title back at 15:00.

Rating: B. I'm really not getting the lack of successful title defenses for Banks. That makes four reigns and she's lost the title in her first defense every time. As for the match itself, Bliss winning clean is an interesting call and the right one if you have to change the title. She looked better than she has before in the ring and is getting to the point

where she can hang with the better workers. Couple that with the insane charisma and persona and she's quite the force.

Post match Nia Jax comes out and destroys Sasha before putting Bliss on her shoulders. One electric chair later and Jax holds up the title over the new champ to end the show.

Overall Rating: C+. The main event and the long promo alone make this an easy show to watch. As usual the original wrestling was nothing memorable in the slightest but I don't think anyone watches this show for that content. Raw is still on a roll right now with even the recap shows being entertaining.

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