

# Monday Night Raw – September 28, 2015: The Really Old Try

## Monday Night Raw

Date: September 28, 2015

Location: First Niagara Center, Buffalo, New York

Commentators: Byron Saxton, John Bradshaw Layfield, Michael Cole

Tonight is a packed show, headlined by the return of the US Open Challenge for John Cena's United States Title. It's always fun to see who is going to be accepting the challenge and probably having the best match of the night with Cena. In addition to that we'll have Becky Lynch and Paige on MizTV and fallout from Kane pulling Seth Rollins through the mat last week. Let's get to it.

We open with a recap of Seth Rollins' issues over the last week. His loss to Ambrose on Smackdown isn't mentioned because that show doesn't exist in the mainstream WWE universe. It's almost like that loss to Ambrose really didn't need to happen, at least not by pinfall.

Opening sequence.

Here's John Cena for the US Title open challenge. The fans aren't all that thrilled to see him though. Cena: "Have no fear because THE CHAMP IS HERE!" The challenge is on now. Instead of just one challenger though, all three members of New Day are here. They sing a little song about winning the US Title before Kofi says they might as well be called Team Scrooge McDuck because they're about to be swimming in gold. The concert isn't over yet because they sing NEW US CHAMPS to the tune of Cena's theme song. Cena wants one of them right now and it's time to be serious.

## US Title: John Cena vs. Xavier Woods

Cena gets right in Woods' face in the corner during the big match intros. The bell rings and Cena takes his head off with a clothesline two seconds in, sending Woods to the floor. Woods: "I WASN'T READY!" Big E. gets knocked off the apron and Kofi grabs Cena's foot to break up an early

Shuffle attempt. That earns both Kofi and Big E. an ejection and we take a break after 80 seconds and two moves.

Back with Cena hitting the Shuffle but Woods slips out of the AA and getting two off an enziguri. A middle rope DDT gets two on the champ but the flipping clothesline is countered with a sitout powerbomb to give Cena two. Woods comes right back with a reverse suplex and Lost in the Woods (Eat Defeat) for two each. Xavier misses a missile dropkick and Cena slaps on the STF, drawing Kofi and Big E. in for the DQ at 9:22.

**Rating:** C+. It's not a classic or anything close to one really, but this was all it needed to be. Woods was in way over his head here but came out looking fine. There was almost no chance of a new champion here but the there didn't need to be. This was about the segment that set up the match and a fun performance, which is all this needs to be about a lot of the time. Good stuff here.

Post match here are the Dudleyz a few seconds later for the save. It looks like a six man after the break.

#### John Cena/Dudley Boyz vs. New Day

That's exactly what we have and it's joined in progress with Kofi getting pounded down in the corner by D-Von and then Bubba. Cena requests and receives a tag and it's time for Kofi to get some rotating stomps of his own. The Shuffle sends Kofi over for the tag to Big E. and it's power vs. power. Big E. shoulders Cena into the corner and it's time for some dancing, followed by the real rotating stomps.

Kofi slaps on a chinlock as Woods plays the trombone and shouts that he should be US Champion. For some reason this results in Cole bringing up that he's undefeated at Wrestlemania and Byron saying that's like him being Tupac. E.'s splash gets two but Cena rolls over and tags in D-Von as everything breaks down. D-Von launches E. into the ropes but knocks Cena off the apron in a big crash. What's Up hits Kofi but Bubba is sent out for not being legal, allowing Kofi to hit Trouble in Paradise for the pin at 6:45.

**Rating:** C-. This started good and hit a brick wall in the middle. Cena

getting knocked off the apron was a turning point and it makes sense to have New Day beat the Dudleyz when it's 3-2. I'm not sure what happens in the tag match on Saturday in MSG and I rather like that feeling.

The Authority and an unknown woman are in the back when Kane comes in. The woman is from human resources due to a complaint against Kane for creating an unsafe working environment. Rollins comes in and hints very strongly that he made the complaint. Kane promises to take this seriously before glaring at Rollins. A sip of coffee brings him back to reality and he's off for his evaluation. This continues to intrigue me a bit but these performance evaluations are almost never any good.

Ambrose suggests that Reigns fighting Bray one on one might not be the best idea. Dean will stay in the back unless Strowman and Harper get involved. Reigns says that Orton will have his back too and Dean gets a bit annoyed. Orton comes in and Dean says he doesn't want any outsiders trying to come in and save the day. Roman calms things down.

### Big Show vs. Mark Henry

I'll be shocked if this breaks two minutes. Show spears him down and plants Henry with some slow slams and a kick to the face. The KO punch ends this at 2:36. I get what they're doing with Big Show and I appreciated them using Henry instead of someone with value, but can they really think that the exact same formula for building someone up is going to work again?

It's time for MizTV and Miz starts us off with a recap of Paige's heel turn promo last week against the rest of the division. Miz's guests are Becky Lynch and Charlotte, the former of whom calls Miz a chauvinist jackass. Miz: "First One Direction breaks up and now PCB?" Charlotte tells Paige to get out here for a talk or a fight but here are the Bellas instead. Nikki says this is high school drama and she knows she's getting the title back.

Charlotte invites her in to tap out one more time but Nikki brags about breaking the record. Nikki talks about Paige saying she started the Divas Revolution (Stephanie being dropped is the right call all the way around) but Charlotte goes off about how the Divas Revolution is about the fans

and the action in the ring. Alicia brings up the 3-2 advantage but Becky is ready to fight anyway.

Cue Paige to say she put the NXT women on the map by being their first champion. Nikki asks about the drama again but Paige asks who needs ambition when the Bellas have boyfriends like theirs. I believe that's the first reference to Cena and Nikki's relationship on Raw, or at least one of the first. A big brawl clears the ring.

#### Team PCB vs. Team Bella

So PCB is working together against a common enemy a week after breaking up. Brie comes in but gets double teamed by Charlotte and Becky but the Bellas drag Becky into the corner. Nikki gets in some stomps and Brie gets two off a suplex. A double clothesline puts Becky and Nikki down as the announcers plug Total Divas.

Charlotte comes in to no reaction and everything breaks down. Nikki kicks Charlotte off the Figure Eight and right into Paige, sending her walking to the back. Natalya comes out to replace Paige, who pulls her off the apron for a crash. Nikki uses the distraction to hit the Rack Attack for the pin on Charlotte at 6:26.

**Rating:** D. So to recap, here's Charlotte's reign: wins the title after hitting two moves in a long match, gets beaten up by Brie until she hits one move, then gets pinned in a six person tag. They're really not trying to hide the fact that they want it back on Nikki and that's not a good thing after all those months of her as champion.

WWE2K16 video.

Video on the history of Big Show vs. Brock Lesnar.

Rollins is badmouthing Kane to the human resources woman when Kane comes in. Seth changes his tune and Kane gives him a present: the head of his statue. Kane dug it up from the landfill after searching all night and Seth is shaken as you might expect him to be. Kane thinks it's funny and the woman is equally freaked out.

#### Wyatt Family vs. Prime Time Players

Harper runs over Young to start and I don't see this going well. Darren gets knocked to the floor and Braun takes the mask off. The beating continues and Darren keeps getting destroyed inside. Young finally gets in a shot and makes the tag off to Titus for some house cleaning. A powerslam and big boot drop Harper but Strowman offers a distraction so Harper can get in the superkick. Braun grabs Darren and Titus' save attempt completely fails. The discus lariat from Harper sets up the choke from Braun to knock Titus cold at 4:18.

**Rating:** D+. Total and complete squash here which is all it needed to be. Strowman is one heck of a monster and this is the kind of stuff that reinforces that perception. The Players are looking less and less important every week, but then again this is the company where you're a jobber one week and pushed strong the next so they might be in line for a title shot.

#### Neville vs. Stardust

Neville flips across the ring to start but is quickly caught in the Tree of Woe. Stardust charges into a boot though and Stardust slides to the floor. He springboards into a dropkick from Neville and it's time for the Red Arrow but cue King Barrett for the DQ at 2:33.

Barrett stares at Stardust but gives him a Bullhammer. Barrett says all hail the return of the king.

Here are Kane and the woman for his evaluation. She's already come to a conclusion after about an hour and twenty five minutes, but here's Rollins to interrupt. He shows us a quick recap of Kane's demonic side (or at least the last few years of it) and says he's going to Heaven instead. The Pope told him so and Rollins believes him because of how good he's been feeling lately. Kane shows us a video of Rollins tormenting Kane and calling for him to lose his authority.

The report says that Kane is sound of mind and can keep doing his job. Rollins deserves the evaluation because he's cruel, paranoid, and the most unprofessional person she has ever seen in WWE. Seth comes to the ring and gets in Kane's face. Rollins drops the belt so Kane goes to pick it up, only to have Rollins give him a Pedigree. He adds in some chair

shots for good measure and even Pillmanizes the ankle.

Rollins laughs and says Kane looks very human to him right now. Kane is loaded onto a stretcher and into an ambulance....but the windows start glowing red. The door opens and Kane comes out in the demon attire. He starts limping but stomps his foot and is suddenly walking just fine. Seth tries a chair shot to no avail and a chokeslam leaves him laying. The threat of a tombstone sends Seth tumbling up the steps and Kane holds up the title. So the evaluation thing was really just a waste of time wasn't it?

Bray asks if we saw what they did earlier. The Family makes him so proud and they would love nothing more than to come out there tonight and tear Roman to pieces. However, Bray is going to grant Roman's request to face off one on one. They are the alpha and the omega because it starts and ends with the two of them. Only a fool believes he can look into the dragon's eyes and believe he won't be burned. Run.

Bo Dallas comes out for a match but first he says the Buffalo Bills just have to Bo-Lieve to win the Super Bowl.

#### Bo Dallas vs. Randy Orton

Orton quickly takes it to the floor and drops Dallas across the barricade right in front of some of the Bills. Back in and the RK0 ends Bo at 2:00.

We look at Kevin Owens walking out on a tag match on Monday.

#### Rusev vs. Kevin Owens

Non-title and Ryback is on commentary. This is fallout from Owens walking out on Rusev on Thursday. Owens is knocked to the floor but he throws Rusev into Ryback for the DQ at 46 seconds.

Dolph Ziggler runs out for the save.

We recap the Dancing for Pediatric Awareness challenges between members of the roster.

Here's Paul Heyman to talk about the MSG match with Big Show. Heyman

knows Big Show better than everyone else and he sees Show as a 6<sup>th</sup> grade math genius who gets a C+ because he's bored. There's no competition for Big Show right now, but there will be this Saturday. Brock Lesnar is going to destroy Big Show like never before and take him to Suplex City.

Cue Big Show to say he knows Brock is worried. Heyman didn't finish talking about Brock's tour because he knows it could end this Saturday night. Paul leaves and Show tells him to imagine a world without Brock. I appreciate them trying to build something but dude. It's Lesnar vs. Big Show. Let it go.

### Roman Reigns vs. Bray Wyatt

Wyatt brings Harper and Strowman with him but a single insult is enough to make Bray send them back. Roman starts fast with a throw and the apron boot as we take an early break. Back with Bray holding a chinlock, followed by a big slam to set up another chinlock. Reigns fights up and hits the corner clotheslines but the Superman Punch is countered with a standing Rock Bottom attempt.

Some elbows break Roman free but Bray takes his head off with a clothesline for two. Bray loads up a superplex but Reigns slips through the legs and powerbombs him down. Reigns no sells a kick to the face (stop watching puro dude) and Superman Punches Bray to the floor, only to have the spear hit the steps. Bray picks up the steps but Roman knocks them away and keeps fighting to the double countout at 13:04.

**Rating:** C. This was fine but the ending was pretty obvious. I'm glad neither guy got a win as there was no way this ended here, though I'm not sure where this feud actually does end. You have to assume that Rollins is the right third man one day, but does a six man finally blow this off? Wyatt not losing is a big plus and almost a rare sight, which is a nice surprise.

They keep fighting into the crowd with neither being able to take over. Bray knocks Roman into the barricade and charges Roman through it and back to ringside. Wyatt poses on the announcers' table but Reigns pops back up and spears him through the table to end the show.

**Overall Rating:** C-. This is a hard one to grade as the show had some good things as well as some bad things. I like that they're keeping some stuff short. I remember days where they would have had Orton vs. Dallas go for seven or eight minutes but there's really no need to do so. Keep the thing short like it should be and give the time to something else.

Unfortunately those somethings else were Kane and Big Show, who are being used as the big stories before we get to the Undertaker match inside the Cell. Now to be fair, these stories could have been FAR worse. It also helps that Big Show vs. Lesnar is this Saturday instead of in another month. The match isn't something I want to see, but it's on a free show and now in the main event of a pay per view so this could be a much bigger issue.

Overall, this is your Raw special to the letter: a good enough show that would have been so much better minus an hour. It was clear that they were filling in time, but at least it wasn't horribly dull filler this time. There's definitely a better energy lately and you can see a lot more effort in the midcard stories, which has been one of Raw's biggest problems in the last year or two. The effort changes everything though and has made these last few shows so much easier to sit through. If they can find a way to cut down on the show's length, they'd have a FAR better show overnight but that's not happening anytime soon.

### Results

John Cena b. Xavier Woods via DQ when Kofi Kingston and Big E. interfered

New Day b. John Cena/Dudley Boyz – Trouble in Paradise to D-Von

Big Show b. Mark Henry – KO Punch

Team Bella b. Team PCB – Rack Attack to Charlotte

Wyatt Family b. Prime Time Players – Standing choke to O'Neil

Neville b. Stardust via DQ when King Barrett interfered

Randy Orton b. Bo Dallas – RKO



Rusev b. Kevin Owens via DQ when Ryback interfered

Roman Reigns vs. Bray Wyatt went to a double countout

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## **Reviewing the Review – Monday Night Raw: September 21, 2015**

We're coming up on Hell in a Cell and again the main event has been set far in advance with Undertaker vs. Brock Lesnar. That's one of those matches that really doesn't need a lot of direct build so we can focus on everything else for a change. Tonight we get fallout from Rollins going 1-1 at Night of Champions because that's what World Champions do these days. Let's get to it.

They mixed things up this week by starting with the Wyatts coming out to talk instead of Rollins or the Authority. It's amazing how much of an improvement this was and how refreshing it felt to have ANYTHING different starting things off. It's not like they even started with a match or anything really different. Just seeing some new faces out there was a nice touch.

Anyway, Bray bragged about winning until Reigns came out to challenge

Bray one on one. That's where this feud is likely destined to end and it's the most logical story they could tell. Eventually Strowman and Harper came in to save their boss but Ambrose came out to help even things up. The big deal here was Randy Orton running out to help the Shield guys, which is likely your next six man at Hell in a Cell.

I could get behind the idea of constantly replacing the third man on the team until it's Rollins for the obvious big match, but I'm hoping they don't turn Reigns heel in the process. At least not until the end that is, as he really doesn't need to switch until the war with the Wyatts is over, at least for now because that one could go on for years to come. That's not a bad thing either.

Now we get to the big story of the night with Rollins going in to see the Authority but finding Corporate Kane, who has no memory of what Demon Kane did last night. I like the idea of a split personality and neither one remembering anything the other has done as at least it's something different than the normal Kane. The idea here is that Kane has made Rollins, who is still banged up from last night, vs. Cena (again) for the US Title tonight. The Authority would talk to Kane later and bring up that they haven't talked to Kane in weeks. They do nothing to change the match and let Kane's decision stand of course.

The Lucha Dragons/Neville beat Ascension/Stardust in a match where the announcers kept trying to figure out what to call Ascension/Stardust. Basically the same match as last night.

Ryback squashed Bo Dallas and got attacked by Owens post match. There isn't much to say here but I'm digging the idea of having the feud continue. Above all else: Owens initiated the violence, which is a strong ground for my false hope about Kevin going somewhere with the title instead of being another coward champion.

Now we get to the other big story of the night as Charlotte came out to celebrate the title win but Paige eventually turned heel and did her best AJ Lee doing her best CM Punk impression with a pipe bomb. This is at least a good idea and had the great line of "Nattie doesn't even seem to work here anymore." Paige as the secondary heel is an idea, but I have a

bad feeling they're just going to have the Bellas back on top by the end of the year anyway. I mean, they're on that reality show and that's totally more important than Paige being on that reality show.

I'm not sure where they're going here. It would seem that Paige/Natalya might hook up which would be fine, but I'd really like to see one of the Divas on their own for a bit. We've spent two and a half months on the team battle series and now we're possibly getting Paige/Natalya as the overlooked ones to fight the Bellas and Charlotte/Becky. Paige is interesting, but she needs to change her style up a bit.

Brie Bella came out almost immediately and lost to Charlotte in a match very similar to the one from last night. I'm not understanding this idea of having Charlotte play Randy Savage from 1995, but it's defeating the purpose of her entire character/style so far. She's awesome in the ring but the idea seems to be to have her sell forever and then hit one big move. As usual, they set up something cool on NXT and then "fix" it on Raw.

Sheamus squashed Henry to remind us that he's here.

New Day/Rusev beat the Dudleyz/Ziggler in a long match. This worked quite well and it's still mainly due to Xavier Woods being allowed to do whatever he wants out there. The idea of letting an entertaining guy be entertaining is very foreign around here but this is what happens when it's given a chance. I mean, BULGARIAN TRICEP MEAT? How can you not love that? The Ziggler vs. Rusev story has hit its peak and the problem now is what to do with them since Lana is out for months. You know, because a wrist injury makes it so hard to appear on TV.

Remember how Natalya was brought up for the first time in forever? Well she lost to Naomi thanks to a Sasha distraction. It does seem like she and Paige might hook up and I don't know why I'd be interested in seeing another team story.

Big Show squashed Cesaro to build himself up for the Lesnar match. This is one of those rare cases where I completely understand the logic behind what WWE does and find it to be the dumbest idea in years. Do they really think that in NEW YORK CITY the fans are going to treat Lesnar vs. Big

Show like a normal match? Having Lesnar squash Big Show (which he will) is fine but don't waste someone with potential on the way. Use Swagger in this spot or something but stop using Cesaro to put over someone like Big Show who is 43 and has done the same stuff for years now.

John Cena beat Seth Rollins again to retain the US Title in a good match. I like seeing them fight because they have good chemistry, but enough already. We don't need to see them fight once a month, especially when Cena beats the World Champ every time and never gets back in the World Title hunt. It's pretty clear that Kane is getting the next shot, which makes these pinfalls all the less logical. Why have someone pin the champion and then never follow up on it? Ah yes, because you have Kane, who to be fair did start this story with Rollins months ago and deserves to be able to finish it. Just nix the champ losing all the time.

Demon Kane pulled Rollins through a hole in the ring because we're really going there again.

Overall, Raw worked for the most part but there are some major flaws in there that are hard to cover up. Chief among them: having the World Champion get pinned twice by the same guy in 24 hours when there seems to be no intention of having that guy go after the title. Is it any wonder why no one wants to watch Rollins as champion? He's a loser at this point and it takes a lot of work to get rid of that kind of stigma. The wrestling was good but a lot of the booking fell short.

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# Ring of Honor TV – September 23, 2015: Japanese For Good Filler

## Ring of Honor

Date: September 23, 2015

Location: 2300 Arena, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Commentators: King Corino, Kevin Kelly

This is one of those weird shows where the pay per view has taken place but there's almost no way to talk about it because this episode was taped a month prior. Therefore, expect a lot of odd commentary where nothing is really revealed because the announcers don't know the details yet. Let's get to it.

### Michael Elgin vs. Silas Young

We get right to it as the announcers say Young is dealing with the fallout from All-Star Extravaganza, despite a lack of any sort of details of what happened at the show. Young's shoulders have no effect as the announcers talk about Elgin's success in the G-1 Climax tournament in Japan. A big gorilla press puts Silas down and Elgin shows off with a long delayed vertical suplex for two.

Young gets creative with a DDT onto the apron and a slingshot double stomp (ow), sending us to a break. Back with Elgin missing a charge and something like an Irish Curse getting two for Silas. Michael comes back with big right hands (why overcomplicate things?) and a sitout Rock Bottom for two of his own. Elgin wins a slugout until Young kicks him in the face and hits his headstand into a springboard moonsault for two. That's really not a very heelish move.

Michael kicks him in the face as well and scores with a discus lariat,

followed by an apron superplex into a falcon's arrow for two. Cool looking move there. Misery (TKO) puts Elgin on the floor and Silas pulls the padding back, only to get powerbombed into the barricade. Elgin is all ticked off and the Elgin Bomb is good for the pin at 11:28.

**Rating:** B-. This was a way to say that Elgin is back after his trip to Japan and it worked quite well in that regard. Young shouldn't have lost after winning such a big match at All-Star Extravaganza but that's part of the danger of taping shows this far in advance. Good opener here though and a fun match.

Adam Cole says his match with Shinsuke Nakamura is one of the best wrestlers in the world, but Cole is THE best in the world, which he'll prove next week in Philadelphia. Simple, yet effective.

#### ACH vs. Caprice Coleman

Feeling out process to start as they fight over a wristlock and trade flips, capped off by Coleman getting no count off a dropkick. The announcers sell the idea that ACH is this generation's Coleman as Caprice trips ACH and drops a leg for two. ACH comes back with a running kick to the face from the apron but his bottom rope clothesline is blocked.

Coleman grabs three rolling northern lights suplexes and we get a pretty awkward striking sequence, including a one inch punch from Coleman. It actually stops ACH from hitting his big dive and Caprice nails the Sky Splitter (top rope Rough Ryder) for two. ACH is still screwed up from the punch (Corino: "Holy Ox Baker!") but he comes back with a quick brainbuster and the Midnight Star (450) for the pin at 6:52.

**Rating:** C. The one inch punch was a little awkward but at least ACH finally won something. They could make him something like the Kofi Kingston of this company but he needs to quit losing so much. Coleman is a good veteran who can make anyone look good and there's some amazing value in that kind of a role player.

Post match Corino asks Coleman about the envelope that Prince Nana gave him a few weeks ago. There was money and a letter inside. Coleman took the money and read the letter over and over. At first it didn't make

sense but now he knows that Nana was right. Nothing more is explained.

### Roppongi Vice/Kazuchika Okada vs. Briscoe Brothers/Hiroki Goto

Okada, part of Chaos with Vice, is IWGP Heavyweight Champions and Goto is the IWGP Intercontinental Champion. Well as of this taping at least. Jay and Okada get things going for what ROH would consider a dream match. They slug it out with Okada kicking Jay in the face to take over. Off to Rocky Romero (of Rocky Romero/Trent Barretta) who doesn't do as well so here are Goto and Trent.

Hiroki scores with some shoulders before it's off to Mark for shoulders of his own. Mark is fascinated by Trent's headband and puts it on, setting up redneck kung fu and a dropkick. Vice starts some double teaming on Mark and Okada adds a slingshot hilo for two. All three members of Chaos rake Mark's eyes until Mark grabs a Death Valley Driver on Okada. Goto comes in to fight Okada like he wants but he gets kicked in the face, setting up Okada's top rope elbow.

The Rainmaker is countered into a backbreaker and we take a break. Back with Jay cleaning house before it's off to Mark, who gets clotheslined in the corner to change control again. Jay comes back in with a powerbomb into a neckbreaker as everything breaks down. Mark counters the Rainmaker into a suplex but Romero kicks him in the face. Trent makes a blind tag but gets caught in a Doomsday Device from the apron to the floor.

Back in and the Froggy Bow gets a VERY close two on Trent but Okada comes back in with a tombstone. Goto breaks up the Rainmaker with a headbutt and everyone is down again. That's enough for Jay as he blasts Trent in the face and scores with the Jay Driller for the pin at 14:05.

**Rating:** B. This was your usual fun six man New Japan match which is a great option to fill in the gaps on shows like this one. The Briscoes continue to look awesome as a team and would be a great addition to the already stacked tag division at this point. Okada vs. Goto was treated like a side story here, which is probably best considering they don't work for this company.

**Overall Rating:** B+. This is one of the better shows the company has had

on Destination America as everyone was on point and rolling this week with three good matches that served no real purpose other than filling in time. I'm not sure when we get to the next story driven shows but at least we had an entertaining show this week, which is all you can ask for here.

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# Slamboree 2000 (2015 Redo): Yes, This Is An Improvement

## Slamboree 2000

Date: May 7, 2000

Location: Kemper Arena, Kansas City, Missouri

Attendance: 7,165

Commentators: Tony Schiavone, Mark Madden, Scott Hudson

It's time for the David Arquette pay per view with the triple cage match which has only been vaguely described on TV. Coming off this week's Nitro and Thunder where there was barely any build for most of the matches, it's really hard to get into this show. Maybe there will be some actual effort this time, though I have a feeling I'm going to be disappointed. Let's get to it.



We open with a recap of Thunder, which set up Great American Bash next month. Notice that: they don't even have anything to build up for this month's show so they're already talking about June. That's a really bad sign.

The Millionaire's Club arrives on a bus. I'm sure their promos in the arena on the pre-show were a figment of my imagination.

We go to the opening video, which starts by talking about Flair vs. Douglas. Is that really the most important thing to talk about? The other big matches get some time too in the best video they've done on the show so far. They're actually talking about some matches for a change.

There's a long entrance ramp back. I've always been a fan of those.

#### Cruiserweight Title: Chris Candido vs. The Artist

Candido is defending and Artist hasn't won a match on TV since March. Tammy offers to show the fans hers in the Show Me State. A quick rollup gets two for the champ but a second attempt is countered into a German suplex for two for the Artist. They pick things up a bit with Artist backdropping Candido to the floor, only to be whipped into the barricade. Candido goes up but Artist kind of clotheslines him out of the air. It looked like a spear with no impact so we'll call it a clothesline.

Back in and a hurricanrana gets two for Artist but The champ comes back with chops in the corner. Artist gets knocked to the apron and suplexes Candido over the top in the only good spot of the match so far. Chris gives him a low blow (there are referees tonight but they're as worthless as ever) but Artist comes back with a bad powerbomb.

Candido's hurricanrana off the top is blocked and Artist hits a middle rope Samoan drop. Tammy tries to interfere and triggers a catfight, only to have Tammy chair Artist for a close two. They even played Candido's music but the referee says keep going. Candido piledrives Artist and drops the top rope headbutt to retain.

**Rating:** D. Artist is dull and boring most of the time but here he was adding in blowing spots. To be fair though, Candido wasn't really helping

here as he kept blowing things left and right as well. This was such a boring time for the title as 3 Count and the Jung Dragons, as in the guys who could actually be entertaining with the title, have been forgotten for this company wide story. It felt like an old NWA Junior Heavyweight Title match where smaller guys who didn't wrestle a different style had dull matches and no one cared but it was its own division and therefore supposed to be special.

Paisley rips off Tammy's dress and crawls over to Artist.

The announcers explain the cage for the first time.

Video of Terry Funk getting beaten up a lot. Now you get to see him defend a title.

Hardcore Title: Terry Funk vs. Norman Smiley/???

Funk is defending and Norman has a mystery partner who is obviously Ralphus. Norman hides in the bathroom to start because it worked so well last month. Funk finds the mystery partner (wearing a catcher's mask) instead, allowing Norman to blast Funk with a fire extinguisher. Why he doesn't hit him with the extinguisher itself isn't clear but Norman isn't the brightest guy in the world.

Funk gets rammed into a Coke machine until the light goes out and some trashcan lid shots get two. They brawl through the back until Terry throws Norman through Gene's interview set. The mystery partner gets on a pile of carpet and throws boxes at Terry, allowing Madden to make pitcher and catcher jokes. Some trashcan shots get two on Norman as the mystery partner just stands around letting Norman get destroyed.

Funk hits him with a chair for two as the partner doesn't even break up the cover. They fight to the go position (Tony: "HOW WILL WE KNOW HOW TO GET TO THE RING???" I would say listen for the cheering but that's not happening at a WCW show.) and then into the arena with Funk dragging the partner to the ring. Madden think it's Bubba the Love Sponge. The mask comes off and of course it's Ralphus.

Funk accidentally pulls Ralphus' pants down as Norman attacks with a

ladder. Madden: "Not since I was attacked by Tank Abbott have we seen.....wait what am I saying?" Ok that was kind of funny. A chair to Funk's head sets up the Big Wiggle but Ralphus, who has lost his shirt, wants to join in. Funk comes back with some chair shots and rolls Norman up to retain.

**Rating:** C. It's stupid, it's goofy, and it's probably the most entertaining thing on this show. Ralphus is one of those ideas where they knew exactly what they had and didn't try to make it anything more than that. This was good fun and Norman continues to be the most underrated thing in WCW.

David Arquette arrives half an hour into the show and says he's got his own money so he's not with the Millionaire's Club. Don't let the smile fool you: he's scared. They're actually trying to treat this seriously and that's even dumber than putting Arquette in the story in the first place.

#### Shawn Stasiak vs. Curt Hennig

Feeling out process to start as the announcers debate what they can call either guy without getting in trouble for gimmick infringement. A hiptoss puts Stasiak on the floor and he comes back in to fight over a top wristlock. Shawn gets two off a sunset flip as the Misfits in Action are in the front row in different color fatigues. Out to the floor now with Stasiak choking over the announcers' table before they head to the ramp.

Hennig throws his back out while trying a slam and Shawn puts on a sleeper back inside. As usual, Stasiak is really dull in the ring. Totally adequate and not bad by any stretch, but dull. Hennig breaks it up after two arm drops and punches Shawn out of the air to take over. Not that it matters as Stasiak catapults him into the post and puts on the HennigPlex for the pin.

**Rating:** D+. Totally watchable match and probably the most technically sound things are going to get all night but I really didn't need to watch eight minutes of Stasiak being dull before getting the pin. I guess Stasiak is supposed to be the new Mr. Perfect. It would be nice if we had heard a promo from Stasiak where he said that, but that's probably asking

too much from WCW.

Russo tells Steiner to keep the New Blood roll going. Steiner doesn't seem pleased.

#### US Title: Scott Steiner vs. Hugh Morrus

Steiner is defending. First up though, Morrus renames himself Hugh G. Rection or Captain Rection for short. Well of course he did. Steiner hammers him down in the corner but Rection comes back with enough right hands to put Scott on the floor for a breather. Back in and a spinwheel kick of all things gets two on the champ and there's Rection's top rope elbow. The girls break up No Laughing Matter though and put Rection in the Tree of Woe, allowing Madden to get in some easy jokes. The t-bone suplex sets up the pushups and the spinning belly to belly gets two.

We hit the bearhug (and Madden misses the squeezing jokes) for a bit before a belly to belly knocks Rection even sillier. Steiner stops to pose, giving us some of the only unique heel work of the night. Rection makes his comeback with splashes in the corner and an Owen Hart-style tombstone, only to mostly miss the moonsault. His feet smack Steiner in the head but the Recliner retains the title a few seconds later.

**Rating:** D. Another bad match here but the stupid name was really messing this up. It's really difficult to stay in a match when there's a stupid joke every 18 seconds. As usual Russo would rather make himself laugh than advance the story in any meaningful way because Russo is a hack. A creative hack but still a hack.

Booker T. comes out to save Rection from the Recliner.

Kanyon says he'll win tonight.

#### Mike Awesome vs. Chris Kanyon

Kanyon starts with a clothesline as the fans look at something in the crowd. Instead of going to a hold, Awesome sends Kanyon outside for a big dive over the top, drawing an ECW chant. Kanyon wraps Awesome's ribs around the post and drives in a baseball slide for good measure. There's a flip dive off the apron as the fans are trying to get into this show.

Back in and Awesome comes back with the top rope clothesline, followed by some chair shots to take over again.

Some choking on the floor is followed by a hard clothesline for Awesome as this is the good match these two are capable of having when there's nothing screwy going on. Mike chairs Canyon in the back but gets crotched on the top, allowing Canyon to pull him down with a nice neckbreaker. Awesome rolls through a high cross body for two but Canyon's fireman's carry pancake gets the same. An Alabama Slam (which Tony calls a version of a powerbomb) knocks Canyon silly before powerbombing Canyon on the back of his head in a scary landing.

Mike peels back the mats at ringside but opts for a slingshot shoulder instead. He can't Awesome Bomb Canyon over the top rope so it's a release German suplex across the ring instead. Awesome loads up the powerbomb onto the concrete and here's Nash to interrupt. Cue the New Blood and the match is thrown out, presumably due to Nash's jealousy shining through.

**Rating:** B-. Match of the night by a mile and I'd be surprised if anything besides the main event comes anywhere close to it. This is what happens when you let two talented guys beat each other up and do impressive looking moves to each other for ten minutes. Now of course there had to be a screwy ending because the fans were getting into it and WCW doesn't know how to handle that, but I'll take what good stuff I can get when I can get it.

The Millionaire's Club comes down for the save, just like they have on every TV show for two weeks.

We recap Bagwell vs. Luger which is happening again for reasons I'll never comprehend. This time Russo has stolen Liz (and let her go on Nitro, only to have her back two days later for reasons that were never explained) and Bagwell is doing Russo's fighting. As has been explained: this is an excuse for Russo to look manly and have Liz on his arm.

Russo tells Liz to change out of her dress (which looks quite good already) and put on something he's picked out for her.

Total Package vs. Buff Bagwell

Bagwell doesn't have a title so Tony isn't sure if he and Douglas are still champions. We start with the posing because that's what they've done for years now. Luger drives him into the corner to start but Buff pounds him down with ease. We're already in the chinlock but Luger fights out with a suplex. Dang he's working hard tonight. The right hands and clotheslines knock Bagwell to the floor, which I think has happened in every match tonight.

Luger gets in a few shots and throws Bagwell back in by the ear. That's certainly a new one. Bagwell gets two of his own off a double arm DDT and we're back in the chinlock. This might be the laziest pairing in wrestling history but they keep getting paired together for years on end. After they stay on the mat with the chinlock it's a double clothesline to put both guys down again. Buff drops a splash for two and it's off to a reverse chinlock.

Luger looks mildly annoyed, realizes there's a camera on him, and starts wincing. We cut to the back where Russo tells Liz to come watch, only to have Liz come out and hit him with the ball bat. Luger starts his comeback but Buff hits him in the ribs. Cue Bagwell with the bat but Buff takes it away from her and hits Luger in the stomach. Liz picks the bat up though and breaks up the Blockbuster, setting up the Rack for the submission.

**Rating:** D. Luger and Bagwell laying around instead of trying to have a good match? Who would have ever seen that one coming? This was your standard match between the two and it's still nothing that anyone would want to see again, hence why I'm sure they'll be best friends again by the end of the year. Can we just have Liz fall for Russo already? You know it's coming soon.

Post match Chuck Palumbo comes in and blasts Luger in the back with an exercise bar. He's wearing gear identical to Luger, so Russo is already repeating his own storyline from the Stasiak vs. Hennig story. Palumbo Racks Luger and Bagwell kidnaps Liz again. April O'Neil wasn't this helpless.

Shane Douglas is happy to finally get his hands on Flair. As usual, if

you didn't watch ECW or read the internet, this story makes no sense to you.

### Ric Flair vs. Shane Douglas

Douglas says he's awesome and is going to destroy Flair. Ric comes out and has the referee hold the ropes for a former World Champion. Flair: "Not that you would know anything about that buddy." Ric even mentions ECW when promising to take Shane out tonight like it's 1981. They actually wrestle to start until Shane elbows him in the face to take over.

The chop it out until Flair gets slammed off the top, followed by a Figure Four from Douglas. Hudson: "THAT'S THE MOVE HE WON SO MANY WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS WITH!" Your factoid of the day: Flair never actually won a World Title with the Figure Four by traditional submission. Every time he won with the Figure Four, it was due to his opponent passing out in the hold. Flair grabs a rope and hits one heck of a low blow to knock Shane to the floor. Shane gets whipped into the barricade but manages a kick to the bad leg to get a breather.

Now we get to the issue with WCW as a whole right now: Douglas pulls out a chain and tries to hide it from the referee, just like wrestlers have been doing for years. However, why should he try to hide the chain? It's clear that WCW referees aren't going to call DQ's unless it's something major, so why would a chain be anything different? Some suplexes have Flair in trouble but he pops right back up for a pair of low blows. It's time for the Figure Four but Bagwell and "Sting" come out with "Sting" ball batting Flair to give Shane the pin.

**Rating:** C-. The match was pretty decent until the end but the story isn't there. I still don't know why I'm supposed to be interested in some big challenges that Douglas made back in ECW, but I'm guessing a fan talked about it online somewhere and Russo decided that it was the hottest story in wrestling.

Bagwell and Douglas lay out Flair but he calls out "Russo" (clearly too tall to be under the Sting mask) for their five minute fight. Luger comes out to drag "Sting" to the ring but Russo pops up behind them and nails

Luger with the bat. Back inside and "Sting" hits Ric with a miniature Statue of Liberty and it's....David Flair. A few bat shots knock Ric silly as Russo does the crotch chop like A MAN would. Nash casually walks down the ramp for the save but Daffney hits him low, allowing David Flair and Russo to stand tall. Yeah we're supposed to be intimidated by those two and Daffney. She's the scariest of them all.

We recap Vampiro vs. Sting, which is about both of them being creepy and Vampiro wanting to be what he thinks Sting should be. This would be the third iteration of the exact same idea on this show alone.

### Vampiro vs. Sting

They start fighting on the ramp with Sting grabbing a suplex and sending Vampiro into the ring for a missile dropkick. Vampiro falls to the floor and Sting knocks him outside with a plancha. Where has this Sting been for the last three and a half years? A DDT on the floor knocks Vampiro even sillier but he comes back with a low blow. It's lead pipe time (I feel like I'm watching Clue tonight) and Sting gets knocked up the ramp.

That goes nowhere so they come back in the ring for another pipe shot to Sting's back. Sting hits him low to break up a hurricanrana and powerbombs Vampiro off the top. A pipe shot to the head doesn't have much of an effect on Vampiro (this is so goofy at this point) so Sting hits two straight Splashes and Deathdrops for the pin.

**Rating:** D+. A lead pipe to the head was sold like a right hand to the jaw. That really should be all you need to know on this match. In case you're keeping track, Vampiro has still only won one time under the new regime and that included Hogan attacking Kidman for two minutes straight. As usual, the old guys get to be superhuman but the young guys are getting a story and that's supposed to mean something.

Sting hits Vampiro in the head with the pipe again.

David Arquette, dressed as Elvis for a reference from the movie, and Page are ready for the main event. Page tells him to stay away from Jarrett and play defense on the top of the cage near the belt. Don't grab it though.



Nash is looking for Russo. Again, this should be on a TV show.

Kidman and Bischoff are ready for Hogan. Again, Bischoff went from being terrified of Hogan to volunteering to be guest referee for their match.

You can get a BUFF BAGWELL pennant for purchasing this show. Who thought that was a piece of merchandise that needed to be made?

### Kidman vs. Hulk Hogan

At least Kimberly and Torrie are looking great here. Hogan brings out Horace with him for reinforcement. Kidman small packages Hogan on a slam attempt to start but Hogan picks him up by the throat for a crotching on top. Hogan gets a chair and drops Kidman onto it face first, only to have Kidman come back with a hurricanrana.

Hogan really isn't someone you picture taking hurricanranas that often. A quick beating on the floor goes nowhere so Hogan comes back in for a whipping with the weightlifting belt. Bischoff takes it away as Hudson tries to make sense of the relaxed rules jazz. Kidman whips away with the belt until Hogan wraps it around Kidman's neck and throws him out to the floor. Hogan whips him into the barricade and Bischoff won't count. We're firmly in the old standard book of evil referee tropes.

Kidman comes back with a few shots to take over so Hogan sends him out to the floor again. The brawling by the announcers' tables goes nowhere so Hogan hits the big boot but Bischoff walks in front of the legdrop. Bischoff gets sent to the floor and Hogan drops the leg. It's chair time but Hogan tries to bring in a table, which breaks upon contact. Kidman saves Bischoff from going through the table and gets two of his own off a chair shot.

Hogan kicks the chair into Kidman's face, kicks Bischoff low and powerbombs him through the table. That's STILL not enough though as Hogan brings in another table, only to get kicked low. Kidman misses a splash through the table and Horace comes in to grab Bischoff's hand and force the count to give Hulk the pin. There are so many broken tables that you can barely see the ring.

**Rating:** F+. Well to be fair, Hogan did let Kidman get some totally worthless pinfalls on him (which weren't really pins) on TV that fewer and fewer people were watching so the completely over the top PPV win was completely justified. Bad match here of course as it was just another brawl in a long series of them since Bischoff and Russo took over.

Russo and Liz run away from Nash.

We recap the World Title match, which resulted in a lot of short title reigns, capped off by David Arquette coming out as champion. I'm moving on before I get even more annoyed.

WCW World Title: David Arquette vs. Diamond Dallas Page vs. Jeff Jarrett

Arquette is defending and this is in the triple cage. It's three cages on top of each other with the Hell in a Cell on the bottom, then a cage full of weapons on top of that and a small cage called the Guitar Room on top. You have to get on top of the Guitar Room to reach the belt. First person to get to the top and pull the belt down wins.

The cage is lowered and to its credit, it looks amazing. Jarrett chases Arquette to start but Page makes the save instead of going after the belt. Well to be fair he wasn't that upset when Arquette won it from him last week anyway. A clothesline puts Jarrett down as Arquette stands on the part of the ramp inside the cage. Jeff baseball slides a ladder into Page's face but Page catapults Jarrett into Arquette.

Page gets pulled face first into the post but comes back by crotching Jeff against it instead. The ladder is set up but Jarrett suplexes Page down. Jarrett is already busted open. Page shoves him off the ladder and is the first man to the hardcore cage, where he has to use bolt cutters to open the door. This is more like an obstacle course than a match. Jarrett follows him up and they're quickly outside the hardcore cage and on top of the big cage. That's quite the dangerous spot to be in considering they have all of five feet to fight on.

Back in the hardcore cage and they break the wall down in what I guess is the big spot of the match. Arquette watches from the bottom cage as Page powerslams Jarrett through a table in the hardcore cage. They go back out

to the edge and Page elbows him in the jaw to break up an Irish whip. Arquette climbs into the hardcore cage and goes up to the Guitar Room but here's Mike Awesome out of nowhere to break up a Diamond Cutter.

Arquette grabs a guitar as Page Diamond Cuts Mike. They both head up and Arquette misses a guitar shot, only to have both of them fall down to the roof of the hardcore cage. Both guys get back up and, say it with me, Arquette turns on Page to give Jarrett the title back.

**Rating:** C+. This wasn't the worst match in the world actually, stupid ending aside. That last part is where it falls apart though: the Arquette stuff in here really didn't need to exist. Let him be a second or a cheerleader or something but there's no need to have him in the match itself. When you can eliminate something from a match and have it be the exact same thing, you can tell it's a bad idea. The match itself was fun and unfortunately they never went back to this idea again (at least not in this form) because the company never had the chance again, which is kind of a shame as it's a cool idea.

Post match here's Canyon to save Page from an Awesome Bomb, only to be thrown off the top of the Cell and through the ramp. The announcers scream that he's broken his back in the shock value moment of the show, which of course is being held in the same arena where Owen Hart fell. Russo: "BUT PEOPLE TALKED ABOUT IT!" Yes they did Russo, just like when you get fired because people stopped watching your garbage.

**Overall Rating:** D. Let's get the good out of the way first: this was a major improvement over the mess of Spring Stampede. It's so much better to have ten matches spaced over two hours and fifty minutes instead of fourteen matches over about two hour and a half hours. It's a big upgrade and the show had a much better structure overall.

Now that being said, the show still sucked because Russo has overbooked the heck out of it. Almost every match had a brawl on the floor or interference or cheating. It's fine to have something like that a few times a match but when you have it every single time, it gets old fast. There comes a point where you stop watching the match and start waiting for the interference or cheating, which defeats the purpose of the match

itself.

Overall though, this company is drowning under the one major idea. This system has almost never worked but for some reason wrestling companies keep running with them. It boils down to one problem: if you don't like the one idea, there's no point to watching the show. You can have one dominant story, but mix in a few other things that are disconnected to it as it keeps the fans around to see that instead of waiting on the major story to be over. This isn't the worst show ever, but they still need to make a lot of tweaks to get this company to work again.

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# Thunder – May 3, 2000: Rules? Where We're Going We Don't Need Rules

## Thunder

Date: May 3, 2000

Location: Mid-South Coliseum, Memphis, Tennessee

Attendance: 3,979

Commentators: Tony Schiavone, Mike Tenay, Bobby Heenan

It's the go home show for Slamboree and David Arquette is still World Champion. They've done a horrible job of setting up the triple cage match as the gimmick has barely been mentioned outside of a video on it early in the buildup. Instead it's all about David Arquette, who wouldn't prove to be the strongest draw. Let's get to it.

Opening sequence.

The Millionaire's Club and others (including Hugh Morrus) are outside waiting on the New Blood. Another car comes up and the low level New Blood members get jumped.

After a Slamboree ad, Russo and Bischoff yell at the rest of the team for not protecting them. So....this is going to be one of those shows about the two of them.

Here's the New Blood for a chat. Oh yeah it's a one note show. Russo immediately calls out the Millionaire's Club and gets his wish, plus pretty much every other face on the roster. Tonight he wants the Club destroyed so he's going to throw their names in a hat and let each member of the New Blood pull one out. Well it's official: the booking is now pulling names out of a hat.

As for tonight, it's New York Rules: no referees or referees whatsoever. It's Russo's dream show: no wrestling and just all out carnage. It's like he doesn't have to do anything at all! Flair loves the idea and promises to take it to Russo tonight. A brawl ensues with Russo and Bischoff running off with Liz. Wait wasn't she freed on Monday?

### Jeff Jarrett vs. Chris Canyon

Before the match, Kimberly grabs a mic and says that Bischoff has shown her the light: Page is a bar bouncing bum from nowheresville and he's just a wrestling mark. Cue Canyon to start the brawl in the aisle as the announcers explain that you count your own pins here. Jeff takes over by dropping Canyon across the barricade and kneeling him in the face. Back in and Jarrett walks into a Russian legsweep, followed by a top rope Fameasser.

They head back outside with Jarrett sending him into the steps and over the barricade. A chair shot to the back staggers Canyon but he grabs a neckbreaker back inside. Cue DDP's music and what felt like some clipping. Like, his music hit and then he was just in the ring almost instantly. A Diamond Cutter to Jarrett lets Canyon count his pin.

**Rating:** D. From what I can find online, the reason for the clipping was due to Page hitting Kimberly with a guitar when she tried to interfere, which also explains why he came out when Canyon was in control. As for the match, it was pretty much the same thing WCW has been doing for weeks now because referees haven't meant a thing for a long time. They just brawled for a little while and then had interference as always. It's pretty telling that it doesn't seem any different when the rules are thrown out. How screwy has this place been if chaos feels like the norm?

Wall picks out his name.

#### The Wall vs. Total Package

Tables match because of course it is. Russo comes out with Liz because this show is all about him. It also allows Wall to get in some cheap shots but that's just a nice effect. Cue Ric Flair to sit in on commentary and promise to keep Russo out of things. Luger gets kneed in the ribs and stopped with a backbreaker. That's about it for Wall on offense though as Luger comes back with every single standard Luger move that you've ever seen.

They fight outside with Luger yelling at Russo, allowing Wall to get in a shot from behind. Wall and Luger head back inside as Russo hits Flair with the bat. Now how did he not see that coming? Luger Racks Wall but Russo hits Luger with the back as well, making Luger drop Wall through the table for the win. In the match with no rules but a tables stipulation which I guess you call yourself.

**Rating:** D. It's a Russo night for sure. Here we have another tables match for Wall and he loses again because that's all he does after weeks of being built up as an unstoppable monster. That's the logical progression right? Unstoppable to loser in the span of a month? In Russo's booking, that's slow motion.

Russo asks Flair if he wants a match now. Flair gets inside and Russo hides behind Liz, only to get kicked low. Flair puts on the Figure Four but Douglas and Bagwell make the save, only to be beaten down by Kronik. This brings out Kidman, who drew Flair's name.

#### Ric Flair vs. Kidman

This is joined in progress with Flair punching away in the corner. Tony: "If you're keeping score at home and I know that you are." You have to be at this point. Kidman gets in a few shots of his own and superplexes Flair. They fight near a table at ringside but save it for later. A slingshot legdrop keeps Flair in trouble but Kidman's top rope splash completely misses.

Cue Konnan and Mysterio to beat down Flair but here's Nash to probably beat them down and shave their heads with one arm tied behind his back and two broken legs. Kidman runs as Konnan gets Jackknifed, only to have Hogan knock Kidman off the stage. I'm assuming the match is thrown out.

Mike Awesome runs to the ring but gets double teamed by Nash and Hogan. That really shouldn't surprise you as he might make them break a sweat and must be destroyed immediately. Nash Jackknifes Awesome and declares Awesome the winner due to outside interference.

#### Diamond Dallas Page vs. Vampiro

Sting jumps Vampiro from behind, beats him up, covers him in blood and throws him in for the Diamond Cutter in less than a minute.

The New Blood is all shook up.

The Millionaire's Club on the other hand is rather pleased.

#### Mike Awesome vs. Sting

Now normally this would be an interesting match. Here I'll be shocked if it goes three minutes before someone interferes. Awesome sells the Jackknife on the way to the ring. Mike is right on Sting when he gets to the ring and slams him down, followed by a splash for two. Sting fights back and knocks Awesome to the floor, where the Misfits In Action jump

the barricade and beat him up. Back in and the Stinger Splash and Scorpion make Awesome tap. What a way for a face to get a win.

Scott Steiner is the last New Blood guy to go tonight so Russo tells him to make it work. Steiner says he's doing this for himself.

#### Scott Steiner vs. Hulk Hogan

Non-title. This should have headlined a pay per view. The announcers are shocked that Steiner is calling Hogan out, even though Hogan is the only Millionaire left. Steiner promises to go see Hogan's wife after the show. Not even Steiner is that crazy. Steiner is on Hogan as he gets in the ring but Hulk comes back with right hands and a clothesline. They fight into the crowd where Hugh Morrus shows up to help Hogan. Back in the ring and Steiner calls in the troops but no one comes to help him and Scott walks for the countout.

Steiner swears a lot in the back and chokes Russo and Bischoff.

A new limo pulls up with FUNB on the license plate.

#### Kronik vs. Shane Douglas/Buff Bagwell

Wait is this a title match? Also there better not be a single tag in this whole thing. It's a brawl to start with Douglas doing a reverse Hennig neck snap on Adams. Douglas gets caught in something like an F5 but Adams puts him down in more like a DDT instead of a full body plant. Clark side slams Bagwell in the ring but Buff comes back with the Blockbuster (Tony: "Whatever it is."). Adams makes the save and it's High Times for the pin. Tony: "Are they the champions? We might have to wait until Slamboree to find out!"

**Rating:** D. I'm going to assume Kronik didn't win the titles here because that would be one of the more logical things WCW could do and logic has no place in WCW these days. Bagwell and Douglas are such lame champions that I often forget they even have the titles. This was one of the more coherent matches of the night so far and it really wasn't very good.

Bischoff says he has an idea.



Here's the New Blood in the ring, all armed with weapons. Bischoff gets right to the point and asks if the fans want guerrilla warfare. Cue Flair and the Millionaire's Club so Bischoff asks if they want an 11 on 11 man war. Flair says the Club has nothing left to prove tonight but if Bischoff wants to make it a battle royal for the World Title shot at the Great American Bash, so be it.

### Battle Royal

Ric Flair, Sting, Brian Adams, Bryan Clark, Horace Hogan, Diamond Dallas Page, Hugh Morrus, Canyon, Total Package, Curt Hennig, Hulk Hogan, Shawn Stasiak, Jeff Jarrett, Vampiro, Mike Awesome, Scott Steiner, Buff Bagwell, Shane Douglas, Chris Candido, Kidman, The Wall, The Cat

It's a huge brawl to start of course and there are no referees so I guess we're going on the honor system. We're nearly three minutes in now and here come Konnan, Bam Bam Bigelow, Disco Inferno, Johnny the Bull, Big Vito, the Harris Twins, Norman Smiley and all three members of Harlem Heat to get us up to thirty two people in the ring at once.

Horace is the first man eliminated and there are now referees on the floor because WCW can't keep its rules straight for a whole night. Tank Abbott slowly comes to the ring as Flair is on the floor hitting Shane with a pipe. You would think they would eliminate a few people here but that's too complicated around here. Canyon gets backdropped out and there's still no way to do any play by play with thirty people in the ring. Stasiak dumps Hennig and the ring is still so full that almost no one can move.

Kronik is eliminated at the same time off camera and we take a break. Back with the ring still crowded but a little bit better. I'm not even going to try to figure out who was eliminated during the break as most of these guys have no chance anyway. Some of the bigger names have weapons to make it even more complicated. Luger, Bagwell, Sting and Vampiro go out but keep brawling on the floor.

Chavo Guerrero Jr. and Lash Leroux came in at some point and eliminate Vito. Big T. and Van Hammer go out but Asya and Madusa come out to take their places. Mona comes in to join them as the people are starting to

get tired. Cue Jim Duggan of all people as the women and a man we couldn't see are put out. Duggan eliminates Bigelow and the Cat with the 2x4. Smiley and Tank are knocked out as well but Duggan eliminates himself due to high levels of stupid.

So we have Flair, Awesome, Stasiak, Candido, Kidman, Hogan, Jarrett, Douglas, Wall and Page in the ring. That's not enough though as we cut to the FUNB limo and see a pair of boots get out. Naturally the camera just shows boots and we go to a wide shot to show the boots walking on the video screen. The boots make it to the entrance and it's....RANDY SAVAGE. He fires ax handles to the New Blood and puts out Stasiak, Wall and Awesome in about ten seconds.

Candido is tossed a few seconds later but Savage drops to the floor to go after him. I guess that's an elimination. Page Cactus Clotheslines Jarrett to the floor to leave us with Hogan, Flair, Douglas and Kidman. They pair off and here's Bret Hart with a chair to blast Hogan, knocking him through the ropes to the floor. So through the ropes counts? Then why are Flair and Douglas still in? Could it be because the script didn't call for them to be eliminated earlier and rules can be twisted to suit Russo's grand vision?

Bret walks out so it's Flair and Douglas as Kidman is backdropped out. Flair puts Shane in the Figure Four but here's Russo with the ball bat....and he accidentally hits Douglas. I guess being the manliest man that ever lived doesn't include hand eye coordination. Flair uses the bat to knock Shane out for the win and the title shot.

**Rating:** D. You know what this had me thinking of? The South Park episode where it wound up in a massive lawsuit with everyone vs. everyone. It's total anarchy and you lose track of what's going on. The match started with 22 people and that had nearly doubled with all the people coming in. How am I supposed to care about any of this or let it have any kind of an impact, especially with most of the match consisting of people not being able to move due to the ring being crowded? This is Russo's deal: take away any form of storytelling and just throw them all out there. Such great writing. The big surprises helped but it was too late.

Post match Hogan gets on the steps to suplex Kidman through the announcers' table but Bischoff hits the knee with a ball bat to knock Hogan through it instead. Bischoff counts a three and raises Kidman's hand because that's supposed to mean something. Yeah it's symbolism or something but it's still stupid.

We're STILL not done though as Jarrett and Page climb up the scaffold. The camera cuts to Savage helping Hogan up and they do the handshake. We cut back to Page, who apparently was knocked off the scaffold and through a table. Tony, in a totally calm and rational voice: "Page has been knocked off the scaffolding. We'll see what this means at Slamboree." Just like that. No emotion, no worry, nothing.

The worst part is that wasn't even the original planned ending. From what I've found, Arquette was supposed to hit Jarrett with the guitar and knock him through the stage. However, Asya accidentally stepped through the gimmicked part of the stage and Arquette fell in later, leaving Page to take an unscripted bump through a table. Only in WCW. I mean ONLY in WCW. Who else could screw up something that badly?

**Overall Rating:** F+. It's another night of non-wrestling with a bunch of short matches that they drew out of a hat. If that's not enough, the last half hour of the show was just taking almost the entire roster and throwing them into one match with no build. As I've said, Russo is the laziest writer I've ever seen as his stories revolve around the idea that everything is all over the place with no structure or build to anything. This didn't make me want to see Sunday's show and felt like something you put on when you forgot you had a show to put on. Bad wrestling, bad writing, bad execution, bad everything this week.

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# Reviewing the Review: Night of Champions 2015

So here's the thing: it's pretty clear to me that there's no point in doing one of these things for every Raw. Far more often than not on the TV shows I'll have to stretch to come up with something to talk about and I can't stand it when someone writes just to fill in space. I don't want that to be the case here and I'm not going to do a Reviewing the Review for each week of Raw.

If there's a major point or two that I don't touch on in the weekly column I'll do a separate post for it, but I'm not going to waste my own or far more importantly your time with stuff like "Rusev and Ziggler did this to build to their next match. It's not great but I've seen worse," seven times a week with one or two in depth topics. I'll do one for every pay per view and major Raw's (like this week's) but it's stupid to sit around typing and not saying anything if there's nothing important.

As for Night of Champions, the show was built up very well given what they had to work with. Sting vs. Rollins was destined to be a mess instead a coherent match and that's best for everyone involved. Other than that we have Cena vs. Rollins, which will be good but nothing we haven't seen before. That being said, this looked good on paper and that's more than you can say about most B shows.

The pre-show match was a six man tag where Stardust/Ascension beat Neville/Lucha Dragons in a totally standard match that did nothing for me. Neville and the Dragons did their dives and high spots but Neville tried one too many and got taken out by the Queen's Crossbow. The match didn't advance the story but they did a rematch the next night (another reason not to do these things every week: so many rematches without

anything significantly changing).

Kevin Owens won the Intercontinental Title from Ryback by raking the eyes. This sets up a nice story going forward as Ryback knows he can beat Owens in a straight up fight but Kevin spends weeks ducking him. Well as many weeks as there are until we get to Hell in a Cell because WWE doesn't get the idea that you can have another match in between title matches and not everything has to be linear. It's cool to see Owens getting something after his feud with Cena ended and this is better than nothing. They'll screw up his reign of course but you have to expect that in WWE.

Ziggler and Rusev had a long match that ended when Summer threw a shoe and hit Rusev by mistake, setting up the Zig Zag for the pin. These two had a good story going but then Lana's wrist injury crippled whatever they had going. Now it's just the two of them running around in circles having lame matches without Lana being around to make things more interesting. People complain about Lana being weaker without Rusev, but could it have anything to do with her being a side player to Ziggler's repetitive antics. I'm sure the solution is to put her back with Rusev so it can start all over again right?

New Day retained the Tag Team Titles over the Dudleyz via DQ in a hilariously entertaining match. This was all about Xavier Woods at ringside being the most annoying pest he could do whatever things came to his mind. This is how comedy acts are supposed to go. Notice how much more entertaining Woods has been because he mixes things up.

That's what got on my nerves about people like Santino and Eric Young: they would do the exact same stuff over and over again and almost never added anything new. Woods is doing the trombone thing every week but he changes what he plays and shouts enough different stuff to keep it from getting boring. New Day is an absolute blast and I haven't had this much fun with an act in a long time.

Charlotte finally won the Divas Title from Nikki Bella in a rather strange match. Charlotte tweaked her knee early on and didn't get in any offense until the very end when she hit a spear and hoked the Figure

Eight for the win. Now this can be looked in a few different ways. First of all, there's the idea that Nikki had to keep the pressure on Charlotte but as soon as Charlotte got in a single shot she had Nikki beat. On the other hand, it might have been a way to keep Nikki from having to do any actual wrestling and to just let her do stuff to Charlotte's leg.

On the third hand, maybe it was a legitimate injury and Nikki had to carry things. Either way, it was an entertaining match and Charlotte took the title after Nikki got the all important record. By all important I mean important to WWE alone but I'm sure they think the fans are thrilled. You know, all 800,000 of them that watch Total Divas, none of whom watch WWE already and all of whom I'm sure worship Nikki Bella. Either way, this might actually lead somewhere with the Divas Revolution, even though it died a month ago. Also of note: Ric Flair came out to celebrate and looked happier than he has in years. That's nice to see.

The Shield boys' mystery partner was Chris Jericho. This is the ham sandwich of choices: it's fine, but nothing that is going to blow the roof off the place. The live crowd seemed to like it though and that's always a big help. It's pretty clear that this feud is likely going on for a long time until Ambrose and Reigns realize the only way to stop the Wyatts is to do the unthinkable and reunite the Shield. That's fine for an idea and the response when it finally happens, even if it's clear where they're going, is going to be incredible.

The match itself was fine as Jericho, though older now, is at least still able to work a one off match like this. Strowman looked like a monster out there and that's all he needed to be. Notice that Reigns and Ambrose got to stagger him and even knock him off his feet but not much more. Eventually Strowman is going to lose and most of his character will change, but they're taking their time getting there to make it feel like a big deal.

John Cena got the US Title back from Rollins with a clean pin in easily the match of the night. These two work well together but like so many other things in WWE, the match has been run into the ground so badly that it's almost impossible to get fired up for it again. They did the trading big shots formula by skipping the buildup part, which made for a much

more entertaining match. I don't need to see it again, which is why we saw it again the following night on Raw. I'm also not wild on the World Champion losing a clean fall, but that's apparently par for the course these days.

Cena gave Rollins an AA on the floor before Sting came out to make things a bit more realistic. Yeah the deck was stacked against Rollins, but at the end of the day there's almost no way you can have Sting beat Rollins when he's nearly thirty years older and barely ever wrestles. Sting did everything he could here and pulled off an entertaining match which is all you can ask for. The story here was Sting's neck/spine getting jacked up by the buckle bomb, which hopefully doesn't end his career. Rollins retained with a rollup and that's about as good as they were going to be able to do. Fun match and as good as they could do it.

Sheamus tried to cash in but was foiled by the returning Demon Kane, which we'll get more into later. I knew they weren't doing the real cash-in here because this was the annual cash-in tease that doesn't go anywhere at this time of year because the briefcase has only been hanging over our heads for three months now.

Night of Champions was quite the entertaining show with almost nothing bad and a really fun match between Rollins and Cena. They've got some momentum heading into Hell in a Cell with Undertaker vs. Lesnar being a good choice to headline a B level show. Unfortunately no one is going to be watching because of Monday Night Football but at least the people who are sticking around are getting some good shows.

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# Smackdown – September 24, 2015: Have Fun But Don't Watch

## Smackdown

Date: September 24, 2015

Location: American Bank Center, Corpus Christi, Texas

Commentators: Jerry Lawler, Rich Brennan, Booker T.

We're getting closer to Kane vs. Rollins, likely inside the Cell, as they blow off their feud from months ago on a show where the other Cell match is the real main event. Then again, given that the World Champion is coming off two losses in two days (though he did beat a 56 year old), maybe it's better that he isn't main eventing. Let's get to it.

We open with a recap of the ending to Night of Champions and Kane's personality shift on Raw. I'm kind of shocked but the Kane stuff is entertaining me.

Here's a very enthusiastic Kane in the ring. He's back because the WWE is on fire right now and needs someone with his administrative assistance. First up, he makes Rusev/Kevin Owens vs. Dolph Ziggler/Ryback as well as Roman Reigns vs. Luke Harper with associated family members barred from ringside.

This brings out Rollins who wants Kane to cut out the nonsense. Kane talks about his training in conflict resolution and hopes to have a healthy dialogue to solve these issues. Seth doesn't buy it and asks about Kane attacking him twice. Just like on Monday, Kane has no idea what Seth is talking about.

Then he switches to serious and talks about being a corporate worker, not a demon who wants to inflict incredible pain and punishment upon him



until he begs for mercy. Seth thinks Kane needs help and Kane is willing to take it under advisement. One last thing: Rollins is facing Dean Ambrose in the main event. Ok Rollins is guaranteed to win there right? Ambrose barely ever beats...Dean is going to pin Rollins again isn't he?

Booker thinks Kane has multiple personalities but the old trickster Lawler thinks it's a ruse.

### Roman Reigns vs. Luke Harper

The Wyatts and Ambrose are banned from ringside. These two have fought each other about once every two weeks since late July. Both guys try powerbombs in the first ten seconds and head out to the floor. Harper gets sent into the barricade and then the announcers' table.

Back in and Harper elbows out of a Samoan drop, only to have Reigns power him up on the second attempt. So much for Reigns selling for more than five seconds. There are the ten clotheslines in the corner and they head outside again. Harper nails a superkick followed by the sitout powerbomb, only to have Roman come back with the Superman Punch and spear for the pin at 3:59.

**Rating:** D+. So we're now at the point where Reigns can beat Harper in under four minutes. Therefore, why would I want to see them fight again? To be fair I could have asked that question before as these two have fought what seems like a hundred times this year alone, but they had a good match or two so why not try it twenty times?

### New Day vs. Neville/Lucha Dragons

Before the match, New Day says the Dudleyz are gone after Madison Square Garden and the tables will be saved. Neville kicks Kofi to start and throws Kalisto onto him for a seated senton. All three members of New Day come in and get stared down to the floor as we take a break less than forty seconds into the match. Back with Kalisto in trouble and getting stomped down in the corner as Woods drops to the floor for some tromboning.

Kalisto backdrops Kofi to the floor and makes the tag off to Cara for a

springboard moonsault and elbow to Xavier's jaw. New Day is all sent to the floor, allowing Neville and Kalisto to moonsault from the top as Cara adds a suicide dive. That looked awesome. Back in and Kofi grabs Kalisto's leg, allowing Woods to add a running knee to the head for the pin at 7:33.

**Rating:** C-. The match was fun while it lasted but they really needed a break in a seven and a half minute match? I like the idea of some trios teams running around as it's not like they have anything to do on their own or in a tag team. If the Dragons aren't going to get a run in the tag team scene, let them hang out with Neville and do cool dives.

### Cesaro vs. Bo Dallas

During Cesaro's entrance, we see clips of Big Show squashing him on Monday to make sure you know you're about to watch a loser. Dallas talks about surviving Suplex City and suggests Cesaro Bo-lieve to get over his trip to Big Show Boulevard. Cesaro does four straight nips to escape a wristlock before wrapping his legs around Bo's waist and rolling him around the ring. Back up and Cesaro charges into an elbow in the corner and gets forearmed in the back.

Dallas pulls him to the apron and drops Cesaro back first across the apron. A chinlock doesn't have much effect so Dallas starts working on the back again. Booker thinks the back injury here could be career ending. If jobbing to Big Show twice in a week didn't kill it already, I don't think a few forearms to the back are going to do it. Back up and Cesaro grabs his arm trap small package for the pin at 4:26.

**Rating:** D+. Another short match here but it's nice to see Cesaro win again, even if it's to someone like Dallas. Thinking of Cesaro jobbing to Big Show twice in a row to build up what's likely going to be a five minute match with Lesnar doing the exact same thing he's done to Big Show every time they've fought makes my head hurt but that's life in WWE for you.

We recap Charlotte winning the title on Sunday.

Here are Charlotte and Becky Lynch with something to say. Lawler doesn't

seem to know why Paige isn't with them. Charlotte talks about how perfect the last week has been for her but Paige comes out to interrupt. Paige has never been a team player and doesn't know what came over her. She's glad Charlotte won the title but was hoping that she was in this spot. Paige thinks she deserves some recognition for starting the Divas Revolution.

Charlotte agrees and here's Natalya to interrupt. She thinks the division is as good as it's ever been before but Paige thinks Natalya is a crazy cat lady. Paige knows she's better than Natalya and thinks Natalya let the Revolution pass her by. Now she's trying to latch on to these younger Divas to keep herself relevant. Paige slaps her in the face and walks away. This has some potential, but none of it matters if they're going to just go back to the Bellas in three months.

#### Kevin Owens/Rusev vs. Ryback/Dolph Ziggler

Ever the good coward, Owens tags out before having to face Ryback. Rusev demands Ziggler come in and stomps him into the corner. A dropkick gives Dolph a breather but he walks into a swinging Rock Bottom for two. Rusev: "I beat you Dolph! Now he's going to beat you!" Owens comes in for a few stomps before it's back to Rusev, who is quickly caught in the running DDT as we take a break.

Back with Owens slapping Dolph in a chinlock. Ziggler's running DDT doesn't work on Owens as Kevin throws him down and drops a backsplash. More heavy stomping gets two for Rusev before it's off to Rusev for more of the same. Ziggler slams both heels and makes the big diving tag to Ryback. Rusev's superkick is countered into a spinebuster but Owens offers a distraction, allowing Rusev to hit the superkick. Owens grabs the title and walks out, allowing Dolph to superkick Rusev into the Shell Shock for the pin at 12:45.

**Rating:** C-. Remember when beating Rusev was a big deal? Or when there wasn't a large stable to be made out of people who use superkicks? The one positive thing I remember here is the days when the midcard was strong and how we're getting closer to having one here. There's been a lot of attention given to the midcard feuds lately and the extra effort

is paying off. It's not great or anything, but it's WAY better than it was a few years ago.

Video on Big Show to hype up Madison Square Garden.

The Dudleyz are talking strategy when Renee Young comes in to ask them about New Day. Bubba thinks New Day doesn't act like champions and the titles are all that matter. Notice that Bubba makes sure to get in the date of the show instead of just saying it's in so and so many days or a week from Saturday.

It's a definitive date instead of some point that might change depending on when you're watching the show. That's the old school way of doing things and I wish it was the more common way now. The Prime Time Players come in to say they want a shot after the Dudleyz win the belts. Bubba and D-Von aren't pleased but they shake the Players' hands.

Rollins promises to take care of Ambrose and Kane.

#### Dean Ambrose vs. Seth Rollins

Non-title. Dean starts in on a wristlock before grabbing the champ's head. Seth comes back with choking in the corner as they're in first gear so far. A dropkick puts Seth on the floor and we take another early break. Back with Seth putting on a chinlock until Dean powers up and sends Rollins outside. The suicide dive is blocked though and Seth's top rope knee to the head gets two.

Ambrose comes back again with some chops but the tornado DDT is countered, followed by the low superkick for two. Booker: "Ask me what I think about Dean Ambrose." Rich: "What do you think about Dean Ambrose?" Booker: "He's a fighter." Thanks Book. Dean hits his rebound lariat (called the Lunatic Lariat) and a bunch of strikes followed by a butterfly superplex of all things for two. Dean comes up holding his leg but he's still able to start a nice pinfall reversal sequence for a bunch of near falls.

A backdrop puts the champ on the floor and now Ambrose's suicide dive connects. Dean gets two off a fisherman's suplex (he's mixing it up

tonight) but Seth comes back with an enziguri to put both guys down. Seth is up first with the Sling Blade but the Pedigree is broken up. Instead a buckle bomb puts Dean down but Kane's pyro goes off, allowing Dean to grab a rollup for the pin at 17:33.

**Rating:** B-. The WWE World Heavyweight Champion has lost three times in five days. TV ratings are sinking like a stone and WWE's solution is to treat the World Champion the same way they used to treat the midcard titles. This is supposed to be the guy that is going to be getting the big face turn and push? The guy who keeps losing over and over again? But hey, did you see HHH and Stephanie dancing a few weeks ago and then getting to be all tough with Kane on Monday? Man they're awesome. Finally, anyone want to bet that this win for Ambrose goes nowhere? Just let it be a countout or DQ and it's the same thing.

Rollins grabs the mic and asks if Kane knows who he is. He hurt Sting at Night of Champions and Seth can do the same thing to Kane.

**Overall Rating:** C. This is a show where the wrestling was fine but the booking really holds it back. On the surface, it looks like there's some good stuff here. The midcard is looking stronger, New Day continues to be hilarious, Ambrose looks like he's going to get a push, Reigns looks like he's going somewhere over the Wyatts for a change and Cesaro looks primed for a push. That's what you would think if you just watched this show. Here's what's likely going to happen.

The midcard will likely do the exact same stuff it has done in the past because the writers can't maintain any stories. New Day will continue to be hilarious. Ambrose's win will mean nothing. Reigns will keep feuding with the Wyatts for another three months. Cesaro will be built up and fed to someone who doesn't need the push for a match that is never in doubt for a second.

In other words, WWE is fun if you watch once in awhile and don't follow it long term. Once you start getting your hopes up for something, they're going to come crashing down around you when you realize that WWE would rather spin its wheels and make sure that people don't get too popular for reasons I still can't comprehend. Everyone not named Cena winds up on

equal footing and the numbers keep going down because there's no one worth cheering for. This was a totally watchable stand alone episode but it's nothing more than that.

### Results

Roman Reigns b. Luke Harper – Spear

New Day b. Neville/Lucha Dragons – Running knee to Kalisto

Cesaro b. Bo Dallas – Arm trap small package

Dolph Ziggler/Ryback b. Rusev/Kevin Owens – Shell Shock to Rusev

Dean Ambrose b. Seth Rollins – Rollup

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## **New Column: Copy And Paste**

Note to self: next time, actually post the thing after you write it up.

<http://www.wrestlingrumors.net/kbs-review-copy-and-paste/41869>

# Impact Wrestling – September 23, 2015: It Still Sucks

## Impact Wrestling

Date: September 23, 2015

Location: Impact Zone, Orlando, Florida

Commentators: D'Angelo Dinero, Josh Matthews

Well the invaders are gone and now it's time for the build to Bound For Glory, which is going to take place in the next two weeks because that's all the time we have left. The big story is now Ethan Carter III messing with Jeff Hardy while we wait for a new #1 contender to be crowned. The show basically resets tonight after the GFW guys are gone so let's get to it.

We open with a recap of last week's Lethal Lockdown. It still sucks.

The roster is around the ring as Team TNA and Dixie are in the ring. Galloway thanks Dixie for the chance and talks about how this is their platform to show how much they love wrestling. Dixie makes a five way match for the #1 contendership later in the night. However, Dixie isn't done yet. There's one man who is outside of the family now and she wants him out here right now.

Cue Eric Young, who says he has an iron clad contract with TNA but he hedged his bets anyway. There's nothing Dixie and company can do about it, but Dixie thinks the people around the ring might want to do something. She brings out Sgt. Chris Melendez, who has lost to Eric every single time as Josh points out.

Sgt. Chris Melendez vs. Eric Young

Lumberjack match. Young throws him to the floor to start but the lumberjacks let him back inside. Back in and the fans chant USA as Young is still in full control with a chinlock. Young keeps destroying him with some knees in the corner as Josh hypes up Kurt Angle returning at Bound For Glory. A horrible Samoan drop puts Young down but he pokes Chris in the eye. The prosthetic leg to the face looks to set up the piledriver but instead puts Chris on top for a superplex. Chris shoves him off and hits a missile dropkick for the pin at 5:25.

**Rating:** D. So here's the lesson: if you go to war and get your leg blown off, you'll get to come back to a wrestling promotion that almost no one watches and be one of the least interesting wrestlers of all time before eventually beating an upper midcarder, which will be treated like the most amazing moment in history. Boring match again, because neither of these two are anything worth watching.

The lumberjacks come in to celebrate because they're easily entertained.

The Dollhouse talks about hurting Gail Kim tonight. Jade is thrilled to get the chance. Rebel and Belle are told to go prove their worth to Taryn.

Ethan Carter III tells Jeff Hardy to do what he says tonight or get fired.

Lashley is done with defending TNA and is ready to go to Bound For Glory.

The announcers talk about the elimination match tonight. Josh looks like a tool with his flannel shirt and sleeve tattoo.

#### Knockouts Title: Gail Kim vs. Jade

Gail is defending but Jade jumps her to start. A hurricanrana gets two for the champ but a German suplex gets the same for Jade. Some chops in the corner have Gail in trouble (Pope: "Look at the chest of Gail Kim!") until she comes back with her corner cross body and the Figure Four around the post. Another hurricanrana is countered into a Batista Bomb to give Jade two, only to have Eat Defeat retain Gail's title at 4:24.

**Rating:** C-. The match wasn't bad but they gave away the ending at the



beginning by showing the Gail vs. Kong graphic for Bound For Glory. You think they can afford to make a second graphic for a single match? Gail was her usual solid but dull self here and Jade did her normal stuff to make for a watchable match, even if it was hard to care about because Gail sucks the energy out of any segment she's involved in.

Rebel and Marti run out to beat down Gail but Velvet and Madison make the save. Gail is left alone so here's Awesome Kong for the staredown.

Rockstar Spud, with Kong's music still playing, says he and Ethan are welded together so tonight they fight again for the World Title.

#### X-Division Title: Tigre Uno vs. Kenny King

Time for your monthly defense of the worthless title against the latest opponent who has already left the promotion because they have nothing to do for him. King is also 0-2 since coming back so naturally he's getting a title shot. Kenny shoves him around to start but Tigre comes back with some kicks to the head to knock King outside, followed by a corkscrew dive. King kicks Tigre out of the air and gets two off a tilt-a-whirl backbreaker. A high cross body gets two for the champ but King kicks him into the corner again. Tigre grabs a quick tornado DDT though and the springboard splash retains the title at 5:29.

**Rating:** C. Fun little match but as I said, this means absolutely nothing. The X-Division might have actually died worse than anything else in TNA in the last two years, which really covers a lot of ground. The match happens and then we're done talking about it again for weeks. There's a chance we'll get another title match at Bound For Glory but odds are it's some big multi-man elimination match with no story. That's the major problem for Uno: other than the stupid Donald Trump thing, he hasn't had a story in the three months that he's been champion.

We recap Jeff Hardy being hired by Ethan Carter III against his will. Notice that Carter has said Jeff needs this job to pay his bills. Translation: TNA doesn't pay you when you're hurt, even if you're appearing on TV.

## TNA World Title: Ethan Carter III vs. Rockstar Spud

Carter is defending and has Hardy and Tyrus in his corner. Spud last won a match....in August or so? Spud chops away in the corner but the champ stomps him down to take over. Some running forearms put Carter down in the corner as well but the Underdog is countered into a powerbomb for two. Spud grabs the leg to block the 1%er and an enziguri puts the champ down. Not that it matters as a quick facebuster sets up the 1%er to retain the title at 5:36.

**Rating:** D+. Another quick match that has no time to go anywhere because they have to fit every single thing they can into a single show. There was a time when this match was fun but that was when it was given more than five minutes and an obvious ending. This was more about a quick title defense for Carter, which is fine, but the World Title shouldn't be on the line in a short match in the middle of the show.

Post match Tyrus beats up Spud even more but Jeff refuses to give him a Twist of Fate. Matt Hardy tries to intervene but Tyrus takes him down. Jeff won't hit his brother but hits Ethan instead. This story continues to go nowhere because Jeff can't wrestle, though it still wasn't the most interesting feud in the first place.

Ethan is going to fire Jeff later.

The Revolution is in the ring with James Storm getting in Abyss' face. Abyss yells at Storm and says he's his own man and a TNA original. If Storm ever gets in his face again, Abyss will knock him back to Tennessee. Abyss walks out so Storm calls Khoya out again. Manik says Khoya's name is Mahabali so Storm shoves him down. Manik still won't call him Khoya but stops Storm from hitting him. The mask comes off and Manik walks away as well. Cue Sheera who wants to fight Storm right now. Storm says ok but then walks away.

Galloway talks to the Wolves but it's about being singles wrestlers tonight. All three are cool with that.

There's going to be a four way Ultimate X match for the X-Division Title at Bound For Glory. No opponents are announced yet. I'm as shocked as you

are: a multi-man title match with no story whatsoever, just like almost every title match.

#### Bram vs. Eddie Edwards vs. Davey Richards vs. Drew Galloway vs. Lashley

Elimination rules and the winner gets the title shot at Bound For Glory. It's a big brawl to start until Bram and Galloway have a staredown. Lashley comes back in to clean house but gets sent outside. The Wolves get suplexed by Bram but come back with a double suicide dive. Back in and the Wolves start kicking away at Bram, capped off by a double top rope stomp for the elimination.

We come back from a break with Lashley lifting Davey up for a delayed vertical suplex which no one can break up. Why they would want to break it up isn't clear but I'd assume it's because logic has no place in a Wolves match. Eddie slaps a half crab on Lashley and Davey adds a cloverleaf on Drew. Those go nowhere and a spear from Lashley and Future Shock from Drew take out the Wolves. Down to Lashley vs. Galloway with Lashley taking over off some chops. A powerslam gets two for Lashley and he unleashes the suplexes. The spear hits buckle though and Drew's big boot sends him to Bound For Glory at 14:43.

**Rating:** C-. Well that happened. It's a meaningless five way with no personal animosity and no one that stood all that high above the rest. As usual, TNA has no idea how to build to a match other than Dixie coming out and announcing it. This was ten minutes of average wrestling with little drama and no reason to cheer for anyone in particular. If Drew wins, fine. If Lashley wins, fine. Bram wasn't going to win because he's a violent man and the Wolves aren't winning because they're a team. What was left to care about here?

Ethan and Tyrus are back to call out Jeff for his firing. Jeff throws the sign down and talks about living to create and how the creatures don't live in Ethan's reality. Ethan talks about Jeff having no other form of income and orders him down on his knee to kiss the World Title. Jeff gets on his knee but quits instead of reciting Ethan's speech. Ethan says Jeff is fired and this show is over.

We get a preview for next week to end the show.

**Overall Rating:** D. This company feels like an indy promotion. You establish some characters and have a main title picture, but the rest of the show is spent having random feuds and matches with no real story to them. Wrestlers come and go, no one really gets over, the feuds mean nothing, and then they move on to their next program. The wrestling was just there as usual, meaning it was nothing all that interesting but it was passable for the most part.

This company needs a complete overhaul but that's not possible when they don't even know how long they'll be on TV. Here's the most telling thing for me: their top stars (arguably) are the Hardys. Matt has been defeated by Ethan twice now and Jeff can't wrestle. Those are your big draws? A failure and an injured guy? And we're heading into the biggest show of the year?

TNA's biggest issue right now (aside from no one watching their show and impending cancellation) is connecting with their audience. Everything is all about caring for people who had stories before. Take the GFW story for example. Why shouldn't I like the GFW guys? Because Jarrett was an outsider, who still owned part of the company? I have no reason to care about TNA and I have no reason to care about most of the stories they're telling right now.

### Results

Sgt. Chris Melendez b. Eric Young – Missile dropkick

Gail Kim b. Jade – Eat Defeat

Tigre Uno b. Kenny King – Springboard splash

Ethan Carter III b. Rockstar Spud – 1%er

Drew Galloway b. Bram, Davey Richards, Eddie Edwards and Lashley – Big boot to Lashley

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# NXT – September 23, 2015: Ladies Night

## NXT

Date: September 23, 2015

Location: Full Sail University, Winter Park, Florida

Commentators: Rich Brennan, Byron Saxton, Corey Graves

It's another night in the Dusty Classic as we're moving towards Takeover: Respect with the semi-finals and finals of the tournament as well as a thirty minute Iron Woman match for the Women's Title. Tonight is likely to be about the tournament and filling in the rest of the card for the show on October 7. Let's get to it.

Opening sequence.

## Eva Marie vs. Carmella

Oh this one could hurt. Carmella shoulders her into the corner to start and throws Eva to the floor so we can get a Moonwalk inside. Back in and Eva's suplex is booted out of the building as the announcers talk about Eva not being accepted for her improvements. A big boot drops Carmella for two (fans: "THAT'S A KICKOUT!") and we hit a bow and arrow hold. Fans: "ALL BOTCH EVERYTHING!" Carmella fights back and starts dancing around like Enzo before ramming Emma into the buckle for two. Eva comes back by throwing Carmella to the floor for a big crash and a countout win

at 5:10.

**Rating:** D. So here's the thing: the story makes sense and yeah Eva is going to get a ton of heat when she probably takes the title from Bayley, but a lot of people, myself included, are going to get annoyed at sacrificing everything the women in NXT have built up for the sake of pushing someone because she's occasionally on a reality show that doesn't even draw a million people a week. Yeah that match that sold the Brooklyn show and was all successful and good, but now let's get rid of it for a woman getting on the job training to be the next Nikki Bella. That's life in WWE and it's something we just have to live with.

Nia Jax is still coming. Nothing has changed since Takeover.

Recap of the announcement of the Iron Woman match.

#### Tyler Breeze vs. Bull Dempsey

Their tag team was a failure and Bull is getting in better shape. Tyler uses the referee as a shield to start and is thrown around like a doll. Bull messes with the hair to really get under Breeze's skin, causing Tyler to send him out to the floor. Unlike Carmella though, Bull is able to get back in off a whip to the floor. Must be the Bull Fit. Fans: "BULL FIT WORKS!"

Back from a break with Tyler ripping at Bull's face before opting for a regular headlock. Graves: "Now going down into the trapezius. I learned my anatomy from Gorilla Monsoon." Bull throws him off and gets all fired up as Breeze punches him. Some left jabs drop Breeze but he's able to roll to the ropes before Bull can drop the headbutt. Bull goes up again for some reason, only to have Tyler pull him off for the pin with his feet on the ropes at 10:19.

**Rating:** C. Bull Fit is a nice idea but Breeze winning here was the right idea. Breeze has the potential to really go somewhere in NXT and winning matches and feuds like this are a good sign for him. Dempsey needs to drop some more weight but the fans are getting into the gimmick which is the most important sign.

Clips of the Texas tour.

William Regal brings out Japanese star Kana, whose Titantron video says Asuka. Regal pronounces the new name as "Aska" and asks if there's anything she'd like to say. Asuka says she's happy to be here and wants to be NXT Women's Champion. They sign the contract but here are Dana Brooke and Emma to interrupt. Regal chides them for their rudeness and it gets even worse as they mock Asuka's English. They're the ones who ran Charlotte and Becky Lynch off so Asuka better play nice. A dejected Asuka starts to leave but the fans chant her name. Asuka turns back and smiles before slowly leaving.

Tyler Breeze doesn't have much to say about his match with Apollo Crews at Takeover. Crews comes up and is far more excited about the match than Tyler is.

Feature on the Dusty Classic. Here are the updated brackets:

Samoa Joe/Finn Balor vs. Colin Cassidy/Enzo Amore

Dash/Dawson

Hype Bros vs. Chad Gable/Jason Jordan

Baron Corbin/Rhyno

The Hype Bros and Gable/Jordan are both ready for next week.

Tag Team Titles: Vaudevillains vs. Blake and Murphy

Vaudevillains are defending in the rematch from Takeover: Brooklyn. Gotch shoulders Blake down for two to start and here's Blue Pants to chase Alexa into the ring for a brawl. Both of them head to the back and English slaps a chinlock on Blake. Blake comes right back with a headlock of his own but Aiden armdrags both challengers down with ease. Murphy back suplexes English onto the apron and we take a break.

Back with English still in trouble off a kick to the face and a chinlock from Blake. Murphy's chinlock keeps the match slow until English comes back with a hard slap to the face. Gotch and Blake come in with Simon's

screwy offense taking over. Everything breaks down and Blake gets his knees up to stop Aiden's middle rope senton. English gets two off a rollup and sends Murphy to the floor, allowing Simon to come back in for the Whirling Dervish to retain at 12:17.

**Rating:** C-. That was certainly chinlocky. It was much more boring than bad though as there was almost no chance of the titles changing back here. I'm assuming the winners of the tournament, likely Gable/Jordan, are the next challengers, which makes more sense than anything else.

Enzo and Big Cass are thankful for everything Dusty did for them and want to win the tournament in his honor. They respect Balor and Joe as well, but respect goes out the window next week.

Balor and Joe say Cass and Enzo might be the realest guys in the room but they're the toughest guys on the block and you can't teach that.

**Overall Rating:** C. Not the worst show in the world here but it was much more about setting stuff up for later shows. The tournament is mostly set up now and we have a good chunk of Takeover set with the Iron Woman match guaranteed to take up thirty minutes and the tournament matches filling in most of the rest of the card. Fun enough show here but it was much more of a building episode than anything else.

### Results

Eva Marie b. Carmella via countout

Tyler Breeze b. Bull Dempsey – Pin with feet on the ropes

Vaudevillains b. Blake and Murphy – Whirling Dervish to Blake

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