

# Ring of Honor TV – December 2, 2015: They Know What They're Doing

## Ring of Honor

Date: December 2, 2015

Location: Wings Stadium Annex, Kalamazoo, Michigan

Commentators: Nigel McGuinness, Kevin Kelly, Mark Briscoe

Final Battle is just around the corner and for the first time in a long time, Jay Lethal's World Title really seems vulnerable. However, for some reason ROH seems much more interested in the tag team division, though that's been some of the more interesting stuff they've been doing in recent weeks. Let's get to it.

Opening sequence.

### Adam Page vs. Will Ferrara

Page is still rightfully ticked off that he's off Final Battle because of Whitmer and Corino being forced off the show as well. Will gets jumped from behind before the bell, which is totally dishonorable but the referee starts the match anyway. Page stomps him in the corner as Kelly runs down the Final Battle card instead of talking about the match. Back up and Page charges into a boot in the corner, only to come right back with a dropkick to send Ferrara out to the floor.

A bridging pumphandle suplex (that's a new one) gets two for Page as Briscoe cheers for Ferrara. Will makes a quick comeback with a sunset bomb out of the corner for two. It's time for a Decade meeting on the floor but Ferrara dives onto everyone. Colby offers a referee distraction and Whitmer throws in the crutch, only to have Ferrara intercept it and lay out Page for the big upset at 4:05.

**Rating:** C-. It's cool to see the perennial jobber get a win like this though I'm still surprised that they're going to leave the Decade off the

big show after everything they've done in recent months. Corino being out changed what they had planned but there's no one else that they could swap in there?

Post match Whitmer goes after Ferrara and the referee, drawing in Mark Briscoe for the save.

Here's the Addiction to yell about how badly they've been mistreated around here. Daniels goes on a sexist rant against Maria who belongs in a kitchen or a nursery. Daniels: "YEAH I SAID IT!" Then they had a masked man run in which should have stopped the match immediately but it just kept going. Kazarian says if Ring of Honor wants to play checkers, the Addition will play chess.....in New Japan Professional Wrestling. They'll go win the Heavyweight Tag League and then come back to regain their World Tag Team Championships of the World.

Video on Adam Cole vs. Kyle O'Reilly which will be one heck of a grudge match at Final Battle.

Package on Brutal Bob Evans vs. Cheeseburger. WHY ARE THESE TWO STILL FIGHTING??? They were fighting like six months ago and they're still at it. Evans broke Cheeseburger's hand at this TV taping and they'll be fighting again on the Final Battle pre-show in another grudge match. I'll take that over them being on the main show.

We look back at Roderick Strong winning the TV Title last week.

Here's the House of Truth (good night that's a low cut dress on Hendrix) with something to say. Lethal says Strong FINALLY beat him last week after all the tries but Jay knows Strong couldn't do it again. He'll be TV Champion again soon enough anyway. That brings Lethal to AJ Styles, who Lethal came to for advice for most of their careers. It's true that Styles was the best wrestler in the world for years, but that changed when Lethal became the undisputed ROH Champion.

Lethal is the only undisputed champion and now he wants Styles out here to say it to his face. This brings out AJ (who thankfully can walk here) to say that Lethal is right because of that belt around his waist. Jay losing the TV Title was the best thing that could have happened to him

though because he needs to focus on AJ and AJ alone. They shake hands and stare each other down with Jay holding up the belt. Well done and very simple idea here.

It's time for Storytime with Adam Cole which has become a highlight of these shows. Cole never saw this coming because even after he kicked Kyle with reality at All-Star Extravaganza, Kyle still didn't get it. O'Reilly isn't going to win the World Title as long as Cole is around because that's just not how it works. Cole starts yelling that Kyle will never be champion because he's not the man that Adam is. He's going to make Kyle quit and leave ROH because he can't handle the embarrassment of how bad things are going to get at Final Battle.

We run down the Final Battle card. I might have to watch that show.

#### Dalton Castle vs. Adam Cole

No Boys here and Castle is clearly not happy about it. Cole on the other hand has the whole Kingdom behind him. Kelly: "I think Cole's greatest advantage, aside from being a former World Champion, is having three mates at ringside." You can't buy analysis like this people. Before we get going, cue the Boys to stand by Dalton's side but Silas Young runs out to say not so fast. How nice is it to have stipulations adhered to?

Cole jumps Castle to start and Bennett trips Dalton to break up a comeback. Nigel: "Come on I'm right here!" Castle dives through the ropes to take out the Kingdom and Cole's dive off the apron only earns him a suplex. The fans are way behind Dalton here but Cole shuts them up with a superkick. The Kingdom gets involved and it's a quick DQ at 1:45.

Since the Kingdom has a Tag Team Title defense coming up, it would seem appropriate for their challengers to come out and make this a six man tag. The fans chant SIX MAN and that's what they get, thanks to Nigel.

#### War Machine/Dalton Castle vs. Kingdom

The good guys take over on the floor to start with Hanson and Rowe destroying Bennett and Cole, leaving Dalton to...bite Taven's stomach? They get inside for Rowe vs. Cole with the latter getting flipped all

over the place off a clothesline. Taven and Bennett trip Rowe down and crotch him though, allowing the heels to take over. A dropkick from Taven gets two and a nice high cross body (Bennett: "TAVEN! FLY!") connects for the same.

We take a break and come back with nothing having changed as Rowe is taken back into the heel corner. A missed dropkick allows Rowe to finally make the tag and it's off to Hanson to clean house with knees to the chest. Cole and Castle come in with Dalton showing him how to do a missile dropkick. Taven comes back in and trades about ten Tombstone attempts with Castle until Dalton FINALLY plants him.

Rowe knees Taven and Bennett out to the floor so Hanson busts out a big top rope flip dive to drop everyone. Back in and the Path of Resistance sets up a middle rope splash for two on Cole as his partners make a save. Now it's Hanson missing a suicide dive, allowing Cole to drop Castle with a brainbuster onto his knee for the pin at 12:00.

**Rating:** C+. This was your signature Ring of Honor main event with the tagging being forgotten by the end and letting it turn into a wild mess which was just coherent enough to keep track of it. You don't want the Kingdom to lose here so having Castle take the fall was the best possible option. Good TV main event here.

The Kingdom poses to end the show.

**Overall Rating:** C+. Another fun show here that did a good job of setting up Final Battle, which is looking like a strong card to close out the year. It really does impress me to see how far Ring of Honor has come in just a few months as I wasn't wild on their first Destination America shows but I'm digging their product now that it's off the national network. This was fun stuff and worked more than well enough.

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# Thunder – July 12, 2000: How To Book A Bad Show Version II

## Thunder

Date: July 12, 2000

Location: North Charleston Coliseum, North Charleston, South Carolina

Commentators: Bobby Heenan, Tony Schiavone

It still feels weird to say that Booker T. is the World Champion but it's a nice feeling to have. For once things feel fresh and with the addition of the newcomers in the tag division, there's an actual youth movement going on around here. Now unfortunately there's no reason to think this is going to last but at least we can enjoy it while it's around. Let's get to it.

On a side note, at some point around this time, Ed Ferrara took over Thunder's booking. Therefore, Russo isn't to blame in case this is awful, though Ferrara was Russo's right hand man.

Opening sequence.

We open with the usual clips from Nitro.

Smooth gives Kanyon advice about something we aren't privy to.

Apparently Scott Steiner beat up and injured Mike Tenay so it's a two man booth tonight.

Here are Tank Abbott and 3 Count to say they're going to dance and the Dragons aren't going to do anything. That's an official warning and you know what's coming. Tank heads outside to dance and here are the Dragons for a surprise attack. Muta jumps Tank and we've got a match.

### 3 Count/Tank Abbott vs. Jung Dragons/Great Muta

Yang tries to pound on Tank but gets thrown across the ring. A wheelbarrow slam into a double facebuster has Yang in even more trouble but Muta makes a save and cleans house. Tank uses the circle to block the mist and the big right hand knocks Yang silly to give Evan the fast pin. So they bring Muta in for a two minute match where his team loses?

Kanyon gives Cat a copy of his book in an attempt to get Jarrett tonight. That's fine with Cat as Jarrett's original opponent, Buff Bagwell, is late. Cat gives him the match in exchange for an autograph.

The Perfect Event attacks the Misfits in the back. For reasons unclear, they hand Major Gunns their exercise bar and she hits Palumbo low. Stasiak laughs, so Gunns kicks him low for good measure. So they're bad wrestlers and stupid?

Stevie Ray is joining commentary. This could be good.

### The Demon vs. Major Stash

Stevie thinks Vampiro and Demon are bizarre and doesn't get why they're together. In other words, Stevie either doesn't watch or doesn't understand the stories either. Stash starts with a big boot but charges into a boot in the corner. You would think he would have learned something like that. Demon gets thrown off the middle rope but comes back with a wristlock. Yeah a wristlock from a guy named DEMON. Stash avoids a clothesline and hits a quick ax handle, only to walk into the Love Gun for another quick pin.

Post match Sting (right) appears and points the bat at Vampiro and Demon.

Kidman asks Lance Storm about being serious. Storm says he's always serious and walks off. After Kidman leaves, Kanyon takes out a cameraman with a Kanyon Cutter.

David Flair tells Hancock that he'll do anything for her. Hancock knows that already.

#### Kidman/Lance Storm vs. Mark Jindrak/Sean O'Haire

The Canadian national anthem plays so Kidman reads the paper and dances behind him. Lance finally catches on but doesn't seem to mind as he and Kidman try stereo baseball slides to the floor. That goes as badly as Kidman's dancing as Jindrak and O'Haire press them over the top and back inside. Kidman tags himself in for a Bodog to Jindrak so it's off to Sean for some right hands. Everything breaks down and O'Haire superkicks Storm, leaving Jindrak to plant Kidman with a tilt-a-whirl slam. The Seanton Bomb gives Sean the pin, making me wonder why they got pinned by Morrus and Leroux a few weeks back.

Storm nails Kidman post match, I'm assuming to cement his heel turn.

Vampiro promises to rip off Sting's ski mask. I'd like to see who is actually under there.

Vito talks about how awesome he is.

Hancock tells David to go win her some gold so he attacks Vito and it's time for a title match.

#### Hardcore Title: Big Vito vs. David Flair

Vito is defending of course and David is in a suit minus the jacket. He pounds Vito into the arena with whatever he can find as this is one sided so far. Vito remembers that he's fighting David Flair and takes over with right hands, only to get suplexed into the ring for no cover. Cue Hancock (with blue trim instead of white this time) as Vito comes back again with a suplex and top rope elbow. He stops to kiss Hancock though (perk of being a champion), followed by the safety cone to the crotch. The impaler DDT through the table retains Vito's title.

**Rating:** D. I'm assuming these are supposed to be serious matches, which continues to prove that the people running WCW don't understand how wrestling works. They're certainly not funny matches but there's nothing setting them aside that makes them entertaining. That black hole of

charisma Steve Blackman is Hardcore Champion in the WWF right now and he's a dozen times more interesting than this. Vito isn't bad or anything but there's nowhere to go with this division.

Jarrett tells Cat that if he's not fighting his scheduled opponent, he's not wrestling. Cat says oh yes you are.

Perfect Event was posing in the ring earlier today (as in before the fans were here) when Canyon attacked another production guy. It's still funny, but is this going anywhere anytime soon?

#### Perfect Event vs. General Rection/Corporal Cajun

Palumbo and Rection get things going with the General scoring off some splashes in the corner. Cajun comes in and gets beaten down due to reasons of not being very good. Things slow down with Stasiak doing one of his only moves (a slam) before stopping to pose. Palumbo's top rope shoulder drops Cajun for two again as Stevie is being the voice of reason against all of Perfect Event's stalling. A gorilla press doesn't work though and the hot tag brings in Rection to clean most of the house until the Jungle Kick slows him down again.

Stasiak gets two off a sitout powerbomb and the fans are actually getting into this. It could be due to it being the longest match of the night, even though we're not five minutes in yet. Cajun comes in for his dancing punches and a clothesline for two. Whiplash gets two more and everything breaks down. Rection hits his moonsault but Stasiak nails the referee with the exercise bar. He throws it off to Cajun though and the referee sees him holding it for the DQ. Yeah he said Rection had the match won but Cajun broke up the pin for no apparent reason. Egads this company is stupid at times.

**Rating:** D. The match wasn't bad until the ridiculous ending. Rection and Cajun aren't the best tag team in the world but then again this isn't the best tag division in the world either. Palumbo is the most interesting out of all these people and he's just ok at best. The ending hurts this even more though as it comes off again like someone doesn't know how wrestling works.



Here's Booker T. with something to say. Booker talks about how great Jeff Jarrett is in the ring but he fails as a man. This title can be defended anywhere anytime and he'll take on anyone that wants to come after it. As for Scott Steiner, save the drama for your mama. This brings out Rick Steiner to congratulate Booker but it's a ruse (does it could if everyone knows it's coming?) and Rick beats him down. Cue Stevie to get up from the table for the save but Rick beats him down, grabs the title and puts it on. Good night what a horrifying visual. Mike Awesome runs out and makes the save before handing the title back to Booker.

Daffney asks Crowbar if she looks fat in her gear. Crowbar says she's pretty and clearly has a thing for her.

Shane Douglas assures Torrie that she won't have to do anything in the mixed tag.

Cat tells Kidman that if he doesn't interfere in the upcoming match, he can have Lance Storm later tonight.

#### Torrie Wilson/Shane Douglas vs. Crowbar/Daffney

Before the match, Shane says Torrie isn't a wrestler and has no business in this match. Torrie apologizes to everyone in the back but she LOVES being franchised. Crowbar quickly dropkicks Shane to the floor, leaving Daffney to go after Torrie. We get the catfight for all of ten seconds before it's back to the guys. That goes nowhere so it's back to Torrie who gets caught by Crowbar. Back to Daffney for some lame hair drags (read as Torrie rolls while Daffney touches her hair) and a jawbreaker to Shane.

Crowbar comes back in to beat on Shane even more, including a nice bite to the head. Shane avoids a moonsault and grabs a powerbomb, but just stops as he's got Crowbar in the air. It looked closer to a jackknife but Shane stopped moving instead of letting him go. In other words, it looked awful. Shane loads up another and Crowbar lands on his feet (there's your answer), only to walk into the Franchiser (landing on his feet instead of his knees) for the pin.

**Rating:** D-. Instead of a match, this was much more like a series of quick

segments cobbled together. As usual, the women have little business being in a ring and it shows even worse each time. Daffney is a great character but not very good in the ring here and certainly not good enough to carry Torrie. Shane.....I still don't get it. Not at the actual wrestling at least.

Daffney takes a Franchiser (and takes it better) after the match.

Cat gives Awesome Rick Steiner tonight, even though Booker wanted the match.

Here's a sitdown interview with Scott Steiner. He doesn't want to talk about Bash at the Beach but Tenay keeps at it until Steiner says Nash isn't his friend. What Scott did felt right at the time and he doesn't care about Scott Hall's family or the fans out there. Steiner goes on a rant about Booker getting the title and then about Tenay calling the Frankensteiner the hurricanrana. Scott doesn't like Goldberg either and would have beaten him up if Goldberg was smart enough to get into the University of Michigan.

Tenay says Steiner has a lot of hatred bottled up and asks if it dates back to his childhood. That's enough for Steiner and he chokes Tenay out. Tenay deserved that as he was flat out badgering Steiner here and trying to sound all tough. Then you bring up the guy's childhood? You earned that beating.

The Dragons try to go after Cat again but this time he ducks and lets them hit each other. Kaz gets put in a fireman's carry and spun around so he hits his partners. Funny but just like the Canyon Cutters: is this going anywhere or is it another joke for Russo and Ferrara's amusement?

#### Lance Storm vs. Kidman

Kidman jumps him in the aisle but gets caught in the corner with some dropkicks. Heenan: "You know a lot of people are talking about this Lance Storm." Stevie: "I haven't heard them." Storm loads up a chair in the corner but gets small packaged for two instead. A hurricanrana staggers Storm but he backdrops Kidman out to the floor. Storm's northern lights suplex gets two and a superplex gets the same. Kidman tries a rollup but

gets kicked into the chair for his efforts. Like most of the schnooks in this company, Storm tries a powerbomb and eats a faceplant for the pin out of nowhere.

**Rating:** C-. The match was fine but really uninteresting as you had two guys doing moves to each other and then one guy won. Certainly not bad or anything but I never cared about what happened. Then again I'll take not caring over wanting to jump off a bridge any day on this show.

On a side note, one of the people that could actually powerbomb Kidman was La Parka. I know he's been gone for awhile, but that powerbomb got me thinking about the people who aren't around at this point. You can really see the cost cutting coming into play as a lot of names who had been around for a long time have just disappeared.

Buff Bagwell and his mom Judy finally arrive. Buff leaves her in the car (dude come on) and here's Kanyon to volunteer to show her around. You can see a look in his eye.

Back from a break and Judy is in a neck brace and being taken away in an ambulance. Oh I would have loved to see her take that move.

#### Rick Steiner vs. Mike Awesome

Awesome elbows him off the middle rope to start and there's a BIG section of empty seats opposite the camera. As in like twenty of them. That's just horrible. After a quick trip to the floor, Rick kicks him low (which the referee could clearly see) and shouts a lot. Steiner loads him onto his shoulder and rams him into the buckle, followed by a German suplex for two. Mike grabs an Alabama Slam for two and the camera reveals even more empty seats in the corner. A belly to belly superplex gets two for Rick and he yells at the referee a lot, allowing Mike to grab a rollup for the pin.

**Rating:** D. Awesome was trying and Rick looked better than he had in a long time but he's still a horrible excuse for a wrestler who can barely do anything without looking like he has no idea what he's doing. I'm hoping Rick isn't in for a full time return here as I was just getting over watching him help screw this company up last year.

Rick stays on him post match until Booker makes the save.

### Positively Canyon vs. Jeff Jarrett

Booker is on commentary and this is now the #1 contenders match all over again. Jeff gets an early two off a backslide and Canyon gets the same off a small package. Canyon is annoyed at the pace of the count (a very common complaint tonight) and has to settle for a top rope Fameasser. Jeff bails to the floor so Canyon points at Booker, allowing Jarrett to get in a suplex on the outside. Both guys are whipped into a variety of metal objects with Canyon getting the better of it.

The sitout Alabama slam gets two but the swinging book misses, allowing Jeff to DDT him onto the book (Heenan: "I've seen the book kill a lot of guys.") for two. The referee won't let Jeff use the guitar and a book shot gets two with Jeff going to the ropes for the break. Now it's Jeff's turn to go after Stevie and Booker, triggering a brawl. Bagwell comes out to attack Canyon but security pulls him away, allowing the Stroke to put Canyon away and send him to New Blood Rising (again).

**Rating:** C. As usual when you let talented guys have a match, it usually winds up being entertaining stuff. This was one of the better matches of the night (again due to having some time) and the ending made enough sense, but it's still nothing that I've going to remember in a few minutes, which is another one of the major problems with this era.

Jeff and Booker yell at each other a lot to end the show.

**Overall Rating:** D. This was a weird one with a lot of the Russo tropes coming out but at a much slower pace. That leaves you with a very odd show that isn't really interesting but feels more like a collection of bad matches. I'd put this above the Russo shows due to more coherence....and that's about the end of its positives. Neither guy knows what they're doing and it gets more and more clear every time I watch one of their shows. I'll take Ferrara over Russo for now, but Terry Taylor and Kevin Sullivan are sounding a lot better every single day.

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# Smackdown – December 3, 2015: Back To The Minor League

## Smackdown

Date: December 3, 2015

Location: Giant Center, Hershey, Pennsylvania

Commentators: Booker T., Jerry Lawler, Rich Brennan

Things started to pick up a bit on Monday as we saw the formation of a new team in the League of Nations. This gives Reigns some more odds to overcome (again) as he gets ready for his second shot at Sheamus in a week and a half at TLC. The only match tonight is Bray Wyatt vs. Bubba Ray Dudley. Let's get to it.

We open with a long recap of the Sheamus vs. Reigns issues from Raw, including the formation of the League of Nations.

Reigns, the Usos and Ambrose are in the ring to start with Roman talking about being in the ring with his family. All three of these men are like brothers to him and he hugs Dean, who he's known for five years but there have been enough memories for thirty. Reigns wants to get his hands on Sheamus and the League of Nations tonight so here are Sheamus and company. The fans chant USA but Sheamus says the four of them all have Green Cards. Well Rusev doesn't but he's working on it.

Sheamus brings up Reigns' five minute title reign but it's worth it because now there's the cool Sheamus 5:15 shirt. There has been an eight man tag made for tonight and Sheamus lists off all eight men in the match to fill in even more time. This brings out New Day for some reason with Woods asking why Reigns is so serious. Big E. renames Roman the Ruiner and Kofi has a new match to announce for later tonight: New Day vs. Usos/Ambrose and if the Usos and Ambrose can't win, Reigns is going to fight the League of Nations on his own tonight.

I'm liking the League of Nations idea and it's a lot more interesting than having Reigns out there to talk about his match with Sheamus on his own. That's not Reigns' strength as he's much better with someone to bounce off of. The League offers several options for Reigns to feud with as well as making Sheamus feel like a much bigger deal instead of just that guy who won the title because of a briefcase.

#### Tyler Breeze vs. Neville

Dolph Ziggler is on commentary. Neville flips over Breeze for a rollup out of the corner to start and we hit an armbar. Dolph recap his history of trading wins with Breeze as Neville sends him to the floor and we take a break. Back with Neville throwing Breeze off a front facelock and clotheslining him out to the floor for a big flip dive.

A standing shooting star press gets two for Neville back inside as the fans are trying to get into this but can't keep cheering for very long. The Supermodel kick gets two for Breeze, only to have Neville come back with one of his own. Summer offers a distraction though and the Unprettier puts Neville away at 7:56.

**Rating:** C. Breeze is another example of a guy who could do something if they would stop having him lose so many matches. He surprised people when he was down in NXT and could do the same thing here with pure hard work and it's something that is always going to work in WWE, assuming you don't job him out every week. Unfortunately the same could be said about Neville.

We take a quick look at Charlotte beating Becky Lynch with a handful of trunks.

Becky says she understands why Charlotte did what she did and they're still best friends. Brie Bella and Alicia Fox come in and to call her naïve until Charlotte comes in to say this is a new generation. Becky and Charlotte are still a bit tense but it seems to be ok.

### Brie Bella vs. Becky Lynch

Alicia and Charlotte are here as seconds as Booker says he doesn't like the factions idea. Becky armdrags her to start and Brie fakes an ankle injury to mock Charlotte, earning her a dropkick to the face. Brie starts in with the YES Kicks as we cut to the back where Tamina is holding a pinata while Naomi swings a stick.

The BRIE MODE knee gets two and we hit a seated abdominal stretch. Becky quickly gets up and makes her comeback with a dropkick and t-bone suplex for two. The threat of the Disarm-Her sends Becky running to the ropes and into Charlotte. Now the Disarm-Her goes on but Charlotte comes in to go after Brie for the DQ at 2:54. Lawler defends Charlotte but that's totally on her. How dare she make us listen to BRRRRRRRIIIIIIEEEEE MODE all over again.

Becky is ticked post match.

Neville is in the back when Miz stops him to make fun of his ears. Social media doesn't like Neville's lack of personality so Miz offers to mentor him. Neville reminds him of Daniel Bryan and look what Miz did for him. Neville takes his card and a copy of Santa's Little Helper on DVD.

Rusev and Lana (in a dress and with her hair in a braided ponytail) call Ryback a barbarian (not the Barbarian of course). Lana's accent slipped a lot during this.

### New Day vs. Dean Ambrose/Usos

If the New Day wins, Reigns is in a 4-1 handicap match tonight. Jey chops Woods down to start and it's already time for the imitation Unicorn Stampede for Xavier. Jimmy gets dragged into the corner for some New Day stomping (showing them how it's done) and Big E.'s elbow to the jaw for two. Woods' chinlock doesn't go very far as Jimmy fights up and makes a

quick tag off to Dean.

Everything breaks down for a bit with Ambrose clotheslining Big E. on the floor but getting crotched on the top back inside. Woods asks what happened to Dean as we take a break. Back with the real Unicorn Stampede keeping Ambrose in trouble, meaning it's time for some tromboning and dancing. A big kick gets two for Kofi and Big E. gets the same off a belly to belly. Dean finally gets smart and low bridges Big E. to the floor but has to roll through Kofi's cross body instead of tagging.

The rebound lariat allows the tag to Jey a few seconds later and it's time for some serious house cleaning. Woods takes the pop up Samoan drop for two but Big E. catches a diving Ambrose. Big E. is nice enough to hold him there for a suicide dive from Jey in a really staged looking spot. Jimmy dives at Kofi but tweaks the knee from Raw, which gets tied in the ropes to make it even worse. Woods adds a Shining Wizard to pin Jimmy at 14:00.

**Rating:** C+. New Day reminds me more and more of Edge and Christian every time I watch them. They can nail the comedy but just as importantly they can have a good match when they need to. This sets up the main event and gave us a good stretch of wrestling in the process. That's exactly what they needed it to be and everything worked well here.

The Wyatts tell the Dudleys they're here.

#### D-Von Dudley vs. Bray Wyatt

Again, can't they keep a match that they set up the day before this was taped? It doesn't really matter which Dudley it is but since that's the case, why bother switching it? Dreamer is here with the Dudleys. The Wyatts' entrance starts and.....R-Truth is on the stage in Wyatt gear. After a wave, here are the real Wyatts with Truth gone. I can get behind this gag.

An early Rowan distraction doesn't work and D-Von takes over with a Thesz press. Bray quickly snapmares him down and puts on a chinlock though, allowing Bubba to play cheerleader. You can say a lot of things about Bubba, but he is never one to sit around and do nothing during a match.



Back up and Sister Abigail puts D-Von away at 1:55. That was quick.

Post match the Wyatts load up a table and Strowman chokes Bubba out. Dreamer takes the table bump and Harper welcomes him home. The ECW guys are all stacked up and Bray poses over them.

### Roman Reigns vs. League of Nations

4-1 handicap. Still no Lana or Colter out with the League. Before the match, Reigns says the important thing is Jimmy's being ok. Renee Young comes up to say Reigns has to go out there on his own but he's ready to bring the pain. Del Rio starts for his team and gets punched into his corner. Booker: "Roman Reigns is a man alone on an island right now. Like Gilligan." Thankfully Lawler is there to correct him as Sheamus comes in and goes right after Reigns, dragging him into the wrong corner.

Reigns fights back until Barrett trips him from the floor.....which is good for an elimination. Lawler calls him Wade (probably earning himself a fine) and the League is rightfully ticked off as we go to a break. Back with Del Rio punching in the corner and Rusev getting two off a belly to back suplex. Rusev throws him to the floor for a beating from the partners as the numbers are dominating.

Sheamus' release suplex gets two and we hit the chinlock. Roman finally gets up a boot to stop a charging Rusev and scores with a Samoan drop. The fans think this is awesome. What the heck are they watching? It's not bad but it's certainly not awesome. Roman gets up and isolates Del Rio but Rusev comes in for a distraction. The Backstabber gets two for Del Rio but Reigns nails a quick spear for the same with Sheamus making the save. The apron boot hits Rusev and a clothesline off the steps drops Sheamus. Del Rio gets thrown over the announcers' table and Reigns beats the count back in at 15:22.

**Rating:** C. That ending felt like something out of an old Smackdown game. That's the strategy you would use if you were in a big handicap match and you knew that you weren't going to win even in a video game because it was too ridiculous. There would have been nothing wrong with the League getting disqualified here or Reigns brawling to a double countout but there's something wrong with Reigns winning.

Ambrose and the Usos come out for the save to end the show.

**Overall Rating:** C+. I've been enjoying this League of Nations idea, even if it's just something short term. Sheamus vs. Reigns isn't a feud that is going to work on its own so why not throw in most of the upper midcard and main event scene to mix it up and strengthen the story a lot? The rest of the show was a bunch of quick stuff but they're doing the important story right and that's what matters right now.

### Results

Tyler Breeze b. Neville – Unprettier

Brie Bella b. Becky Lynch via DQ when Charlotte interfered

New Day b. Usos/Dean Ambrose – Shining Wizard to Jimmy

Bray Wyatt b. D-Von Dudley – Sister Abigail

Roman Reigns b. League of Nations via countout

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# Obtuse Wrestling Angles Podcast Appearance

<http://obtuseangles.libsyn.com/the-obtuse-angles-podcast-special-guest-tommy-hall-pt-3>

This is my third appearance on the show in which we discuss some TNA. Note that this was recorded back in July so some of the jokes might be a bit dated. Also keep in mind that this is NOT safe for work.

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## Impact Wrestling – December 2, 2015: Bore Me No Further

### Impact Wrestling

Date: December 2, 2015

Location: Impact Zone, Orlando, Florida

Commentators: D'Angelo Dinero, Josh Matthews

We're in week nine of the World Title tournament and it's finally time to get to the round of sixteen, meaning single elimination matches. The brackets were revealed last week and we've been promised to have this round done tonight. In theory the finals will be held at the live Impact on January 5 but that hasn't been confirmed. Let's get to it.

Quick preview of the round of sixteen starts things off.

### TNA World Title Tournament First Round: DJZ vs. Ethan Carter III

DJZ goes right after him with some rollups for early near falls but DJZ knees him in the ribs to stop that cold. Carter gets sent to the floor for a suicide dive though with Tyrus not giving him much of a heads up.

Back in and DJZ gets sent outside as well, allowing Tyrus to run him over with a headbutt to the chest. Dinero: "Josh I don't know if you've ever been hit in the head with a coconut before." A chinlock doesn't get Carter very far so DJZ comes back with his fast paced offense, capped off by the tornado DDT for two. DJZ's hurricanrana is countered into a sitout powerbomb, followed by the 1%er to give Carter the pin at 6:28.

**Rating:** D+. Watchable match here with the ending never in doubt. It's nice to finally get through some of these matches so we can get rid of the lower level names and get down to the bigger matches. I'm glad they kept this one short as the match wasn't good enough to make me care about seeing it go any longer but it didn't overstay its welcome.

Gail Kim is ready for Tigre Uno because she's so proud to be one of the sixteen WRESTLERS in this tournament. Gail, you're great in the ring, beautiful and very talented, but SWEET GOODNESS you are so boring.

#### TNA World Title Tournament First Round: Gail Kim vs. Tigre Uno

Tigre isn't sure what to do to start so Gail kicks him in the ribs. Thankfully Pope mentions that these two are both champions, even though there are no belts in sight. Tigre goes with some basic wrestling including a front facelock but Gail comes right back with a spinning cross body. Eat Defeat is broken up so Gail settles for a Black Widow. Tigre powers her out to the floor for a plancha but Gail snaps off a hurricanrana back inside. Gail's normal offense including the Figure Four around the post has him in trouble, only to have Tigre sit down on a sunset flip for the pin at 5:32.

**Rating:** C-. Well that happened. Gail was built up as a potential star throughout the last two months but then she just loses here in five minutes. I'm glad that Tigre won because he's been a solid X-Division Champion and it would suck to see him lose really early on, but did they really need to build Gail up as something only to have her lose that easily?

#### TNA World Title Tournament First Round: Bram vs. Davey Richards

The winner gets Carter. Bram shoves him down to start and Davey might

need to change strategy. With the arm work not getting him anywhere, Davey takes it to the floor for some kicks to the chest. They look good but don't seem to have a lot of effect as Bram takes him up into a fireman's carry to drop him face first onto the steps. Davey comes back with a drop toehold to send Bram into the steps as most of this match has been on the floor.

A double stomp from the steps keeps Bram in trouble and Davey takes him back inside for a northern lights suplex. Josh thinks Davey winning would be an upset as the top rope double stomp gets two on Bram. An F5 plants Davey and Bram yells a lot. The Brighter Side of Suffering is countered into a small package to give Davey the pin at 7:00.

**Rating:** C. This wasn't too bad but Richards still doesn't do anything for me as a singles guy. His passive aggressive promos probably have a lot to do with it as he seems like he's going out of his way to be nice, which really makes him more boring than anything else. The same problem that the tournament has had throughout is still here though: these guys are just doing moves to each other and there's no personal issue, making it a lot harder to get invested.

Eli Drake isn't worried about Mahabali Shera.

Video on Shera's success so far.

#### TNA World Title Tournament First Round: Mahabali Shera vs. Eli Drake

Josh talks about Shera wanting to make it to the semifinals but the part where he says "in Mumbai, India" is edited out. An early clothesline puts Drake on the floor and it's time to dance. Back in and Shera shrugs off some kicks to the chest and scores with more clotheslines. Sky High eliminates Drake at 3:12.

**Rating:** D. Well that was quick and thankfully they kept the dancing to a minimum, but good night I'm not getting behind this dancing schnook. He's gotten better but at the end of the day he's a guy who pops his shoulders and does one good move. For some reason that makes him one of the top eight wrestlers in the company? Really? It's clear that they were putting him in this spot because of the India tour but like so many other things

TNA plans, they couldn't get it to work. Oh wait there were "security concerns". Right. Maybe they can get the Los Angeles Coliseum. I hear Wrestlemania VII is over now.

Matt Hardy says he'll win.

Pope and Josh pick the remaining matches.

#### TNA World Title Tournament First Round: Bobby Roode vs. Matt Hardy

Feeling out process to start with both guys getting in some low level offense. They head outside with Matt clotheslining the post to give Roode a target back inside. Roode cranks on the arm and grabs a Hennig necksnap but stops to yell at the fans. Is he a heel again? The Crossface doesn't stay on long and Matt comes back with a Side Effect for two. It's back to the Crossface but Matt is up again, setting up the Twist of Fate to advance at 6:36.

**Rating:** C. How am I supposed to feel anything about this? Roode worked on the arm for a few minutes and then Matt did his finisher to advance. That's this tournament in a nutshell: two people have a match and one of them wins. There's nothing more or less than that because we don't have time to fit in any emotion or stories so this is what you're getting, like it or not.

Drew Galloway is ready.

#### TNA World Title Tournament First Round: Awesome Kong vs. Jesse Godderz

The winner gets Matt Hardy. Before the match, Jesse implies that Kong wants to do a different kind of wrestling with him. As stupid as this is, it's the first time all night where we've had anything more than "I want the title and I'll win." Jesse puckers up and gets punched in the mouth as Kong starts in a hurry.

A splash in the corner crushes Jesse and three straight slams send him to the floor. Godderz says Kong's one night in Heaven is off so Kong throws him into the steps. Josh isn't sure if this would be an upset as Kong throws Jesse back inside. Kong misses a splash though and gets rolled up with a handful of trunks for the pin at 3:12.

**Rating:** D. You knew this was coming didn't you? I mean, the Knockouts advancing might have been interesting and something worth seeing so that had to be crushed in the first round at the hands of Tigre Uno (not as bad) and a comedy goof in Jesse Godderz. To be fair though, Kong wasn't going to be able to do much due to all her injuries anyway but this was another option that could have been interesting going nowhere in this way too long tournament.

The announcers recap the night so far.

#### TNA World Title Tournament First Round: Kenny King vs. Eric Young

The winner gets Tigre Uno. King grabs the arm to start before grabbing a headlock to keep Young in trouble. Back up and Eric sends him to the floor for an attempt at a countout, only to have King do a handstand into a kick to the head from the apron. That earns him a forearm to put him outside again. King realizes that going toe to toe isn't working so he comes back in with a springboard clothesline and a bad looking spinebuster for two. Not that it matters as the piledriver sends Young to the next round at 6:22.

**Rating:** D. Well they didn't have much of a choice here as Young is the only one that actually still works for the company. Run of the mill match for the night so far with the limited action and almost nothing interesting until the ending. Young winning was the obvious ending and he's got a good looking piledriver but this was another predictable match, which wasn't what this show needed.

Videos on Lashley and Galloway to set up the main event.

Eric Young yells about being on a crazy tidal wave.

#### TNA World Title Tournament First Round: Drew Galloway vs. Lashley

The winner gets Shera. Lashley powers him into the corner to start and chokes with his boot as we take an early break. Back with Lashley missing a charge in the corner and getting dropped with a top rope clothesline. Drew sends him shoulder first into the post to weaken the spear, which is the most common strategy used against a power wrestler, even though it

almost never works. Back in and Lashley rolls some Germans before a powerslam gets two. Galloway comes back with White Noise and loads up the Claymore, only to run into the spear for the pin at 13:53.

**Rating:** C-. Well that happened. Galloway could have been an interesting way to go here but instead let's go one step closer to being right back where we were a year ago. Lashley still has a lot in him and is a good option on top, but I was pulling for Galloway here to give us something fresh instead.

Here are the updated brackets:

Ethan Carter III

Davey Richards

Lashley

Mahabali Shera

Tigre Uno

Eric Young

Jesse Godderz

Matt Hardy

A long preview of next week's round of eight takes us out.

**Overall Rating:** D+. I'm not going to bother re-listing all the issues I have with this show and tournament as I managed to squeeze them in during all the short matches that were just like the first eight weeks of short matches this tournament has offered. This was a step forward for the show but they're dragging this out as long as they possibly can and it's just not working. Want proof that it's not working? The Impact after Bound For Glory 2011 drew just over two million fans. Last week drew 234,000 fans, which was up over the previous week. That's a loss of 88% of the audience in four years.

Let me repeat that: in four years, nearly nine out of every ten people



that had been watching TNA have stopped. A big reason why would probably be the same people in the main events over and over. Of the people still in this tournament with a realistic chance of winning (Lashley, Hardy, Carter and maybe Young and Shera), four of them are former World Champions. Galloway was a good option for something fresh but let's make sure to get rid of him in the first round before he makes a splash in this thing. As I've said so many times over the years: they never learn.

### Results

Ethan Carter III b. DJZ – 1%er

Tigre Uno b. Gail Kim – Rollup

Davey Richards b. Bram – Small package

Mahabali Shera b. Eli Drake – Sky High

Matt Hardy b. Bobby Roode – Twist of Fate

Jesse Godderz b. Awesome Kong – Rollup with a handful of trunks

Eric Young b. Kenny King – Piledriver

Lashley b. Drew Galloway – Spear

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# New Column: What I've Been Waiting For

The WWE Network has given us our Christmas present.

<http://www.wrestlingrumors.net/kbs-review-what-ive-been-waiting-for/46072/>

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## NXT – December 2, 2015: I Believe In A Thing Called Joe

### NXT

Date: December 2, 2015

Location: Full Sail University, Winter Park, Florida

Commentators: Corey Graves, Byron Saxton, Rich Brennan

Takeover: London is in two weeks and the card is mostly set. That leaves us with two shows to firm up the build, which means we could be in for some entertaining nights leading up to the next big show. The cliffhanger from last week saw Nia Jax throw her hand in to the ring for the Women's Title shot and Bayley doesn't have an opponent for London yet. Let's get to it.

Opening sequence.

### Baron Corbin vs. Tye Dillinger

Some chops earn Dillinger a throw across the ring and Corbin chokes on the mat. Corbin is in his full slow mode here and it's working as always.

Dillinger comes back with a clothesline and a superkick for two, only to come off the middle rope and right into the End of Days for the pin at 2:52.

Apollo Crews is ready for Corbin at Takeover and is ready to team up with Finn Balor to face Corbin and Samoa Joe next week.

Tommaso Ciampa says Joe is dangerous, but Ciampa is even more dangerous because he has nothing to lose. When he pins Joe tonight, everything changes.

#### Nia Jax vs. Blue Pants

Pants has a modified version of the Price is Right theme. Jax takes her down by the arm to start and stomps on the hand. A toss by the head keeps Blue in trouble and her kicks have no effect. Some elbow drops and a Samoan drop set up the big leg to squash Pants for the pin at 2:10.

Dash and Dawson don't want to talk about Enzo and Cass because they'd rather just hurt people. If the consequences of hurting people are the Tag Team Titles, they don't have much to worry about. Last week Enzo and Cass jumped them because those two can just talk the talk instead of walking the way. Dash really doesn't get why Enzo and Cass are getting the title shot in London when they haven't beaten anyone. That's fine with them because Cass has a good leg that they haven't broken yet.

#### Adam Rose vs. James Storm

Rose orders his music cut off because this is serious business. Storm starts with a shoulder but Rose gets in some shots to the back to take over. A chinlock doesn't get Adam anywhere as Storm comes back with his forearms and running neckbreaker, followed by the Last Call for the quick pin at 2:38.

The Vaudevillains are disappointed that they lost last week but they're going to win here tonight. Cue Jason Jordan and Chad Gable to disagree. Really quick and to the point promos here.

Video on Sami Zayn winning the NXT Title last year at Takeover: R-Evolution.

## Vaudevillains vs. Jason Jordan/Chad Gable

Gable takes Gotch to the mat to start but Simon grabs the arm, only to have Chad easily flip out. It's off to Jordan to take English to the mat with ease and Aiden's leapfrog is countered into an atomic drop. The fans say this is wrestling as English counters an Irish whip into the corner by standing on the middle rope and posing. Gable comes back in and goes after English's bad leg but gets backdropped out to the floor for a big crash. Not that it matters as Chad slides over and makes the tag off to Jason for a bunch of dropkicks. The Grand Amplitude puts Gotch away at 5:28.

**Rating:** C. This was just a step ahead of a squash as Gable was barely in trouble for a minute before making the comeback for the hot tag. Those two could be something special in the future as Gable is getting quicker every week. Jordan has come out of his shell by bouncing off Gable, which has been the big trick they've needed for over a year now.

Gable and Jordan offer a handshake but the Vaudevillains walk away. Well it fits their name a lot better.

Emma and Dana Brooke are ready for Asuka in London.

We get another song from what seems to be Elias Sampson.

## Liv Morgan vs. Emma

Morgan is formerly known as Marley and Gionna Daddio. Emma doesn't seem impressed and grabs the Dilemma followed by the Emma Sandwich. Morgan comes back with a quick guillotine choke and a dropkick. That's it for the jobber offense as Emma drops her again and gets the win with the Emma Lock at 3:48.

**Rating:** D+. Morgan has some good charisma and the fans like her but she's still in the early stages of her NXT run, meaning these losses don't mean much. This was clearly just a warmup for Emma before she gets ripped into 14 evenly divided pieces by Asuka in London. At least it wasn't a total squash.

Emma is in the ring when Asuka pops up on screen, beating the fire out of

a punching bag. She'll see Emma in London.

Bayley says she's ready for all challengers, including Nia Jax. This brings up Nia, who stares at the title. Bayley says she'll accept anyone who comes at her, so Jax knocks her through a door.

#### Tommaso Ciampa vs. Samoa Joe

Ciampa isn't scared as Joe drives him into the corner and works on a wristlock before not selling a chop. Joe stays on the arm until Ciampa tries another chop. That just ticks Joe off so he forearm smashes Ciampa's head half off. They start slapping the taste out of each others' mouths with Joe getting the better of it until Ciampa grabs a rollup and stomps on Joe's arm.

More hard strikes stagger Joe and a guillotine choke has him in even more trouble. Make that a Kimura but Joe drives him into the corner again for the break. The enziguiri knocks Ciampa half cold and a scoop powerslam makes it even worse. Joe Facewashes him in the corner and the release Rock Bottom drops Ciampa again. The fans are behind Joe until the Muscle Buster and Koquina Clutch end Ciampa at 6:37.

**Rating:** B. That might be a bit high but dang these two were beating the tar out of each other. Those were some incredibly hard strikes with Joe absorbing everything Ciampa threw at him and looking like a real killer for the first time with London looming. This has me even more ready for the title match and was a really, really fun surprise. Good stuff.

**Overall Rating:** B+. NXT is getting in six matches an hour. Can you imagine most other wrestling shows pulling that off? This is straight out of the old school WCW shows as they're flying through squash matches to set up the big show with the showdowns you want to see. Awesome show this week and one of the best they've done in a while.

#### Results

Baron Corbin b. Tye Dillinger – End of Days

Nia Jax b. Blue Pants – Legdrop

James Storm b. Adam Rose – Last Call

Jason Jordan/Chad Gable b. Vaudevillains – Grand Amplitude to Gotch

Emma b. Liv Morgan – Emma Lock

Samoa Joe b. Tommaso Ciampa – Koquina Clutch

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# Monday Nitro – July 10, 2000: We Don't Talk About That Around Here

## Monday Nitro #248

Date: July 10, 2000

Location: Jacksonville Coliseum, Jacksonville, Florida

Attendance: 5,257

Commentators: Scott Hudson, Mark Madden, Tony Schiavone

We're done with Bash at the Beach and that means a lot has changed in WCW. First of all, Booker T. is World Champion after a surprise change in

last night's title match. This change came about due to what seemed to be an overly complicated work/shoot which also saw the return of Vince Russo. We're back to that old Russo style after a few weeks of false hope that the company might be getting better. Let's get to it.

The opening video talks about Booker becoming the new champion and gives us a quick history of Booker's career in WCW. This was a really good way to make Booker look like a star but there was no mention of Hogan whatsoever. It really is Halloween Havoc 1999 all over again.

Tony recaps things as well and only mentions Russo making an impromptu title match due to some circumstances.

Here's Booker for his first appearance as champion but the announcers are busy talking about things that they legally can't talk about. The fans chant for Booker and it's one of the few genuinely emotional moments in years around here. Booker says this is him speaking from the heart but above all else, he wishes his mom was here to see him win the title. Well that's already a better moment than almost anything we've had in a long time.

Booker thanks the fans for being behind him every night and he's always tried to give everything he can every single week. He thanks all the fans in Dayton Beach last night (silence from the Jacksonville fans for that one) and to all the people in the back who doubt him, don't hate the player, hate the game. Above all though, Booker wants to talk about Goldberg.

Booker says Goldberg has been out with an arm injury but has spent months complaining about everything. Goldberg is nothing but a mark for the business and himself (more terms the fans don't get). Booker has one more thing to say and brings his wife (not Sharmell) into the ring to thank her for her patience when he was gone all those times. Before Booker leaves, here's Stevie Ray to interrupt.

Stevie remembers growing up with Booker and everything he did for him over the years. Then one day Scott Casey (the wrestler that trained them) saying Booker had what it took to go to the top. Now his brother is on top of the world and Stevie is so proud. They hug but here's Midajah to

interrupt as well. She yells at Booker's wife about Scott Steiner being the only real man here and here's Scott with a ball bat to take out Booker and Stevie. Booker is already a more interesting champion than we've had this whole year.

Jeff Jarrett blames the Cat for the title loss because he wasn't ready to defend, though I believe Russo booked the match. Jarrett wants his rematch tonight but Booker already has a match thanks to the Cat. Cue Scott Steiner again to lay out Jarrett and wreck the interview set.

### Shane Douglas vs. Crowbar

Before the match, Shane brags about how gorgeous Torrie is. Well you can't argue that one. Torrie says Bagwell was in the wrong place at the wrong time and calls Kidman Little Billy. Crowbar hits the ring and gets an early two off a sunset flip before sending Shane to the floor for a plancha. Torrie is nice enough to step between them, allowing Shane to take over.

Back in and Shane gets Two Amigos of all things until Crowbar spins out, only to have Torrie trip him up so Shane can get in another shot. Cue Daffney for some screaming and it's time for a quick catfight. Crowbar throws him back in for a slingshot legdrop and a Lionsault for two. Shane pops right back up and grabs the Franchiser for the pin.

**Rating:** D. Well you can't complain about Torrie in a skin tight green dress and Daffney in jeans but the match was your usual Shane Douglas affair. He's good at making you want to punch him in the face but the matches really aren't the most interesting things you're going to see. Crowbar continues to be totally fine in the ring but getting stuck either jobbing or having nothing better to do than mess around with David Flair.

Post match Buff Bagwell comes in and beats up Shane.

Kidman, in a Bash at the Beach shirt, says Torrie is a dime a dozen but he's more interested in his career anyway. This brings in Jarrett to shove Kidman away, triggering a brawl.

Smooth shows up carrying a gold record. Tank Abbott, in the top half of a



tuxedo and shorts, and 3 Count (in full tuxedos) are in his limo.

Cat gives Jarrett Kidman instead of a title match.

Here are 3 Count and Tank with the gold record and a ladder for some reason. Tank tells them to hang the record and who are they to argue with him. This brings in the Jung Dragons to shove the ladder over and beat up 3 Count, only to have Tank clean house. Cue the Great Muta of all people to spray mist at Tank, allowing the Dragons to make off with the gold record.

Kanyon thinks he should be #1 contender after beating Booker last night. Since Cat won't do it though, he's getting BANGED.

### Jeff Jarrett vs. Kidman

Jeff tries to get in some shots to start but Kidman snaps off a headscissors. That earns him a hiptoss out to the floor and Jeff sends him into the steps for good measure. Back in and Kidman's high cross body is rolled through for two but Kidman clotheslines him back to the floor. I'm not sure how to handle this back and forth wrestling so here's Torrie for a distraction.

Torrie's slap is blocked but Shane comes out, allowing Torrie to kick Kidman low. That's only good for two so Jarrett tries a powerbomb (as is his custom), setting up the facebuster because that's still a thing for Kidman. A Bodog is countered though and the Stroke gives Jeff the pin.

**Rating:** C. As usual, Kidman could have been a lot more than just a guy in the midcard but instead they just have him job to every major name they can find and put him in a feud with Shane Douglas. The Torrie stuff would be fine but sweet goodness Shane really isn't doing it for me and is dragging Kidman down with him.

Scott Steiner beats up Kanyon.

Cat gives Mike Awesome the US Title but he wants to earn it instead. He turns around and hits on an overweight woman. Well we had to get here eventually.

### WCW World Title: Mike Awesome vs. Booker T.

Booker is defending and slaps Mike in the face to start. Awesome's right hands have Booker in trouble so it's a spinwheel kick to put Mike out on the floor. Back in and some more right hands have Awesome in trouble in the corner but he runs Booker over with a clothesline. Since this is a Russo company, Awesome is allowed to use a chair to take over again. An Alabama Slam sets up the Awesome Splash for two. That's enough wrestling for Mike so he sets up a table, only to be knocked through it instead. Back in and the ax kick and missile dropkick get two for Booker before the Book End retains the title.

**Rating:** B-. That might be high due to the level of awful I'm used to but I liked this match more than I was expecting to. Booker gets to look good over an athletic opponent and Awesome loses (again) to someone he shouldn't be beating anyway. This was a good debut as champion for Booker, made much better due to the lack of interference. I could have done without the chair and table, but you have to expect that anymore in WCW. It's really just part of the standard package these days.

Post match Steiner runs in to attack Booker but Awesome makes the save.

Here's the Cat to yell about Steiner going on a rampage tonight and calls him out face to face. Steiner wants a title shot and swears a lot until Cat hits him. Scott fights back until Booker comes in for the save. This brings in Canyon to attack Booker, which really doesn't make a lot of sense. Jarrett comes in and goes after both of them until Booker fights them off. Cat makes a three way for the #1 contendership later tonight. We're not done though as Goldberg comes out and wants to make it a fourway, which is quickly approved.

And now, a package on Ralphus/Norman Smiley vs. Big Vito. This really deserved time?

Norman has Ralphus in training, which has potential to be funny but I'd rather see Norman in a regular match.

### Hardcore Title: Big Vito vs. Norman Smiley/Ralphus

Son of a Russo. Vito, defending here, goes after Norman to start as Ralphus stays in the ring. The other two fight into the back with Norman getting the better of it and blasting the champ with a fire extinguisher. They get back into the arena with Ralphus hiding behind a table in the ring. Vito pounds away and puts a traffic cone between Ralphus' legs for a crutch shot. A top rope splash puts Ralphus through the table but Norman hits Vito in the back....knocking him onto Ralphus for the pin to retain while Smiley dances.

**Rating:** F. So now he's not just losing, but he's losing because he can't pay attention to something as simple as where his fat partner in a red shirt is laying. This division is dead but I've ranted enough about it already. Vito isn't going anywhere but at least he's not in his 50s or 60s.

The Cat beats up the Jung Dragons again because this is still a thing.

Paisley needs to get Artist's shirt ready and asks a guy in the back if he can clean it. The guy, named Kiwi, is in neon pink and covers every stereotype of a gay model you can imagine. Paisley instantly swoons.

Lenny Lane is in the crowd with a sign that says USE ME.

### Lance Storm vs. The Artist

Before the match, the fans chant USA at Storm. Lance responds by saying he's not here for sports entertainment because he's a wrestler from Calgary, Alberta, Canada. As you might expect, this is his heel turn promo. We get 0 Canada (full version) as the announcers bicker over whether we should give Storm silence. Paisley joins commentary as Storm hammers away to start.

A dropkick gets two for Lance as Paisley talks about Kiwi being a potential "purple passion fruit" in the future and calls Storm a Power Ranger reject. Artist gets two off a superkick but the middle rope DDT is countered with a northern lights suplex. Storm's sitout powerbomb gets two and a springboard missile dropkick gets the same. Artist's Angle Slam gets two more but the half crab makes him tap.

**Rating:** C+. Well there's your surprise of the night. This was actually really entertaining with Paisley making me chuckle on commentary. Storm was on a roll at this point and I'm not sure why they turned him heel here when his style is far better suited as a good guy. Then again he's foreign and I'm sure that screams bad in Russo's thinking.

Vampiro is here and my eyes roll.

#### Tag Team Titles: Kronik vs. Corporal Cajun/General Rection

Kronik is defending and Juventud Guerrera/Rey Mysterio are on commentary. Adams and Rection start things off with Brian hitting a quick full nelson slam (don't bother trying to fight out of the hold or anything). Off to Cajun who is launched off a cover so it's back to Rection. Cue Jindrak and O'Haire to brawl with Juvy and Rey as Rection misses a top rope elbow. It's off to Clark to clean house as everything breaks down.

A spinwheel kick to Clark sets up No Laughing Matter but Adams makes the save. Things settle down again until High Time plants Cajun with Rection having to make a save. Kronik completely botches the powerbomb/top rope clothesline to Cajun (Adams fell backwards and Clark came off the top too fast, leaving him to collide with Cajun in the air) but it's enough to retain anyway.

**Rating:** D+. So Kronik is big, strong, and 58% more likely to cause severe head trauma to people from the Louisiana Bayou. I like the fact that we had the #1 contender match last week and they actually gave us the match here, but the Misfits really weren't the best option. The division is getting more traffic, though that doesn't mean the quality is going up at the same time.

Post match Perfect Event runs in to lay out Kronik.

Here's Vampiro with a coffin and something to say. He's been through everything and will survive in the darkness where everyone here fails. The Demon pops out of the coffin and gets in Vampiro's face. Vampiro goes on about Asya not understanding the difference between good and evil so he wants Demon to beat her down. The lights get even weaker and Sting's music comes on. Cue a guy we can't see with a ski mask on, nearly

guaranteeing that it's not really Sting.

#### Jeff Jarrett vs. Positively Kanyon vs. Scott Steiner vs. Goldberg

Winner gets the title shot vs. Booker at New Blood Rising. One fall to a finish here and Kanyon starts with Steiner. Scott drops to the floor to yell at some fans before kneeing Kanyon in the face. The bicep elbow gets no cover so Steiner hits him with a chair. Goldberg breaks up the Recliner, allowing Kanyon to get two off a sitout Alabama Slam.

Jeff tags Kanyon but Scott suplexes Kanyon down anyway. There's a Kanyon Cutter to Jarrett but Goldberg tagged himself in and speared Kanyon in half (to one of the pops of the night). Steiner makes a save to set up the staredown with Goldberg, only to have Jeff cover Kanyon for the pin.

**Rating:** D. This didn't have the time to go anywhere but it started the build to Goldberg vs. Steiner. Kanyon was just there as a fall guy to set up Jarrett's rematch which is a rare good idea from this company. Jarrett is a good option to give Booker another title defense on the big stage, though the promos are going to be a chore to sit through.

**Overall Rating:** C. Again, the less Russo on a show, the better they're doing. There was no mention of Hogan's name tonight and the whole thing last night seems to be a big waste. The ratings were indeed up by .3 over last week, good for about half of the increase Raw had. The wrestling was much better this week as some of the matches got more time but it still wasn't anything I'm going to remember in about ten minutes, which is yet another major problem for this company right now.

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# Wrestling Wars Podcast Episode 30

In which KB and NorCal talk about the builds to Takeover: London and TLC.

<http://mightynorcal.podbean.com/e/wwpwhoa-30-our-30th-is-myself-and-kb-doing-short-thoughts-on-survivor-series-and-discussing-the-divergent-nxt-and-tlc-builds/>

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## Monday Night Raw – November 30, 2015: League Of Trombone Playing Nations

### Monday Night Raw

Date: November 30, 2015

Location: CONSOL Energy Arena, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

Commentators: Michael Cole, John Bradshaw Layfield, Byron Saxton

We're closing in on TLC and things aren't in the best place at the moment. Roman Reigns is challenging Sheamus but also has to deal with Rusev and King Barrett who attacked him last week. That's really all we have right now but a lot of the pay per view card will likely be set up

tonight as the show is in less than two weeks. Let's get to it.

We open with confetti falling and here comes New Day to stand on a red carpet in the ring. Big E. knows we're wondering whose birthday it is and even though it's actually Naomi's birthday, this is about a NEW DAY. Instead of a birthday, tonight is a gala, a jubilee if you will. Big E. starts to sweat so Woods gives him a Terrible Towel (the symbol of the Pittsburgh Steelers) to clean up. Today marks a new champion: the shamrock shaking ginger giant Sheamus.

Here's the new champ, in a suit with his hair slicked back this week. Sheamus thanks the New Day for introducing him and then thanks the Authority for giving him this chance. Finally though, Sheamus wants to thank Roman Reigns. If Reigns had only accepted HHH's handshake, he might have this around his waist. Sheamus does a bit of dancing (Kofi: "The hips don't lie baby!") and New Day is amazed at the title changing hands after only 5:15. It's time for more posing with fireworks but here's Reigns to Superman Punch Sheamus and walk off with the title. They're already better than they were last week as this was fun.

Reigns is with Ambrose and the Usos in the back when the Authority comes in. They make him give the title back and Reigns says he's coming for the title at TLC. That's not soon enough for Sheamus though because he wants to defend the title tonight. The catch: there's a 5:15 time limit.

The announcers explain everything we just heard thirty seconds ago. WE'RE NOT THIS DUMB WWE!

### Dolph Ziggler vs. Tyler Breeze

Probably time for Breeze to job again so Ziggler can get his win back. Breeze takes over to start and sends Ziggler into the corner for some shoulders to the ribs. We hit a front facelock as the announcers talk about the title match instead of anything in front of them. Ziggler fights up but goes shoulder first into the post as we take a break. Back with Ziggler fighting out of a front facelock and ducking an enziguri.

Breeze counters a hurricanrana into a powerbomb but Dolph slips out, only to nail another enziguri for two. Dolph's superkick is countered into a

catapult, followed by a modified backstabber. For some reason this makes Ziggler hold his shoulder again but he's still able to counter the Unprettier into a pinfall reversal sequence for some near falls. Back up and Ziggler nails a quick superkick for the pin at 10:33.

**Rating:** C. Yep you knew it was coming. How did you know it was coming? You knew because this is what WWE does. Breeze got one over on Ziggler so that means it's time for Ziggler to get one over on Breeze because Breeze might get too popular (despite losing almost all of his other matches) and that must be stopped, meaning we have two guys who are hitting .500 and wonder why neither is over. Such is life around here because this company is stupid.

It's time for MizTV with guests Rusev and the returning Lana. Rusev is here first and says this isn't about the USA. The fans want Lana but Rusev says she's his wife and his alone. Rusev rants about loving her and brings out Lana, who looks exactly like she did about a year ago. Miz asks why this happened after everything they've been through but Lana says the past was forgiven when Rusev proposed. Seeing what else was out there just made their love stronger.

Lana NEVER went all the way with Dolph, drawing a YES YOU DID chant from the fans. Rusev didn't go all the way with Summer either. All he did was break her heart, just like he's going to break his opponents apart. Rusev and Lana kiss but here's Ryback for Rusev's next feud.

Ryback has no business here and no connection to anyone in the ring but Cole and company act like this is totally expected because their script says it's supposed to happen. Apparently they had a scheduled match, but Cole only threw that in as an aside. Tell us this when Ryback's music hit so we're not trying to figure out what's going on. Anyway Ryback says we fight here so the match is on.

#### Ryback vs. Rusev

This is joined in progress with Rusev in control. Ryback fights back and hits a missile dropkick of all things. They fight to the floor with Lana getting knocked down, meaning Rusev stays outside for the countout at 1:45.



Rusev blames Ryback for Lana being hurt.

Ambrose has been called into HHH's office so HHH can tell him that if Reigns doesn't win in 5:15 tonight, Ambrose loses his Intercontinental Title shot as well. Reign has to learn that his actions affect his friends as well and what better way to show him?

Here are the Dudley Boyz with some tables leaned up against the ropes and covered in black sheets. The Wyatt Family has beaten them up for the last week, including chokeslamming Bubba through a table last week. So many teams have tried to put the Dudley Boyz down and the Wyatts have come very close but they're still standing and breathing. They pull the sheets off and each one has a Wyatt's name. D-Von reminds us of the three commandments: thou shall not steal, thou shall not kill and thou shall not mess with the Dudley Boyz.

They're ready to fight at anytime so here are the Wyatts so Bray can accept the challenge. He advises them to never invite the devil into your backyard because he might stay. Bubba says it looks like the Wyatts have the advantage but the Dudley Boyz have their own family. Cue Tommy Dreamer of all people and the Wyatts bail.

#### Wyatt Family vs. Tommy Dreamer/Dudley Boyz

Bray is the odd man out here and it's joined in progress again. D-Von is in early trouble but punches his way out and tags in Dreamer, who walks right into a swinging Boss Man Slam from Harper. Rowan puts on the head vice but misses a splash, allowing for the cold tag to Bubba (D-Von was too busy clapping to put his hand out). Everything breaks down and the referee throws it out at 3:33.

**Rating:** D+. Of course it was Dreamer. It's always Tommy Dreamer. When all else fails, there is no one else on the planet that you can bring in for a hardcore match with ECW people involved than Tommy freaking Dreamer. If this is a one off thing or even a two off thing at the pay per view (which it likely is) then fine but this could have been a good introduction for someone new. Instead it's an old name for the Wyatts to beat up while giving the fans a very cheap pop.

It's time for a table but Bray gets knocked off the apron and through one instead, allowing the good guys to escape and preserve the ECW legacy for one more night.

We recap the opening segment.

### Goldust vs. Alberto Del Rio

Non-title AGAIN. Before the match, Colter says the fans are too concerned with rats on Mars and Anne Hathaway being pregnant. Goldust punches Del Rio in the face before he can say anything and we start fast. A powerslam and spinebuster get two each on Del Rio but Goldust misses a charge in the corner, setting up the top rope double stomp for the pin at 2:00.

Post match Del Rio puts Goldust in the cross armbreaker until Jack Swagger makes the save.

Becky Lynch thinks she and Charlotte could have a great match, non-title of course. They WOO at each other and Ric is here too.

### Usos vs. Lucha Dragons

Winners get the title shot, presumably at TLC. New Day is on commentary here as well. Kalisto takes Jimmy down for two to start before Jey comes in for a double elbow. Big E. starts with his reporter voice as the Dragons hit their monkey flip into a 450 for two. Cara speeds things up again as everything breaks down. Kalisto gets backdropped onto Jey but Jimmy takes him down with a big dive. Cue Cara for his own dive but the New Day runs in for the no contest at 2:55.

New Day says that means no title match and it's time to dance.

Post break, Stephanie makes it a three way match at TLC, but if the Usos want in, Reigns has to win as well.

### Brie Bella vs. Sasha Banks

Another Twitter induced match. Team Bad has a new thing where they put their fists together and shout UNITY in falsetto voices. Brie takes over to start but Sasha drops her in a hurry. Alicia gets sent into a

superkick and Brie gets sent into the buckle for two as this is already a step off. A clothesline gets two on Brie and we hit a cross arm choke. Brie fights up for her middle rope dropkick and the YES Kicks. Not that it matters as the Bank Statement is enough to make Brie tap at 4:57.

**Rating:** D. I really wasn't feeling this one as Sasha seemed like she had to slow things down for the sake of letting Brie keep up with her. That's the problem with the division right now: half the matches get time but half the matches have to be slowed down and cut short because not everyone is on the same level. This didn't work for me though and they need to let Sasha get away from Tamina and Naomi already.

Ambrose and the Usos fire Reigns up. It's going to end in a brawl and we're going to get an eight man tag for the real main event aren't we?

#### WWE World Title: Sheamus vs. Roman Reigns

Sheamus (now in a Sheamus 5:15 shirt) is defending and this match has a 5:15 time limit with Ambrose and the Usos' title shots on the line. The champ tries to bail to start so Reigns rolls him up for some early near falls. Sheamus takes it to the floor and sends Reigns into the barricade as the clock is ticking. Back in with less than four minutes to go and we're under 4:00.

Reigns fight up and hits a boot to the face as we're under three minutes. Sheamus can't escape up the ramp and a Samoan drop gets two. They head outside again with two minutes left and Reigns is thrown over the announcers' table. Sheamus gets posted but the time is ticking away. Roman finally gets him back in with a minute to go. The Superman Punch is loaded up but Rusev pulls him to the floor at 4:40.

**Rating:** D+. Yeah this was obvious. You knew they weren't going to change the title on Raw (because that might make people watch) so let's just do this and then set up the obvious eight man tag later on in the show. Sheamus vs. Reigns is fine and they're doing what they can with it but Sheamus losing again at the pay per view is going to make it even worse.

Barrett, Del Rio and Rusev huddle around Sheamus, who calls the four of them the League of Nations. Cue the Usos and Ambrose to even things up

and Sheamus gets punched off the apron.

### Charlotte vs. Becky Lynch

Non-title with Paige on commentary and Ric Flair in Charlotte's corner. Becky grabs the wrist to start and takes Charlotte down with a headlock takeover. Charlotte pops up and it's a standoff as Ric struts on the floor. They hit the mat for more headlocking until Charlotte chops her in the stomach. The neckbreaker sets up more chops but Becky kicks her in the chest. Paige gets annoyed at all the questions and threatens to put Byron in a submission on the table right now. Charlotte twists an ankle coming out of the corner but it's all goldbricking, allowing Charlotte to grab a rollup for the pin at 4:40.

**Rating:** C-. So they might be turning Charlotte heel? That's their big solution? Becky continues to lose, but they're at least offering some shades of gray here to make things a bit more interesting. Hopefully Ric is just a one off appearance here because he doesn't need to be around Charlotte, who is good enough on her own. Just don't have her talk live again.

Becky is stunned and more than a bit annoyed.

The eight man tag is announced for the main event.

Post break Becky wants to know what that was but Charlotte calls it strategy. This isn't NXT anymore and everyone needs to step it up. They're still friends though. Charlotte leaves and Paige comes up to gloat a bit, leaving Becky conflicted.

Adam Rose has a gossip segment called The Rosebush. Rose thinks Rusev wears the bra in his relationship with Lana and suggests that Ziggler loves both Summer Rae and Breeze.

Titus O'Neil sings Christmas carols to Stardust and tells him to get in the Christmas spirit before shoving him down. We'll go with a holiday ok then here.

### Usos/Dean Ambrose/Roman Reigns vs. League of Nations

The good guys don't get an entrance. We're not quite ready to go yet because here's the New Day to announce they're now part of the League of Nations to make this a 7-4 handicap match. Kofi and Dean get things going and it's Ambrose in early control with left hands in the corner. It's off to Jimmy vs. Woods and the Usos and Reigns start a quick Unicorn Stamped to turn the tables. The big staredown takes us to a break.

Back with Del Rio kicking Jey into the corner and tagging out to Woods. A clothesline gets two and it's off to Rusev for some stomping on the leg. The beating continues with Sheamus for the ten forearms to the chest. Reigns finally tries to make the save but Jey has to save himself with an uppercut to knock Kofi out of the air. The hot tag brings in Jimmy to clean house but Big E. clotheslines him from the apron. Jey is holding his knee on the floor as we take another break.

Back again with Jey having been taken to the back because of his knee. Jimmy is still taking a beating but he finally gets away to make the tag to Reigns as house is cleaned. Everything breaks down though and Reigns hits the apron kick to Kofi and Xavier, only to have Del Rio send him into the barricade. That means it's time for Reigns to get beaten down, including a knee drop from Sheamus for two.

Big E. puts Reigns in an abdominal stretch for some rhythmic slapping to the ribs. Reigns gets run over again and it's off to Del Rio for a chinlock to keep this slow. We see Jey on the floor, because when Cole meant he was taken out he meant he was down. Close enough I guess.

Reigns finally gets up and makes the hot tag to Ambrose to take everyone out. Dean dives off the top to take out New Day and Barrett before a suicide dive does the same to Sheamus. The Superman Punch drops Del Rio and Reigns adds a clothesline to Barrett but seemed to be holding his knee. Back in and a Brogue Kick puts Ambrose away at 25:10.

**Rating:** B-. This was a good brawl to end the show and make the League of Nations seem like a threat for a change. I'm not sure why New Day needed to be in there but anytime those three are on my TV I'm happier than I was otherwise. Sheamus getting the pin is a good idea, but you would think an Uso would have been a better option. Good, long match though and

a much better option than just Rusev vs. Reigns from last week.

Post match Reigns comes in for the save (thankfully his leg seems fine) but gets beaten down to end the show.

**Overall Rating:** C. The major difference here is simple: there was a point to almost everything. Last week felt like they were just throwing out random stuff to fill in time and that's not how Raw is supposed to go. This week felt like they were building up to something instead of just wasting time until the next big show came. There are still a lot of problems with the show but it helps to have a point to stuff. Reigns vs. Sheamus is looking better, but you can see the screwjob from here.

The rest of the show was hit or miss at best, but there was enough good on here to make it work. The key thing here is it was better than last week, which really isn't a hard bar to get past. They've done a good job of setting up TLC as you can see most of the card from here and the League of Nations is a good idea but the show is still hitting its head on a low ceiling because these stories don't have a lot of room to go anywhere.

## Results

Dolph Ziggler b. Tyler Breeze – Superkick

Ryback b. Rusev via countout

Dudley Boyz/Tommy Dreamer vs. Wyatt Family went to a double DQ when all six brawled

Alberto Del Rio b. Goldust – Top rope double stomp

Usos vs. Lucha Dragons went to a no contest when New Day interfered

Sasha Banks b. Brie Bella – Bank Statement

Roman Reigns b. Sheamus via DQ when Rusev interfered

Charlotte b. Becky Lynch – Rollup

League of Nations/New Day b. Usos/Roman Reigns/Dean Ambrose – Brogue Kick

to Ambrose

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