

# 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 head 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 no selling a chop. Joe stays on the arm until Ciampa tries another chop. That just ticks Joe off so he forearm 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 enziguri 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 Canyon.

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.

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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 Zigler 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 Stampede 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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# Chikara Off the Hook: How Did I Reach This Point In My Life?

## Off the Hook

Date: October 24, 2015

Location: The Arena, Jeffersonville, Indiana

Commentators: Mike Quackenbush, Leonard F. Chikarason, Dr. Rod Diamondfire, Bryce Remsburg

So this is an interesting one as I was actually in the arena (as in The Arena) for the show. I'm far from familiar with Chikara but I know enough about it to have some form of idea of what I'm watching. This was my first time seeing them live and it was a rather entertaining night, especially for \$20 for the last row (last out of four that is). Let's get to it.

Now for those of you that aren't familiar, Chikara is basically a comic book come to life in a wrestling promotion. There are cults, secret organizations, mind control, wrestling ants and blowing up a bus full of children. When you get into something like this, you have to know what you're signing up for. You can't expect WWE style or production values, along with expecting a very indy style experience.

It should also be noted that this season's main story (yeah Chikara is divided into seasons, with an actual offseason) is a multi-team competition called Challenge of the Immortals. The roster has been divided into ten four person teams. Each team will face off against each other at least once with the captains picking the stipulations. No word on what the prize is for the winning team.

Finally, I'm probably not going to know a lot of the details and backstories here. Chikara is one of those places with an incredibly deep and complicated history and there's almost no way to keep track of everything. I apologize in advance for any mistakes I make though I'm sure I'll be corrected on them.

The opening sequence is almost identical to the Marvel Studios logo. Again: I love that they aren't hiding what they're doing. It makes things so much easier.

We get graphics of all the matches on the card.

The arena really was small with maybe 150 people in the arena at most. I was sitting opposite the hard camera so on the off chance you see this show, I'm in the fourth row in the Superman shirt.

The announcer (Alex Pearlman, a guy who doesn't seem to be that well known. He was a really good host though and held the show together all night.) welcomes us to the show, with his mic cutting off a few times in the middle. The only problem here was he said they were going to blow the roof off the place. It was raining pretty hard that night so does he want everyone to get wet?

#### Challenge of the Immortals: Orange Cassidy/Drew Gulak vs. Ophidian/Shynron

Gentleman's Club vs. Snake Pit. Each team has their own flag which is a very nice touch. Gulak is a British style wrestler and Cassidy wrestles in sunglasses and torn jeans. Cassidy and Shynron start things off with Orange grabbing a headlock. Cassidy: "I want out! This is too much!" He takes off the sunglasses as the announcers are ripping on Cassidy for being lazy and exhausted.

Cassidy runs in slow motion and taps against Shynron for a shoulder before tripping him down. The comedy is actually working here as Cassidy trips but claims it was a splash. Off to Ophidian vs. Gulak for the actual wrestling portion. They hit the mat for some nice counters until Ophidian bounces off the mat several times to escape a wristlock. Cassidy tags himself in and asks for a test of strength. You can see the joke coming from here.

The much smaller Ophidian puts him down with one arm as referee Bryce Remsburg (one of the stars of the show) says this was Cassidy's idea. Now Cassidy wants Shynron. Ophidian: "You sure about that buddy?" Shynron moonsaults off the middle rope and moonsaults right up to Cassidy who

immediately tags out. Gulak easily wrestles Shynron to the mat and starts working on the arm before getting rolled up for two. It's back to Cassidy vs. Ophidian with Cassidy taking a nap with a stuffed tiger.

Ophidian gets smart and tries a quiet count but Gulak shouts FREE BAGEL BITES at two, making Cassidy snap up and small package Ophidian for two. Cassidy asks for a weapons check of all things and gets caught in a reverse Tumbleweed of all things for two for a bunch of two counts. Gulak comes in for a rolling cradle of his own but still can't end this comedy. Shynron tries some handsprings into a headscissors on Drew but has to settle for a victory roll instead.

Back to Ophidian vs. Cassidy with the snake man headstanding on the top turnbuckle and hissing. A very complicated rollup gets two on Orange and it's back to the wrestlers for a crisscross into a sunset flip from Drew. Shynron's springboard is countered into an electric chair which is countered into a hurricanrana for two but it's time for the partners to come in and turn the hold over about a dozen times in a row. Cassidy: "STOP IT!"

Cassidy complains to the referee that he's trying to win the match and Ophidian is over here trying to win the match too. Totally unfair! The fans want a hug and Ophidian offers a handshake. Cassidy tries a trick of course and gets rolled up to give Ophidian the pin at 14:01 with Gulak (where was he anyway?) being a second late.

**Rating:** C+. This was longer than it needed to be but it was the perfect way to set the tone for the show. The comedy was really working here with Cassidy as a good slacker and Gulak the completely opposite partner. The Snake Pit could have been any given combination and the match would have worked just fine. Really entertaining stuff with the wrestling as a backdrop, which is going to be a trend all night.

Pragash Sabar, who is basically an X-Pac tribute character from Pakistan, says Farmer Frog (just go with it) isn't poisonous enough for him. He gets in a few Sean Waltman jabs for good measure. Waltman has to show up (again) and squash him good and strong.

Pragash Sabar vs. Farmer Frog

He's a frog who farms and certainly NOT the Estonian Thunder Frog who died recently. We get another weapons check and the referee finds....cucumbers on Sabar? Sabar bails to the floor and hands a fan two more cucumbers. I really don't want to know the joke here. The much bigger Frog shoves him down a few times before grabbing Pragash by his big fake tongue. That means it's time for the armpit to the tongue and I have no idea how I reached this point in my life.

Sabar goes to the floor for a breather (and so fans can rub his tongue), allowing Frog to come off the top with an ax handle. Back in and a Cannonball sets up a delayed gordbuster (Frog: "OOPSIE!" Oopsie?) for two. The Slop Drop (for once that name makes sense) is broken up though and Sabar gets two of his own off a high cross body.

Some X-Pac kicks in the corner (and a few licks of the hand) set up the Bronco Buster (Chikarason: "Five hit combo.") for two, mainly because it's not a move you pin people with. Frog grabs an Oklahoma Stampede of all things but Sabar bails to the floor and tries to get his cucumbers back. That goes nowhere so Frog hammers away in the corner, only to get powerbombed down into a rollup with Sabar putting his feet on the ropes for the pin at 7:44.

**Rating:** D. I wasn't feeling this one and the match really didn't work that well. Neither guy showed off that much as it's kind of hard to get into a match between Henry Godwinn/Brian Knobbs as a frog (which didn't change much) vs. X-Pac with a long tongue. It's not a terrible match or anything but I didn't care too much for it. This might have been edited as the live notes I had listed it as longer but I didn't notice any major edits.

Sabar gets his cucumbers back. I still don't get it.

AC/DC (Arik Cannon, wearing a Less Than Jake shirt, as in the band that sang We're All Dudes in the cinematic classic Good Burger, and Darin Corbin) are ready for their match. Corbin calls Cannon for fun but Cannon yells at him for not taking this more seriously. Darin suggests slow motion tonight. Oh dear indeed.

AC/DC vs. Lucas Calhoun/Missile Assault Man



Calhoun is an Elvis impersonator and Missile Assault Man used to be an ant but was brainwashed into being extra aggressive by a shadow corporation (or something like that). From what I understand, they're followers of a guy who was murdering various wrestlers last season (just go with it). Man and Cannon get things going and a quick armdrag sends Man outside, which is as good as a tag around here.

Corbin comes in as well and it's time for a karate demonstration (Chikarason: "The school of Stan Lane vs. watching a lot of Mighty Morphin Power Rangers."). A little dancing leads to Corbin putting on a karate headband but Calhoun punches him in the ribs and rips it apart. More karate leads to a slap fight and that's enough for Man as he drags them apart. Corbin sends both guys to the floor for a big dive before telling Cannon they should isolate Calhoun. A double dropkick gets two for AC/DC but Man comes in and dropkicks Darin down for the same.

We get a Missile Assault MAN stomp (with one letter per stomp) as the match settles into something like wrestling. A kick to the head gets two for Calhoun and rolling northern lights suplexes get the same for Man. Corbin elbows both guys away and the hot tag brings in Cannon so everything can break down. Man is sent to the floor and a double superkick gets two on Calhoun.

After a quick interlude from Man, we hit SLOW MOTION. Corbin Stuns Calhoun as even the announcers are speaking slowly. A fan in the crowd says Missile Assault Man sucks in slow speak as well. Cannon gets two off a backslide and now it's back to full speed with Calhoun eating an RK0, only to have Corbin walk into a Brogue Kick from Man for the pin at 13:55.

**Rating:** C-. I was getting into this one until the slow motion kicked in. I've seen the bit before and while it's a cool idea, it really takes me out of the match. It's ok to just have a match end once in awhile, though to be fair that's the kind of rule that you see for a match in a bigger company. Man and Calhoun were kind of working as an oddball tag team and AC/DC are a good choice for a midcard pairing. Good enough match to start but it needed to have a better finish.

## Challenge of the Immortals: Blind Rage vs. Eddie Kingston

Nightmare Warriors (captained by Grand Champion Hallowicked, which will become important in a bit) vs. Snake Pit. Rage is a generic guy with red paint on his face and Kingston (coming in with a bad knee) is a big star known as the War King. Kingston has some issues getting his robe off in a funny bit. Eddie works on a top wristlock and shouts that Hallowicked isn't here to save Rage. A snapmare puts Rage down and Eddie slaps him in the of the head. Kingston: "It's ok. I'm a tweener."

Rage gets smart with a dragon screw leg whip but Kingston fights up from the mat in a nice touch. Kingston gets in some weak knees to the back but gets dropkicked in the knee to slow him down again. A middle rope knee to Blind's head (with Eddie limping after landing on the bad knee) sets up a DDT for two. The spinning backfist (Eddie's finisher) misses and a Michinoku Driver gives Rage two more.

Some really weak looking rapid fire chops (I have yet to see those look good from anyone) from Kingston have Rage in trouble but he gets caught in a sitout powerbomb from the corner. They're way too spent for only being eight minutes into a match. Rage misses a top rope double stomp and rolls outside, allowing Hallowicked to run in for a DDT. A quick STF gives Rage the knockout win at 8:16.

**Rating:** D+. Rage really didn't hold my interest very well here but you could see that Kingston is one of the better guys they have. He carries himself better than most guys on the roster and he actually sold the knee really well. The ending was a good idea as there's only so much you can do to have a guy like Rage look credible against one of the biggest names in the promotion.

Kingston yells at the referee for missing the interference. Referee: "I was outside." Kingston: "ARE YOU KIDDING ME???"

Intermission, with a lot of the wrestlers coming to ringside to sell shirts. The handful that I talked to were all very nice and it was a really pleasant experience for a change.

## Challenge of the Immortals: Juan Francisco de Coronado/Proletariat Boar

## of Moldova vs. Jakob Hammermeier/Soldier Ant

United Nations (Coronado is one of the bigger heels in the company) vs. Bruderschaft des Kreuzes (a former mega heel stable who are now barely a thing. The United Nations take their sweet time coming to the ring with Pearlman and Rensburg taking a nap in the corner during the entrance. Pearlman does their introduction in slow motion ("Making their way to the ring.....eventually.....at their own pace....."). The Boar of course has a tail. Soldier Ant seems to be under mind control of some sort (Fan: "Remember who you are Soldier Ant!") which is likely a very interesting backstory because they always are around here.

No commentary on this match for some reason. Coronado respects Jakob for being a foreigner and offers a handshake. Jakob offers his left hand and attacks ("YOU CAN'T TRUST THE GERMANS!") before grabbing Coronado's bowtie. It's time for a test of strength but both heels go for kicks to the ribs. Juan: "I THOUGHT I LIKED YOU!"

They both poke each other in the eyes and it's off to the Boar for a spinebuster/dropkick combo. The heels (as in Coronado and the Boar) stomp away in the corner until Jakob crashes to the floor, which again counts as a tag. Soldier Ant comes in for a clothesline on Juan and a Liger Kick to the Boar. A not very giant swing sends Juan flying and it's off to some freaky leg lock. Juan gets thrown around and then out to the floor, allowing Boar to come in instead.

The Ant beats him up too until Juan grabs his foot, only to be terrified by the Ant staring down at him (well in theory as you can't see his face). Boar's Samoan drop gives Juan two and the Ant's layout powerbomb from the corner gets the same. The Ant starts boxing the Boar (another thing I never expected to type) until the tailed one kicks the Soldier outside. Jakob remembers he's in this match and goes after the Boar, only to eat a spear for the pin at 10:49.

**Rating:** C. Chikara is interesting as this competition is basically throwing a bunch of people together for what feel like random matches, even though they make sense when you know the story. That being said, most of these matches are working well enough and the competition gives

the match some meaning, even if it doesn't feel like it all the time. Fun enough match here though with Soldier Ant stealing most of the show.

Blaster McMassive, a guy who is exactly what his name sounds like, snaps a Slim Jim, just like he's going to do to Chuck Taylor's neck tonight.

#### Challenge of the Immortals: Blaster McMassive vs. Chuck Taylor

Wrecking Crew vs. Gentleman's Club. Taylor is a big star and known as the Kentucky Gentlemen (I think I have a Chikara favorite) but he's on a retirement tour (which might see him go to WWE as he's only 29). Chuck breaks up the posing with a dropkick to the floor, followed by a quick dive.

Back in and a jawbreaker is broken up so we hit a chinlock from Blaster. Taylor fights up for an octopus hold of all things, only to get kicked in the head for two. They slug it out until Taylor grabs a release Rock Bottom for two. There's a DDT for the same but Taylor misses something off the top and walks into a sitout Boss Man Slam for the pin at 5:32.

**Rating:** C-. Quick match here but power vs. speed is still one of the best stories you can run no matter what. Another good enough match here but the time was kind of surprising. If Taylor is supposed to be a big deal, you don't expect to see him lose in just a few minutes. Not bad but it needed more time.

Dasher's Dugout (the team leading the competition coming into the show) is ready but they don't like missing Young Lions Cup holder and fourth partner Heidi Lovelace. They have Princess KimberLee as a fourth though so it's not the worst thing in the world.

#### Dasher Hatfield/Icarus/Mark Angelosetti/Princess KimberLee vs. Hallowicked/NRG/Heidi Lovelace

This is challengers vs. champions with Hallowicked as Grand Champion (NRG (Race Jaxon/Hype Rockwell) as Tag Team Champions and Lovelace as Young Lions Cup holder. Lovelace is usually part of Dasher's Dugout (a sports themed team with Dasher wearing a baseball mask and Angelosetti being named Mr. Touchdown). KimberLee is a princess with purple hair.

Icarus and Hallowicked (former champion vs. the champion) start things off but it's off to Lovelace before anything happens. Icarus isn't clear what to do here so he wrestles slowly as they trade arm holds. Neither can hit a kick so Lovelace clotheslines him down and they slap hands before tagging out to Jaxon and Hatfield. Dasher grabs an armbar to slow Jaxon down before it's off to Mark for a bulldog.

The much bigger Rockwell comes in to trade shoulders with Angelosetti with Mark getting the better of it. We stop for some Tebowing (with the announcers wondering if that's still a thing) until NRG takes Mark down. That goes nowhere so here's the Princess vs. Hallowicked for a big showdown. The Princess actually gets the best of it and kicks Hallowicked down for two. NRG tries to interfere again but gets caught by Dasher and Mark with a double headbutt to keep the good guys in control.

KimberLee puts Race in a full nelson with her legs until Jaxon springboards out of the corner for the tag off to Rockwell. Everything breaks down for a bit and Hallowicked throws Heidi to the floor to prevent a showdown with the Princess for some reason. Go To Sleepy Hollow (a GTS with a kick instead of a knee) gets two on KimberLee before it's back to Race for two off a butterfly suplex. Hallowicked comes in and cranks on KimberLee's arm before it's off to Heidi for a chinlock. Hallowicked: "SHE IS OUR ENEMY! WHAT DO WE DO TO OUR ENEMY???"

A crucifix into something like Rings of Saturn has the Princess in trouble until she rolls out. Heidi and Hallowicked argue on the floor until KimberLee dives through the ropes to take them down. That means it's off to Icarus for a bad looking hurricanrana on Rockwell as things speed way up. Dasher comes in with no tag for a wheelbarrow slam/Stunner combo (the Bo Jackson) on Race.

Jaxon gets caught in the corner for a double superplex until Rockwell makes the save by powerbombing Dasher and Mark off the top. Race moonsaults onto both of them and it's off to KimberLee for some chops to NRG. The two of them are taken out with ease and NOW we get KimberLee vs. Lovelace. They kick it out because this is an indy promotion and we have to do it at some point.

KimberLee gets the better of it until a wicked Saito suplex sends her to the floor. Hallowicked comes in and decks Icarus before telling Heidi to get out. Lovelace says no so Hallowicked shoves her down allowing Icarus to beat up Hallowicked with strikes and a nice Sliced Bread #2. It's time for the parade of finishers, including Heidi apologizing to Dasher for a Fameasser. A pop up Diamond Cutter seemed to hurt Heidi but here's Eddie Kingston for the backfist to drop Hallowicked, allowing KimberLee to score the pin at 20:15.

**Rating:** B+. This was a lot of fun with all eight of them flying all over the place. This place is similar to Lucha Underground as the women are on equal footing with the men, making for a much more entertaining match instead of the stupid "let's treat them differently" nonsense that you often have to see. KimberLee getting the pin is a good choice instead of the normal stuff where it's the main World Champion contender getting the pin. This was by far and away the match of the night and a lot of fun with all eight looking awesome.

The credits roll and Alex thanks us for coming out, but here's Bryce Remsburg to say ONE MORE MATCH.

#### Fire Ant vs. Oleg the Usurper

Oleg is a viking who was frozen in ice and is rapidly turning face. Fire Ant is the high flier of the former Colony and a fan favorite. Ant dives through the ropes to take him out and fires (see what I did there?) off strikes inside. A boot to the face puts Ant down though and Oleg SMACKS him in the side of the head for the pin at 1:23. Well it was just an encore.

Pearlman thanks us for coming to end the show.

**Overall Rating:** B-. This is a show where there's a lot more to the show than just the wrestling. Chikara is much more about a fun show that is built up over time instead of a single show. That being said, this was a lot of fun and more than worth the money. It's definitely a show that you can get into more if you watch regularly but as a one off, this was a lot of fun and a really entertaining night.

The main event blows away everything else but nothing was bad and it was a really fun atmosphere all night long. It felt like the wrestlers were having a good time entertaining the fans and it showed in their performances. It's a really fun company if you want a legitimate alternative to WWE, which is often the case in name only.

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## **Reviewing the Review – Monday Night Raw: November 23, 2015**

It's been a bit since I've done one of these for Raw but the show has been so pitiful lately that I figured it was time to take another look at it. The show's ratings are pathetic and it should be interesting to look at how screwy the show has been to see why they're in such a horrible place (even though they're making bank with the sponsors etc.). We're fresh off Survivor Series, meaning Sheamus just cashed in Money in the Bank because of reasons. Let's get to it.

The show starts and it immediately goes off a cliff. Here's the problem: Sheamus is Seth Rollins with pale skin and an annoying accent. The Authority came down to gloat, the new champion came out to say I TOLD YOU SO, the hero challenger came to the ring and issued a challenge, which

was eventually accepted for the hardcore based gimmick pay per view.

In other words, it's the exact same thing that Rollins did when he set up his match with Randy Orton at Extreme Rules 2015. That's bad storytelling all around because you could call out every single thing that was going to happen in the opening twenty minutes of this show from the second that Sheamus kicked Reigns in the face the night before.

That's where Raw is having its biggest issues right now: it's so predictable. They have been using this same format for so many years and you can just swap in the characters you want. Why should I care that Sheamus is now going to be HHH and Stephanie's lapdog instead of Rollins? Now we get to see Sheamus go out and work really hard in a match so he can get the Authority's praises and go see them like a four year old that wants his dad's approval. You could see the Authority talking down to everyone again with Stephanie ripping Reigns' balls off because that's all she does these days.

Of course there will be no repercussions because the Authority is on a higher plane than everyone else so they can't be touched. HHH might do a match at Wrestlemania and put someone over (Unless they're Brock Lesnar because then the fans needed to see HHH get his precious win back. Or if they're Sting and the fans weren't absolutely certain who won the Monday Night Wars, which the match was about because Stephanie said so.) but it's happening once a year because HHH is too busy doing wacky fun stuff like dancing to make the crowd cheer or bequeathing the Pedigree to Rollins so Seth can get a rub.

The Authority taking one loss every few months doesn't change anything about them. It makes them look like they're treating a top star like a charity case. If Rollins or Reigns beat them at Wrestlemania, it would change absolutely nothing because HHH would go into war mode for a big rematch that no one would care about because the Authority will be right back to normal with their charity of the month and doing nice things for the crowd because they're faces one week and serious businessmen the next week. As long as those two stay over though, Raw has accomplished its main goal. Until that changes, Raw isn't getting better.



As for the actual story of the night, Rusev came down and attacked Reigns to set up the main event. Yeah after all that, we get a match that has no real drama and will only end in a DQ or Reigns getting a pin. There's also nothing on the line and the new champion isn't in action. Therefore, there's no reason to watch. Reigns is part of the problem here but it's much more that it's a predictable story. The fans have learned that this kind of story isn't going anywhere until at least after TLC because we're going to have the Authority interfere and let Sheamus keep the title, setting up the Rumble. Why watch until then at the earliest?

The Dudley Boyz beat the Wyatts via DQ in a quick match. This seems to set up a feud, which makes me shake my head even more. If you were moving the Wyatts into a feud with the Dudleyz, do a Survivor Series match the night before with the Dudleyz, Bray and Strowman getting counted out or disqualified, leaving you to do the same finish that you did with Harper taking the final fall. It sets up the feud and protects Bray while still giving us the Undertaker moment. Everyone wins, but as usual we got the lamer idea because that's how WWE works.

Sasha Banks pinned Becky Lynch with a handful of trunks (which Cole was too busy schilling stuff to notice). After that WAY too long opener and all the Undertaker videos, this got four minutes. "Yeah we want you to revolutionize the division. Here's four minutes with no mic time or a character for either of you. Go rock it!"

Then the New Day came out and made fun of country music for about ten minutes. This was supposed to include an open challenge but New Day canceled it when the Lucha Dragons tried to accept. The Usos came out as well and it seemed to be setting up a three way match (possibly with a ladder and probably the Ascension) at TLC, but there was nothing tonight. In other words, more time being wasted on something that doesn't really go anywhere.

However, there's one more major thing here: Kofi said that he hated country music and it wasn't even his character talking because he REALLY hated country music. How do you even respond to that? I understand the kayfabe is dead, but this is running out there and holding up a big sign that says "HEY! YOU DO KNOW THIS IS ALL FAKE RIGHT??? LIKE, KOFI KINGSTON

IS TOTALLY A NICE GUY AND YOU DON'T NEED TO GET ANNOYED AT US OVER HIM!"

This screamed of trying to make it seem like Kofi was a jerk instead of just having him play one and letting us get immersed in it. The idea has worked for years but now we have to tinker with it for some reason because the fans are too smart. Yeah there are smarter fans, but there are also a lot of fans who either aren't smartened up (they're called kids) or a bunch of fans that like to be swept up in the whole idea (they're called the majority). Stop trying to reinvent the wheel.

Neville pinned Mark Henry in a quick match. Henry showed him respect after the match and that was that. This might be the start of a Henry retirement angle but as of now it seems like another match that didn't mean much. I like that actually as it's nice to just have a match for a change instead of having an angle and a story involved in every single thing that happens.

The Prime Time Players and Goldust beat the Ascension and Stardust. It was short and it was meaningless, but in this case it was boring. Not everything can work.

Del Rio and Colter did their weekly thing and no one cares. Like seriously, no one cares. It's the most boring thing on the show every week and I have no idea where it's supposed to go. Colter is awesome on the mic but he's got NOTHING to work with here. Oh and then Swagger came down and went after Del Rio again. This brings up another problem for WWE: they give someone a gimmick and that's what they're stuck with for good. This feud could have gone to anyone that they make into a patriot but instead we're getting Swagger, who will lose in the end because that's what Swagger does.

Charlotte and Paige had a much better rematch than the mess they had the previous night. They actually acted like they wanted to hurt each other instead of having a lame wrestling match, which made for a much better story. The ending helped as well with a double countout to likely set up a big brawl at TLC. It makes you wonder what they were thinking at the first pay per view match, but it was probably them letting them calm down after the whole Reid Flair fiasco.

Ryback beat up Heath Slater in another filler segment. Not a match of course, but a segment.

Ambrose/Ziggler beat Owens/Breeze in ANOTHER midcard tag match that barely went anywhere. This was to help set up Owens vs. Ambrose for the title, so of course Breeze had to take yet another pin. Breeze is another great example of a guy that has been crippled coming out of the gate because he's a fresh name for the bigger stars to beat and since they only know a few ways to build up a challenger (beat the champ or beat the same guy over and over), this is what we're stuck with.

Then Reigns beat Rusev via DQ in a long, dull main event with King Barrett interfering. Did this mean that Reigns was fighting more adversity? Of course not as he cleaned out Sheamus, Barrett and Rusev AFTER they beat him down. That's how the show ends: with Reigns looking like he's about to deal with even more midcard goons who aren't going to beat him before he gets to fight for the title, where I'm sure he'll get ripped off again before he wins the Rumble and likely fights Lesnar and wins the title at Wrestlemania XXXII.

In other words, we're going another few months before Reigns finally gets there. The problem is we've been doing that same story for over a year now and the fans are on the verge of giving up on him. There's a large group of fans that want to see Reigns, but so many of them are just fed up with having him lose and then deal with some midcard feud before going after the title again and then starting another midcard feud when he gets screwed over. They need to do something and do it soon because this stuff is really old.

Overall Raw was a total mess. In addition to the completely predictable opening and main event developments, we have the huge gaping holes due to all the injuries. Since this is WWE, we certainly can't give the other Divas match more time or bring in some people from NXT for a showcase match or an angle that changes things up a bit. No instead we're getting Heath Slater and New Day making fun of country music because it makes Vince laugh.

The big idea here is that the show is stale. It's the same formula and

the same ideas that we've seen forever but there's no indication that they're going to switch it up. We're at the point where Raw opening with a match is considered shaking things up. How am I supposed to get excited for a show when I have to wait twenty minutes to get to the first match because HHH needs to say "I told you so" and Stephanie needs to screech at whoever she's adding to her collection this year? How is that good television?

Apparently a lot of people don't think it is either and the ratings are showing it. Another bad show this week and something they need to fix in a hurry before it gets even worse. It's something they could fix easily too, which makes the shows that much more frustrating. Just stop doing the same stuff over and over and the show will feel better, which is half the battle already.

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# Bash at the Beach 2000 (2015 Redo): Your New Hero

**Bash at the Beach 2000**

Date: July 9, 2000

Location: Ocean Center, Daytona Beach, Florida

Attendance: 6,572

Commentators: Tony Schiavone, Scott Hudson, Mark Madden

Oh boy. After all those nice weeks of no Russo and/or Bischoff to screw things up, tonight we're back to the old ways because this wrestling and storytelling stuff must be stopped at all costs. It's a double main event of Goldberg vs. Kevin Nash for Scott Hall's contract and Hulk Hogan challenging Jeff Jarrett for the World Title. Let's get to it.

Cat sends Smooth the Limo Driver to tell the Filthy Animals and the Misfits in Action that they're banned from ringside during the Cruiserweight Title match. The Jung Dragons show up and attack Cat, likely trying to get more money. See, now this is the kind of idea that doesn't need to be here but makes SO much more sense with the context of watching Thunder. Unfortunately WCW doesn't explain anything of it, thinking that everyone saw the one off segment that set it up.

The opening video is just stills of the four men in the two main events. No narration or anything, but it does have shots of Jarrett's fat women.

We get some very lame pyro as Penzer is in a beach shirt.

#### Cruiserweight Title: Juventud Guerrera vs. Lieutenant Loco

Loco is defending but Juvy stole the belt on Thunder. Konnan tells Juvy to keep the title and wants Disco/Rey to go after the Tag Team Titles. The seconds are all sent out but the Animals stick around for a bit instead. Tony: "The bell has sounded in this sports entertainment opening bout." Loco clotheslines him to the floor to start and it's already time to stall.

Madden tries to figure out what was up with the Dragons so Scott, who seems to actually watch Thunder, explains the story. Mark has nothing in response, basically making this a quick production meeting for him. Back in and Juvy fires off some right hands but gets taken down into an armbar. Loco is wrestling a much slower paced style here which is normally the heel Cruiserweight Champion style.

Juvy blocks a charge with an elbow but a double cross body puts both of

them down. Back up again and Chavo sends him to the floor for a big plancha as we've got the Filthy Animals in masks because we're on a Russo show and two talented guys wrestling are going is going to bore the fans and make them change the channel FROM A PAY PER VIEW THEY ALREADY BOUGHT.

The Animals are taken to the back as Juvy drops a slingshot legdrop to the floor (thankfully not breaking his tailbone like Johnny the Bull). Back in and a springboard splash gets two for Juvy and a sunset Liger Bomb gets the same. Cue General Rection as Bill Clinton (just go with it) as a distraction for Major Gunns to come down (now with thong sticking out because Lita was doing it at the time) and get Juvy's attention. The plan mostly works as Loco grabs a sitout reverse gordbuster (called a reverse powerslam by Hudson) for two. Loco's tornado DDT retains the title a few seconds later.

**Rating:** C. This is one of Russo's big problems summed up in one match. You had two talented guys who could put on a match that people wanted to see but instead here's a WACKY idea of the two teams interfering with masks on in a story development that doesn't mean a thing. Yeah Rection was dressed like Bill Clinton. How is that funny, interesting, noteworthy or ANYTHING besides something else to take the focus off the match? It's a simple case of "Russo doesn't get it".

The Cat imitates Chris Tucker from Rush Hour as he tries to tell the Jung Dragons that it's over. Jarrett comes in to ask where Hogan is because his fat viking woman is ready to sing. Total TV scene. Hogan isn't here yet either and Jarrett is clearly wearing the replica title (notice the big black outline).

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

Vito is defending in this unannounced match with mystery challengers. Tony explains that the match is supposed to start in the back and then come to the ring. Those sound a lot like rules. Vito hammers away with the stick on Ralphus and then sends Norman into the barricade. They go backstage so now I guess they can fight back into the arena so the match can end in the ring. Ralphus gets in some trashcan shots to the head for what might have been his first offense in history.

Some trashcan lid shots (you have to mix it up) have no effect on Vito so it's time for the plastic dinnerware to come into play. Norman is thrown into a service elevator, leaving Vito to beat Ralphus back to the ring. That means it's table time but it's broken before it's even thrown in. Vito splashes him through it anyway and retains the title as Norman comes back, only to be a hardcore loser all over again.

**Rating:** D-. Well thank goodness this got pay per view time. Norman, one of the most popular acts in the company for a few months, is still right where he was before and the heatless Vito keeps the title even longer with no one to challenge him. Bad match here as you would expect, but keep this stuff on Thunder where it belongs if you just have to do it.

Goldberg arrives with Hall's contract in his pocket.

Nash says he hasn't been nice lately and tonight he's getting his friend back.

We recap Daffney vs. Miss Hancock, which is actually one of the better stories they're running at the moment. David Flair and Daffney were engaged but he cheated on her with Miss Hancock (who was his real life girlfriend at the time). Daffney had her head shaved earlier this week so tonight it's a wedding gown match for no apparent reason other than to have Hancock in limited clothing.

#### Miss Hancock vs. Daffney

There's a wedding cake at ringside and the announcers acknowledge that it's going to be destroyed. David is here with Hancock and they kiss before the match to drive Daffney crazier. That earns Flair a low blow and we start fast. Hopefully it ends fast as well. Hancock does a handspring elbow as they're fighting in slow motion. Daffney keeps flipping her for the upskirt shots but David prevents Hancock from going into the cake.

The referee gets hit low and pantsed (with Tony pointing out how fast Hancock can get a man's pants off). David gets the same treatment and we get the face first fall onto the crotch. They go after Daffney's hair but Crowbar makes the save. Crowbar takes his own pants off and gives David

the Mind Bender (Tony has forgotten the name from four days ago) as the women have disappeared. David is about to get shaved so Hancock strips to save him and end the match. I'm sure this was in no way, shape or form inspired by Patterson and Brisco having an evening gown match last month.

**Rating:** F. I get the idea here and I'm not going to complain about Hancock in limited clothing, but this gets old in about ten seconds. After that it stops being fun and entertaining and you're asking yourself what the heck am I watching. That happened WAY too often in WCW around this time and it becomes much more embarrassing than entertaining. This is the lowest common denominator and that's rarely quality television.

Crowbar and the referee sit down to watch but it's cake time instead.

The Dragons sneak up on Cat, though he's tipped off by the Japanese music playing. Cat is worried that Hogan hasn't arrived yet and thinks O'x Baker might be available.

The announcers talk about Hogan not being here as we clean up the ring from Russo's latest fantasy fulfillment. The ring must be very dirty as they go over Hogan bring in Shaquille O'Neal back in 1994 and then the formation of the NWO. We see the mats being picked up as the crew pours bottles of water onto the ground and wipe it up. THEY CAN'T AFFORD A MOP???

#### Tag Team Titles: Perfect Event vs. Kronik

Perfect Event is defending, even though Brian Adams and a production guy pinned them on Thunder but now Adams has Clark back. Adams and Palumbo (Palumbi according to Tony) get things going and it's Chuck quickly being sent to the floor. Stasiak is thrown on top of him as well, which Madden says is like throwing a Frisbee. Mark Madden has never thrown a Frisbee has he?

Now the champs have cake on their trunks because WCW can't even destroy a cake properly. Clark beats Stasiak up and gives him a release Rock Bottom before bringing Adams back in. Tony wants to know if Kronik will be happy with a simple win. Does anyone even remember what their issue is at this point or how the champs got the titles in the first place? Better yet,



does it matter? Palumbo low bridges Adams to the floor and gets in a chair shot to take over.

We hit a sleeper as the fans are behind Kronik. That's not boring enough so it's off to Stasiak for a sleeper of his own. Back up and they hit heads (allegedly), setting up the tag to Clark as everything breaks down. Palumbo DDTs his way out of the Meltdown and Stasiak clotheslines Clark off the apron. Clark gets double teamed back inside and we get a really awkward exchange where he looks at the champs as if to say "ok, it's your spot now."

Adams breaks up a cover off a double flapjack and F5's Shawn, setting up High Times. There's a rumble that sounds like a motorcycle but doesn't lead anywhere. Probably fans leaving this boring show. Palumbo takes High Times as well and a powerbomb/top rope clothesline combination (better move than the double chokeslam) gives Kronik the belts back. There's smoke around the ring for no apparent reason.

**Rating:** D. Not the worst match in the world here but still the same boring match the Perfect Event has been having for weeks now. At least Kronik is a more interesting team who can have a watchable power match. Perfect Event is just flat out boring and I'm glad they've dropped the belts, even though they only held them for a few weeks.

The Cat hears the Dragons' music AGAIN when Jarrett comes in AGAIN, claiming that he's bored. Jarrett promises to screw with the show and leaves, allowing the Dragons to appear and attack Cat. Scott has to explain the story to Madden AGAIN.

#### Booker T. vs. Positively Canyon

Tony calls this the sixth match because the show has dulled his abilities to count. Booker headlocks him to start and scores with the spinning kick to the face. Some elbows and a dropkick put Canyon down again and there goes Canyon's shirt. Booker finds the brick in the book though Canyon didn't see that it's been removed.

Kanyon sends him out to the floor and a whip puts Booker into the barricade. That's enough for the wrestling so Kanyon crushes Booker's arm

under the steps and baseball slides Booker's ribs into the post. The apron superplex gets two and Canyon wedges chair in the corner for later. Canyon puts on a reverse Boston crab but is quickly pushed into a rollup for two.

That means it's time for a book to the head for two more because there's no brick. Naturally picking up a book or a book with a brick inside feels EXACTLY the same and Canyon just didn't notice. Booker pops up with the kicks for two each, followed by the Book End for another near fall. This brings out Jeff Jarrett with the guitar (he was bored remember) to knock Booker out, setting up a middle rope Canyon Cutter for the pin.

**Rating:** C+. Match was fine until the TV ending. Canyon's offense really was different enough to make you pay attention and it was cool to see him win a big match, but assuming WCW knows what's coming tonight, the ending here is questionable at best. Still though, best match on the show by about a mile so far.

Mike Awesome is hitting on the overweight viking chick when Pamela comes in to ask about Scott Steiner. Awesome promises a win and insults Pamela before leaving.

#### US Title: Mike Awesome vs. Scott Steiner

Steiner is defending and dives onto Awesome (who, like Steiner, is in black trunks with red lettering) but gets sent into the crowd for a dive over the barricade. Awesome gets in a trashcan shot but takes it back to ringside with Steiner in control. They get inside for the first time for a belly to belly superplex to give Scott the first near fall.

Steiner stays on the back but Awesome takes it right back to the floor for a chair shot to the ribs. A bell to the head means it's time to look at a fan holding up a sign about Awesome's mullet. More chair shots set up a slingshot splash for two and here's the Cat for no apparent reason. Steiner fights back and loads up the Recliner but Cat reminds us that it's illegal.

The distraction lets Awesome get two off an Alabama Slam, followed by the Awesome Splash for the same. There goes the referee so Cat comes in and

superkicks Awesome by mistake. Steiner's belly to belly sets up the Recliner so Cat strips him of the title and calls for the DQ. Scott really doesn't seem to care and the announcers have no idea if Awesome is champion or not.

**Rating:** C-. So Awesome doesn't seem to get the title (he wouldn't), Steiner doesn't care, and Cat is apparently only a heel when he's dealing with Steiner. This is more wasting of the US Title because Steiner clearly doesn't care about it after spending months barely acknowledging that he was champion at all. The title has been worthless for years now but this made it even worse.

Steiner beats Awesome up and celebrates anyway.

### Vampiro vs. The Demon

This is in a graveyard (Or maybe a big graveyard set. Would you put it past WCW to rent one for something this big?) and you win by getting back to the arena first. No word on how far the graveyard is from the arena so this match might require a bus trip from Branson, Missouri. Assuming the graveyard is in the same city as the arena (would you really put it past WCW to have it be somewhere else?), there's always the chance that the wrestlers will get lost on the streets of Daytona Beach. Vampiro dives out of a tree to attack Demon....and now we have no light.

A superkick puts Demon down and Vampiro, clearly on a microphone, tells Demon to join him. Asya kicks Vampiro in the back and they fight into an open grave for a bit. You can barely see anything here and Vampiro chases Asya off. Demon gets out of the grave and the match has become a footrace.

Vampiro throws him in the water and Asya is rocking back and forth. She gets dragged off again until Demon gets out of the water as Tony brings up the fact that they have no idea where the graveyard is. Demon finds Asya next to a coffin but Vampiro pops out and sprays mist in his face. Vampiro says join him or die but Demon says no, only to get hit in the head with a tombstone and knocked into the coffin. Vampiro leaves and we cut to an interview, so screw the rules for the "match".

**Rating:** N/A. I'm not rating this because this had nothing to do with wrestling. This was a scene out of some weird horror movie that Russo probably saw back in 1993 and decided to recreate it on his show. I mean.....what is there to say about this? They were fighting in a graveyard, then in a pond, then one guy got knocked into a grave. I can't believe I'm saying this but the evening gown match had WAY more value than this did. Total waste of time, much like everything else Vampiro does.

Shane Douglas promises to beat Buff Bagwell tonight.

You can win a sweepstakes and become Goldberg's manager. I've heard worse ideas.

### Shane Douglas vs. Buff Bagwell

Another feud where I don't think most fans remember why they're fighting in the first place, though Hudson does at least explain it. Buff starts a FRANCHISE SUCKS chant and is already doing more than most people on this show to get the fans to care. Often times it's something as simple as telling them to chant something. The fans are made part of the show, which is more than you can say the majority of the wrestlers tonight have done.

The fight quickly heads outside with Shane being sent into the barricade but coming back with what was probably a low blow. The mats are peeled back but Shane can't pull off a piledriver. Buff kicks him in the ribs, only to have Shane punch a chair into his face. They head inside for a crank on Bagwell's still bad neck but here's the returning Torrie Wilson to slap Shane. She's going to turn on Bagwell in.....I'll say two minutes or less.

Torrie stays on the apron as Bagwell makes his comeback before getting in to kick him low (didn't even make it a minute). The Pittsburgh Plunge gives Shane two but Torrie breaks up the Blockbuster, allowing Shane to debut the Franchiser (a lame jawbreaker) for the pin, with tights of course because Shane is a heel.

**Rating:** D. The match was boring and the swerve was the most predictable

in a LONG time (which is covering a lot in WCW terms) but Torrie looked better than usual (which is also covering a lot) and it's always good to see Bagwell take a beating for some reason. Bad match but Torrie is a better valet than Tammy at this point anyway.

Shane and Torrie kiss some more.

Hogan has finally arrived.

Jarrett says he has allies tonight.

Quick recap of Jarrett and the fat viking women. It still makes no sense and goes WAY too far for the sake of a joke.

WCW World Title: Hulk Hogan vs. Jeff Jarrett

Hogan is challenging. There's no Jarrett at first so here's Vince Russo. Jarrett comes out and so does Hogan to make it look like we're ready to go. Jeff is standing on the stage though and I have a bad feeling this isn't ending well. The bell rings and Jeff lays down because SCREW YOU RUSSO. Hogan says this is why WCW is in the place it's in and covers Jarrett for the pin and the title. We'll be coming back to this later so I'll go into it after the other stuff.

The announcers talk about how this couldn't have been what was scripted. Those lines make my head hurt badly enough so I'll skip the usual ranting about how stupid this is.

And now, Vampiro is back! So the match is now officially done, putting it at about thirty minutes. Vampiro says the dark circle is now complete and Dale Torborg is gone. Cue eight guys in Sting masks carrying a coffin. Someone who might be Sting (but clearly isn't due to the hair length) jumps out and beats Vampiro with the bat before throwing him into the coffin. This would be another story that I never want to think about again.

Goldberg is trying really hard not to rip up the contract. This is about a week and a half after he ate the thing so this speech is kind of hard to buy.

Here's Russo, who is booed out of the building. Not likely because of what his character did but because of the bait and switch he just booked. Russo talks about leaving three weeks ago but the fans rip into him before he can get anywhere. He didn't know if he was going to come back because of all the politics backstage. Remember that he debuted in WCW roughly eight months ago and only returned three months earlier. Based on the way he talked, you would think he had been dealing with it for twenty years.

Russo came back for all of the boys in the locker room like Booker T., (given a military gimmick that wasn't going anywhere), everyone in MIA (Given another lame military gimmick based around sex puns and Major Gunns taking off her top. Oh and Pops. Don't forget Pops.), for the Filthy Animals (spinning their wheels for months) and for Jarrett (no explanation needed on that).

So he cares about them, just not enough to make them into anything important. None of the old guys like Hogan care about this place because he's just a politician. Hogan wanted to play his creative control card tonight, meaning he gets to win the World Title. That's the last time you'll ever see Hogan in WCW (it truly was) but no one is going home disappointed tonight (oh I doubt that). Tonight, there's going to be a new WCW World Title, which still belongs to Jarrett as far as Russo is concerned.

Russo says Jarrett is one of the only people who comes out here and works hard whether you love him or hate him (True. Jarrett gets a lot of flack but he's one of the few main eventers who does seem to work hard every single week. He's a lame World Champion, but undoubtedly a talented guy.).

Tonight, Jarrett is defending against someone who has been fighting for a spot in WCW "for fourteen years." Booker has only been wrestling for eleven years at this point and debuted in WCW in 1993 so we can add math to the things that Russo is horrible at. Russo promises that Booker and Jeff will tear the house down tonight and leaves.

Where do you start with this? First of all, there have been a ton of

explanations for what happened here but the most common that you'll hear is most of it was a work but it turned into a semi-shoot. Hogan was allegedly scheduled to come back in roughly three months and side with Bischoff against Russo's new champion, leading to a big match down the line. Not the most interesting idea in the world but I can go with that.

That brings us to Russo's shoot, which was supposed to set up Hogan leaving before he came back. Allegedly Russo went too far and Hogan got ticked off, resulting in him sitting at home. Therefore, Hogan is gone and Russo gets to look like a hero after finding a way to get rid of Hogan and putting Booker in the title picture. There's likely a wrong detail or two in there, but it's the best I can figure out.

Here's where the whole thing stops working for me (not on the story of it, but on why this is a bad idea): it's all about Russo. What do people remember about this show? Russo's shoot. Who is supposed to come out looking like a hero after weeks and months of being the star villain of the show? Russo. The World Champion coming into this show was Jeff Jarrett and he looks like the biggest afterthought in history as he was mentioned in the same breath as the Misfits in Action during that speech.

Yeah in all this chaos, Vince Russo is the one that comes off looking good. No matter what happens in this company, you can count on Russo being the star because he builds the whole thing around him. Whether it's hanging on in the Figure Four for over a minute and completely defeating Ric Flair or getting rid of the horrible Hulk Hogan here, Russo is the big star in the whole thing and it's not going to help any of the problems.

Another reason it won't: as usual, NONE OF THIS MADE SENSE TO THE FANS! Common questions you probably heard asked in the crowd during and immediately after this speech: "What's creative control?" "Backstage politics?" "What is he talking about?" This story is still confusing fifteen years and a lot of details later. For the live fans, they just saw the World Champion get pinned in an angle that they saw nine months earlier at Halloween Havoc 1999.

Big angle or not, it's a bait and switch. Booker T. getting the shot is

cool, but that's not what the fans paid to see. There are probably a lot of people (of the six thousand in the arena) who wanted to see Hogan in the ring and they got ripped off. I know it's probably better long term (or at least it would have been two or three years ago) but if Hogan was advertised, they should have had him do the match somehow. Instead it's yet another case where people are going to say WCW is making this up as it goes and the stories make no sense while changing the channel to see what Rock and HHH are doing this week.

Overall, it's another bad idea in a long list of them from Russo. As usual, it's a big angle over a big match and the old guys and/or Russo are the ones who look good at the end of the day. The fans didn't want to see whatever insane angle they had going here because that's not what they signed up for. Maybe this works as a standalone angle at a different time, but WCW had lost any and all credibility at this point and another big shoot angle was the worst thing they could have done here. I'm sure we'll hear more about it on Nitro, but this really doesn't hold up on its own.

The announcers are stunned.

We recap Goldberg vs. Kevin Nash which is over Scott Hall's contract. Goldberg ate it at one point (which is shown in the recap video) but had it again the next week. It made as much sense as anything else at this point. Goldberg hates the Outsiders for whatever reason and is trying to kill them once and for all.

Scott Steiner says he's too busy to have Nash's back. Just turn him now.

### Kevin Nash vs. Goldberg

The contract is all crumpled up after being perfect the last time we saw it. Goldberg slugs him down in the corner and gets two off a suplex. A superkick gets the same but Nash comes back with a chokeslam for two of his own. Cue Steiner and Midajah to play cheerleader. Nash stops a charge with a boot and sidesteps the spear, meaning it's time to take down the straps. Steiner comes in to turn on Nash, allowing the spear and Jackhammer to put Nash away in less than six minutes.



**Rating:** D-. Another lame match after way too much buildup because Nash can't deliver on the checks his mouth writes. Steiner turning on Nash was obvious from the second that he came to the ring because in Russo's world, you expect the swerve instead of being surprised by it. They couldn't do the epic style a year and a half ago and no one thought they could here either.

Goldberg tears the contract up as Steiner puts Nash in the Recliner.

Booker says he's ready.

The announcers preview the main event with Madden saying Jarrett is the kind of guy that Hogan held down. Yeah the four time World Champion was held down.

#### WCW World Title: Booker T. vs. Jeff Jarrett

Jarrett is defending, though I guess you could say the title is vacant as well. I know Russo's world is screwy but a champion getting pinned in a title match means the title changed in some way to me. Jarrett's music cuts off Buffer's big introduction for Booker. The title is bent at the top again and it's clearly the original belt. They fight over a headlock to start and there are a lot of empty seats for this one.

Booker sends him out to the floor as the announcers talk about the formation of the New Blood leading to this. Back in and a side kick has Jeff in more trouble and they fight into the crowd to kill some time. Jarrett gets sent into a wall but comes back with a chair shot at ringside. Jeff piledrives him onto the table, which doesn't break. Scott: "They finally got the construction right on this thing!"

We hit the chinlock to slow things down before Jeff starts in on the leg. The Figure Four has Booker in trouble but he turns it over without too much trouble. A cannonball misses Booker's leg and there are even more empty seats now. Booker's spinebuster gets two but he misses the side kick and hits the ropes. The referee goes down and Jeff misses a belt shot, allowing Booker to nail Jeff for a close two. Some hero.

Jeff puts a chair in the corner but gets sent into it head first for two

more. Jeff beats up the referee and gives him a Stroke (without ever leaving his feet) but the top rope guitar shot is caught in the Book End to give Booker the pin and the title to a legitimately strong reaction. Well from the people still here.

**Rating:** B. Well they didn't tear the house down but they did have a good match. Booker winning the title is about a year too late but it's cool to see someone young (35) get the title for a change. It certainly can't save the show because it's taking a big backseat to the big story. Booker is a better option than Jeff as he's far more likeable, but it's just too late to do much good.

Booker is overcome with emotion to end the show.

**Overall Rating:** D. As good as it is to get rid of Hogan and as good as it is to have Booker as champion, the long and boring Perfect Event match, the wedding gown match, the stuff in the graveyard, all Russo all the time and all the interference really drag this down. It's certainly not the worst show from a quality perspective but for every problem Russo fixes, he creates ten more. That's the thing dragging the show down at this point and Booker as champion is nowhere near enough to fix that.

If you need to sum up the problem here, it's the shoot being what people remember most from this show. In other words, they remember Russo and the shenanigans instead of Booker taking the title in a good match (longest of the night as well, clocking in at 13:40). It's always about the drama and insanity in WCW and that can't work long term. It didn't in the WWF and it's not going to here, but it's all Russo knew so that's all we're going to get. Well that and Russo, because the show is still all about him.

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# Thunder – July 5, 2000: And So, It Ends

## Thunder

Date: July 5, 2000

Location: Civic Center, Columbus, Georgia

Attendance: 3,088

Commentators: Bobby Heenan, Mike Tenay, Tony Schiavone

It's the go home show for Bash at the Beach, meaning my moderate smile about WCW is about to go away. We're still in the "Can Jeff Jarrett build a whole main event by himself, even though it's a boring match in the first place?" phase which amazingly enough isn't working because Jeff Jarrett is one of the least interesting World Champions WCW has had in the last three months. Of the five guys to hold the title since early April, he's like the fourth most interesting at best. Let's get to it.

Standard Nitro recap to open things up. Enjoy this while it lasts.

Jarrett yells at the Cat about ratings and they keep insulting each other. Cat's decision is to put Jarrett on the show tonight. Why in the world is Jeff Jarrett vs. the Cat the main feud on this show?

Here's Jarrett to say THE EXACT SAME THINGS HE ALWAYS SAYS before talking about how he was told there was no time for him on the show this week. Tonight he's going to retire Hulk Hogan but here's Cat to interrupt. Cat is tired of hearing Jarrett go on and on (the Cat speaks for the people) so tonight he's putting him in the ring. Then he's going to put on a

karate demonstration. Back to Jarrett, Cat is going to make Booker T./Buff Bagwell vs. Canyon/Shane Douglas with the person getting the fall earning a title shot tonight. I've heard worse ideas, even though this isn't very good.

Stasiak and Palumbo got into tanning beds earlier today and Woody turned them all the way up. What is up with this Woody guy? Is there no one else on the roster that could have used this to get somewhere? Maybe set up a challenger for the Tag Team Titles? No instead let's go with a production guy who isn't going to have a match. The bits are entertaining but this isn't getting anyone anywhere.

Jarrett still wants Hogan. As he rants, Canyon lays out a production guy with a Canyon Cutter.

#### Rey Mysterio vs. Kidman vs. Lance Storm vs. Disco Inferno

One fall to a finish. Since this is WCW, the Animals' name plate says Tygress is accompanying them but they come out alone. Storm gets jumped during his entrance as we're waiting on Kidman to show up. Kidman finally hits the ring for the save and starts with Storm for a nice pinfall reversal sequence which is probably going to be the best thing on the show.

Mysterio elbows Kidman from behind though and Disco comes in to bring the quality down. Storm blocks a Bronco Buster with a raised boot, only to have Disco come in and try to steal a pin. Rey is fine with beating up his normal partner but Storm comes back in to break that up. A springboard legdrop gets two on Lance and everything breaks down. Disco piledrives Kidman for two but Storm grabs the half crab to make Disco tap.

**Rating:** C+. This was a lot more fun than I was expecting with all four guys (yes even Disco) moving around as much as they could in the four minutes they had. They're probably lucky to get that given how much time this show needs to dedicate to everything else they have going on.

Buff promises he'll go into Sunday as champion. The idea of Bagwell vs. Hogan as the main event of a pay per view makes me smile.

Buff is working on his own book called Positively Canyon's Greatest Moments. Chapter One: Canyon Sucks. Chapter Two: Canyon Still Sucks. Chapter Three: Canyon Sucks Again. This was funnier than it should have been.

Perfect Event is let out of their tanning beds and look like they fell in buckets of red paint. Palumbo wants his mommy as Stasiak is told Woody did this.

Here's the Cat for his karate demonstration with opponents....the Jung Dragons. They're Asian and therefore know martial arts you see. The Dragons jump Cat to start and take him down with a variety of kicks, setting up Jamie's middle rope legdrop. Well that lasted longer than I was expecting. Cat bails and says this isn't respectful enough. The Dragons are dumb enough to bow and all three get kicked in the face. Jamie's missile dropkick slows Cat down for a bit but he kicks them all again and throws Kaz over the top by the crotch. All three Dragons are sent to the floor and Cat says that's enough, meaning DANCE TIME!

Perfect Event goes after Woody in the production truck. Woody promises that he'll have an army. Gee I wonder who that's going to be.

Cat pays the Dragons and says he hasn't had that much fun in a long time. Ok then.

#### Hardcore Title: Big Vito vs. The Demon

Demon is challenging. Vito attacks the coffin in the back but gets jumped by Demon. Hardcore master Vito comes back by throwing Demon into a wall and bringing him out to the set for a ram into....whatever those metal things on the set are. Vito puts a trashcan lid between Demon's legs and stomps down on it before getting a piece of plywood. Was the table making union on strike this week?

As you might expect, Vito is thrown through the wood instead, followed by a middle rope elbow for two. This brings out Vampiro because this story is still going for some reason. Demon dropkicks a chair into Vito's face (close enough) but Vampiro breaks a shovel over Demon's back to give Vito the easy pin.

**Rating:** D. Vito's hardcore stuff isn't entertaining, anything Vampiro does is stupid at this point and no one ever cared about the Demon. This is the kind of stuff that could have been cut out to give the four way more time (maybe make it an elimination match) but WCW has a bad tendency to try and fit everything they can into one show. That's rarely a good idea because most of the stuff doesn't have the time to develop and we get stupid ideas like this.

Mike Awesome shows doctored footage that makes it look like he beat Rick Steiner on Monday. Gene calls him a mullock (trash) but Awesome hears him, scaring Gene half to death.

Shane and Kanyon argue over who is going to win tonight. Kanyon tries a Kanyon Cutter but Shane stares him down.

Here's the Perfect Event with Stasiak slapping his partner on the back to make Palumbo cringe. They DEMAND Woody come out here right now so here he is, removing his shirt to reveal that he is in fact not a wrestler. As you might expect, Woody has some backup.

#### Brian Adams/Woody vs. Perfect Event

Non-title. Adams fights out of a double team to start thanks to Woody slapping Palumbo on the back. A powerbomb sends Stasiak onto Palumbo and Adams kicks Shawn in the face for good measure. Woody offers a double back slap to break up another double team, allowing Adams to full nelson slam Palumbo. A chokeslam (called High Times thanks to Woody) lets Woody pin Stasiak. Yeah a production guy just pinned a Tag Team Champion and I'm supposed to want to see Kronik fight them on Sunday.

Vito beats up Funk and leaves the arena.

#### Buff Bagwell/Booker T. vs. Shane Douglas/Kanyon

Whoever gets the fall gets a title shot tonight. Kanyon shoves Booker from behind and gets double teamed for his efforts. This brings up the question of whether Douglas should help his partner or not, which actually merits some discussion. Granted it's not a discussion you're going to get here but it could be interesting. A double suplex drops

Kanyon and Booker officially starts with him. The assorted kicks keep Kanyon in trouble but Shane won't tag in. That ends the interesting psychology discussion and goes right to stupid as you can't get the fall if you're not legal.

Buff comes in for a DDT but a Shane distraction (how hard can it be to distract Bagwell?) lets Kanyon get in a Russian legsweep. Shane still won't tag in so Kanyon gets two off a neckbreaker. Buff elbows him out of the corner and drops a Vader Bomb (263 according to Tony. Huh?) followed by the Blockbuster but Shane makes the save. Booker comes in without a tag and Book Ends Kanyon for the pin and the title shot. Ignore Booker's music playing at two.

**Rating:** D. Shane being stupid aside, it's cool to see them actually push someone new. Of course Horace got a title shot last week so this could mean absolutely nothing. The problem is this is the kind of thing that they needed to do two years ago because now it means nothing. The match was nothing to see because again, it didn't have enough time after Woody's match.

MIA is given their orders for the night.

Daffney, now with red hair, is wearing a shirt that says step child.

Mike Awesome sprays something on Rick Steiner's glasses.

#### Tygress/Juventud Guerrera vs. Major Gunns/Lieutenant Loco

The guys start with Juvy grabbing a headscissors but having to stop to pull his pants up. Heenan: "Juvy looks like he's wearing the seat cover from a '69 Pinto." Loco's tilt-a-whirl backbreakers send Juvy crawling over to Tygress so it's time for the girls. Tygress tags out as well so Gunns takes off the shirt as a distraction to kick Juvy low. The catfight is on and Gunns does one of the worst slams I've ever seen. Loco lays out Juvy but another catfight breaks out. In the melee, Juvy hits Loco with the belt for the pin.

**Rating:** F+. These women are bad. Like, they're Eva Marie kinds of bad. It's ridiculous to call them wrestlers because this has nothing to do

with wrestling. We have two women out there because of how they look, trying to do moves to each other and failing miserably. Chavo vs. Juvy will be fine but this was another big waste of time with the women in there.

Juventud leaves with the title.

Steiner puts the glasses on and is almost blinded.

Booker says he'll win the title.

Video on Vampiro and the Demon.

Mike Tenay is at Jim Duggan's home for a sitdown interview. Duggan and his wife are glad that he's ok but he'll be back no matter what Russo does. Somehow this takes three minutes.

Crowbar jumps David Flair as Miss Hancock watches.

Jarrett insults Gene for general purposes.

Rick Steiner gets medical treatment.

We recap Crowbar/David/Hancock/Daffney.

### Crowbar vs. David Flair

Impromptu match. Crowbar throws David down the aisle but gets crotched on top. A superplex drops Crowbar and it's already time for the Figure Four. Hancock comes out to help but gets caught to force the break. Crowbar yells at the referee and gets shoved into a rollup for two as Hancock comes in, allowing the low blow from David. Cue Daffney for a tug of war so Hancock can roll backwards with her skirt coming up. Daffney goes for Hancock's hair and they run off, leaving Crowbar to hit David with the pipe. The Mind Bender (sitout gordbuster) puts David away.

Crowbar chokes David and threatens violence until David admits that he shaved Daffney's hair. Again: IT WAS ALL ON TAPE! David also admits to cheating on Daffney, sending her leaving in tears. This is actually a good story no matter how goofy it's been.



After a break, Hancock is getting checked out for a leg injury. David comes in and thinks something is up so the trainer gets his head shaved.

#### Rick Steiner vs. Mike Awesome

Rick's eyes seem to be fine as Awesome pounds him down. Some belly to bellys get two for Steiner and they head outside for a table. Mike sets it up in the corner and is quickly shoved through it, only to have Awesome spray the stuff in Rick's eyes again for an easy three count. The blinding stuff earlier in the night could have been completely omitted and nothing would have changed.

#### WCW World Title: Jeff Jarrett vs. Booker T.

Jarrett is defending. Heenan thinks winning the title might push Booker over the edge to being a big star. They trade shoulders to start until Booker clotheslines the champ to the floor. Jeff is sent into the announcers' table but comes right back with an early sleeper back inside. A quick knee crusher and the Figure Four have Booker in trouble.

That's way too early (and since it's the Figure Four it's not likely to win a big match) so Booker makes the rope and runs into a double clothesline. The ax kick sets up a spinebuster for two but here's Canyon with a Cutter on the floor to knock Booker silly. Jeff gets the pin but before he can even get in some good celebrating, Cat comes out to say not so fast. The champ is thrown back in and a rollup gives Booker two.

The missile dropkick gets the same with the foot going on the ropes (When Booker hooked the leg. I don't think I've ever seen that.). A side kick hits the referee by mistake so there's no one to count after the Book End. Cat is going to be referee and counts two off another kick. Jeff knocks Cat out with the guitar and walks out as another referee calls that a DQ to end the show.

**Rating:** C+. Good match marred by too much stuff going on at once. Cat vs. Jarrett is about as far down on the Austin vs. McMahon scale as you can get but you can see what's going on and the promos are adequate so it's still firmly above whatever Russo and Bischoff were doing. Booker felt right in this role for the simple reason of he's spent years being built

up. That's something so many people don't understand today: it's really hard to throw someone with no resume into the main event and expect it to work. Booker has been built up for about seven years at this point and it feels right to see him moving forward.

**Overall Rating:** D+. They really are trying to make Hogan feel like he doesn't matter here. It was so strange to not have Hogan, Nash or Goldberg around for an entire show as it was almost all about the young (well younger) guys for a change. That allowed for much better storytelling because you didn't have so much focus on the old guys wanting to be champion but putting in the least amount of effort possible. It's even more proof of what WCW could have been if they didn't have so much chaos going on backstage to screw the whole thing up.

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