

Monday Night Raw – December 22, 1997: Russo Done Right

Monday Night Raw

Date: December 22, 1997

Location: Memorial Auditorium, Lowell, Massachusetts

Attendance: 2,403

Commentators: Jim Ross, Michael Cole, Kevin Kelly, Jim Cornette

It's the Christmas show and things are really starting to find their groove. The Royal Rumble is coming soon and it's getting clearer and clearer every week that Steve Austin is the next guy. However we still have Undertaker vs. Kane and Undertaker vs. Shawn to go, as well as Owen Hart running around. Let's get to it.

We open with a recap of the end of last week's show with the LOD being destroyed by D-Generation X and the New Age Outlaws.

Opening sequence.

The arena has a Christmas theme with wreaths and snow falling.

Here's D-Generation X with the guys in bathrobes. Shawn asks if all the little boys have been good this year. Before they get their presents though, HHH has a little bit of business to take care of. The Legion of Doom had a great fifteen year career taken down in a single night by D-Generation X. However, the New Age Outlaws want credit for what happened, but they would be best served by staying out of D-Generation X's business.

As for Owen Hart, HHH won the Rock, Paper, Scissors competition last week and now he gets Owen served to him on a silver platter. HHH tells Owen what he can suck on and now it's time for Shawn to address Undertaker. Back in the Cell, Shawn gave Undertaker the beating of his life and he's never going to lay down in a casket. Finally it's time for the present. D-Generation X disrobes to reveal Christmas boxers, which are lowered to reveal.....something censored by D-Generation X logos. I think I'm better

off not knowing here.

This brings out Slaughter, who points out that Shawn hasn't defended the European Title in sixty days so he can either defend it tonight or be stripped of the belt. Shawn is fine with that, so Slaughter makes Shawn vs. HHH for the title later tonight. They tease a quick argument but everything seems to be fine.

Thrasher vs. Henry Godwinn

On the way to the ring, Henry says the Outlaws owe he and Phineas a title shot. Thrasher crashes into him in the corner and hits a quick cross body for two, drawing in Phineas for the DQ in just over a minute.

The Godwinns lay out the Headbangers and beat them with leather straps.

We recap Dude Love vs. the Outlaws over the last two weeks.

Mankind says that when the Outlaws hurt Dude Love's ribs, they hurt his too. Since they've ruined his eggnog drinking for the year, it's better for him to give the Outlaws a beating than to receive one, starting tonight.

After last week's show, Santa Claus showed up to ask Sable if she had been naughty or nice. Instead he got a kid, who didn't think he was the real Santa. Incensed, Santa throws the kid out. Cue Steve Austin to ask if this is the real Santa either. If it's the real Santa, what did Austin want when he was six years old? Santa thinks it was a Barbie and tiddlywinks. That earns Santa a Stunner and the fans are WAY too excited. Cornette: "He cracked Kris' kringle!"

HHH and Shawn can be heard arguing behind closed doors.

The Rock vs. The Undertaker

Non-title. The Nation offers an early distraction and Rock gets in some right hands, only to charge into a boot in the corner. Another big boot gets two and it's time to crank on the wrist. Old School is loaded up but Paul Bearer comes out for a distraction, allowing Kama to crotch Undertaker for the save. This match might be a bit overbooked. Back from

a break with Rock stomping him down in the corner, followed by the Elbow for two.

Off to a nerve hold on Undertaker as the announcers are talking about what a big win this would be for Rocky. Again, it's not hard to tell a story on commentary. Undertaker's comeback is stopped with a low blow and it's back to the nerve hold. The second attempt at a comeback works a bit better with the chokeslam knocking Rocky silly. A tombstone plants Rock but here's Kane for the no contest.

Rating: C. These two never had the best chemistry but you could see the future of the Rock coming out here. Undertaker was still in his groove at this point and it was cool to see him selling so much for someone a few rungs beneath him. Good enough match, though the Kane ending was pretty obvious.

Bearer calls Undertaker a sham of a man who ran from Kane last week. Another mention of Undertaker's dead parents is enough to make Undertaker lunge for Bearer but Kane punches him back. Undertaker grabs Kane by the throat but lets go and gets beaten into the corner without putting up a fight.

We recap the first hour.

Hour #2 begins.

European Title: HHH vs. Shawn Michaels

Shawn is defending but Owen Hart runs in and nails HHH during the entrances. Slaughter comes out to break it up and Shawn claims conspiracy. Back from a break and, in what is becoming WAY too common of a custom, we replay exactly what we just saw. The match will take place later.

The New Age Outlaws search for Mankind in the bowels of the building but beat up someone who just happened to be down there.

Marc Mero vs. Scott Taylor

Before the match, Mero tells Sable to come out here in her special

outfit, which is a full body reindeer costume. Cornette is livid as Sable doesn't want to come to the ring. The reindeer's nose lights up and Mero throws her out. After the opening bell, Sable takes off the reindeer head and Mero is already distracted. Taylor fires off some chops and sends Marc face first into the mat. A rollup gets two for Scott and that flipping double kick to the back gets the same, only to have Mero grab the TKO for the fast pin.

Mero hits Taylor low post match and loads up another TKO, only to have Brandi come in for the save. Sable takes off the reindeer gear to reveal a rather fetching Mrs. Clause outfit.

HHH says he has everything to gain tonight.

Kurrgan vs. 8-Ball

8-Ball goes after the knee to start but his right hands in the corner have almost no effect. Jackyl keeps talking on a live mic at ringside and the distraction lets Kurrgan get in a cheap shot. Back in and some clotheslines put Kurrgan on his knee but Jackyl grabs his foot. Kurrgan's sideslam is enough for the pin.

Recon and Sniper come in to triple team 8-Bull but Skull makes the save with a 2x4.

The Outlaws still can't find Mankind.

Ken Shamrock vs. D'Lo Brown

Shamrock gets right to the point by taking Brown to the mat by the leg. A fireman's carry and a headlock takeover have D'Lo in even more trouble as the announcers give us one of the first discussions of the Royal Rumble. The belly to belly sets up the ankle lock to make Brown give up.

The Nation is ready to go after Shamrock but the Rock calls them off. Now, Rock knows that his fans want to know how he feels about the Gulf Crisis. Well maybe he'll get into that another day, because now he wants to call the UFC a bunch of has been's. Rock is in a giving mood tonight though and offers Shamrock an Intercontinental Title shot at the Royal Rumble.

Shawn says he's fixing D-Generation X tonight.

The Outlaws find Mankind, who beats the tar out of them as he sings The Christmas Song. Eventually they get him into a walk-in freezer and lock him inside.

Here are Goldust and Luna in with Goldust as a Christmas tree and Luna in a silver two piece swimsuit. Not quite the traditional look, with Cornette describing it as what happened when the nuclear power plant was installed near the North Pole. Goldust reads A Visit From St. Nicholas (the real name of the poem most commonly known as The Night Before Christmas) in a very stereotypical high pitched voice. The real Santa comes out to give candy to the fans before he knocks the coal out of Goldust. As you might expect, it's Vader. Cornette: "I thought it was a jolly fat man in a red suit, and it was!"

European Title: HHH vs. Shawn Michaels

Shawn is defending, meaning nothing has really changed in the last hour. There's no contact for the first minute before they lock up. HHH shoves him down, runs the ropes for about fifteen seconds, and covers Shawn for the pin after no action.

HHH celebrates like he just won the WWF World Title to end the show. Shawn starts to cry and says he's never been so emotionally and physically drained after a match. HHH channels Rocky Balboa and says "YO SARGE, I DID IT!" Slaughter laughs and says, without a microphone, that HHH is defending against Owen Hart last week. D-Generation X has no idea to end the show.

Overall Rating: B. This is what Russo is capable of when he has someone to funnel his ideas into a watchable show. There are still some kinks that need ironing out but the show is still coherent enough and the stories were all advanced tonight. If you cut stuff like the Henry vs. Thrasher match and probably Kurrigan's squash and added that time onto some of the matches, you would have one heck of a show here. Still though, the year is closing out on a hot streak, which is a really nice surprise.

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TNA One Night Only – Knockouts Knockdown III: One Of The Worst Shows I’ve Ever Seen

Knockouts Knockdown III

Date: July 1, 2015

Location: Impact Zone, Orlando, Florida

Attendance: 1,100

Commentators: Jeremy Borash, Rockstar Spud

I’m finally getting back to these things after a few months away. Not because they didn’t air them or anything but because they’re hard to find. Can you blame people for not wanting to put them up though? It’s another series of qualifying matches for a big gauntlet match to end the show because that’s all these things know how to do. Let’s get to it.

The opening video is standard stuff that you would expect here. I’m thinking the “standard” part is going to be a recurring theme here.

Christy Hemme and Jeremy Borash are in the ring to open the show and explain the concept. This brings out the BroMans to judge the women who will be challenging the Knockouts because they need to fill in time. Jesse is dating Angelina Love and Robbie has dumped Brooke and gotten Velvet Sky fired. He's single and ready to mingle. The crowd on the other hand sounds like they're ready to go to a funeral.

After ejecting Christy and JB, Robbie brings out the aspiring Knockouts, lead by Mia Yim (Jade), making this even more dated than it already was. Jesse is handling the interviewing, starting with Mia, whose dream for tonight involves Jesse himself. She thinks of slapping him off the top two years ago, but Jesse says it didn't count because his mom didn't see it. Next up is Alisha from Boston, who keeps correcting Jesse that it's Alisha, not Alicia. She's better known as Alexxis Neveah and isn't interested in going home with either BroMan tonight (probably because she's married to Eddie Edwards).

Su Yung is from Seattle and is asked for her drink of choice. From Starbucks, you start with shots of vanilla and carmel, plus fat free, low calorie soy milk. Much like the other two, Robbie isn't interested in taking a picture with her due to her taste in milk. Next up is someone Robbie has a crush on: Thea Trinidad, formerly known as Rosita. Robbie bends over to pick up his selfie stick but Thea thinks it's disgusting. No picture, but then again you're not aspiring when you're a former champion in the company.

Solo Darling and her furry ears implies that Jesse and Robbie are a couple and thinks adorable is a number. Laura Dennis (Cherry Bomb) lives by the code of sex, weights and protein shakes, which is finally enough to get a picture with the team. Finally we have Mary Kate from Tampa says she didn't come here to play games with these buffoons, but she kisses Robbie for a potential advantage in her match. Robbie: "I LIKE HER!!! I WANT TO MARRY HER!!!" DJZ announces the matches for tonight but I'll leave those for a surprise. Each of the opponents comes out to drag this even further.

This segment ran twenty five minutes, out of a show that runs less than two hours and forty five minutes.

Clips of Gail Kim winning the first competition in 2013.

Clips of Madison Rayne winning the competition last year.

Madison asks Christy Hemme about her family but cuts her off because Madison doesn't care. She promises to win tonight and get her crown back.

Madison Rayne vs. Alisha

Before the match, Madison tells Earl Hebner to hang on a second. Madison asks Alisha what her name is but doesn't care to hear it. The crown belong to her so Alisha doesn't even need to look that way. The opening bell rings over thirty two minutes into the show. A quick rollup gets two on Madison and Alisha sends her into the corner, prompting a demand for a timeout. Alisha hammers away as the commentators have set a record by staying on topic for the first two minutes of a match.

Rayne gets sent outside for a breather before getting two off a rollup of her own. This isn't the most thrilling stuff in the world so far. Madison slams Alisha's face into the mat in her signature way before they hit cross bodies at the same time. Madison takes over again with a kick to the head but stops to yell at Hebner, allowing Alisha to get two more off a rollup. Back up and Madison grabs a rollup (and trunks) for the pin to advance to the gauntlet main event.

Rating: D. Oh man this is going to be a long night. Madison is great as the evil stuck up character but I have a bad feeling we're going to have a bunch of clones fighting the Knockouts. That doesn't make things interesting because it makes the rest of the card feel like a waste of the time before we find out which Knockout is chosen to win tonight.

Thea Trinidad says she's been in TNA before (thank goodness) and she's here tonight get some revenge on Angelina Love for past issues. She talks about the Hardys and Tommy Dreamer mentoring her and this again feels like filling in time.

Angelina Love, with boyfriend Jesse Godderz, says she's awesome and will be the Queen of the Knockouts tonight. Rebel and Crazy Steve come up and honk a horn. Did I mention this was taped a long time ago?

Angelina Love vs. Thea Trinidad

Feeling out process to start until Trinidad gets two off a suplex. Love sends her into the middle rope for some choking, followed by some backbreakers for two. A quickly broken chinlock is countered into a small package to give Thea two. Love comes right back with a Hennig necksnap and it's off to a full nelson with the legs. Back up and Thea kicks her in the face for two, Matrixes away from a kick, and totally botches a bulldog.

After copying three of Trish Stratus' signature moves (minus the springboard on the bulldog), Thea connects with a moonsault but Jesse gets on the apron for a distraction. Cue Crazy Steve to pull him off though, allowing Thea to knock Angelina off the apron and out onto Godderz. Apparently that one crash is enough for the countout to advance Trinidad.

Rating: D. So we had to sit through seven and a half minutes to get to part of the Menagerie causing a countout because Love can get knocked down for ten seconds off what was basically a high cross body. Unfortunately I'd assume we're using this to set up a tag match later in the show because they have no idea how to fill in two and a half hours on a Knockouts show.

Post match Robbie and DJZ come in to help with the beatdown so here's Knux for the save to set up the six person tag for later. Oh and it's elimination rules to make it even longer.

Gail Kim, who is pro women's wrestling, says this is her favorite show of the year. She wants the crown.

Gail Kim vs. Laura Dennis

Before the match, Gail brings up Laura answering an open challenge back in 2013. Gail offers a handshake but Laura pulls her into for a cheap shot to take over early. That's more personality than the other two have shown so far. Gail avoids a charge in the corner though and sends her face first into the buckle, setting up the figure four around the post. Well she is Canadian after all.

Dennis crawls up the ramp so Gail can't dive on her. Back in and Laura gets in a knee to the ribs to take over again before busting out some Cattle Mutilation. Gail rolls out of that and ties up the arm while bending Laura's leg over her shoulder to make it kind of a half crab. The hold looks too awesome to keep it on very long so Gail hits a Stinger Splash and the running cross body to the ribs for two. Eat Defeat puts Dennis away.

Rating: C-. I have a feeling this isn't getting topped tonight. As you might expect, the most talented in ring Knockout there is and the one who has been wrestling for ten years had a good match. Dennis was solid enough out there, but like I've said too often tonight, I can't get much out of them in a seven minute match and a quick promo.

Quick Knockouts music video. Nice job on showing Taryn in her Dollhouse gimmick after showing her as the old version in the arena.

Havok wants to fight Amazing Kong. Yes Amazing.

Solo Darling vs. Havok

Darling has furry ears and a long tail. Heaven help me she's wrestling with the tail on. Havok throws her around to start and it's time to talk about Spud's pajamas. Solo's right hands to the stomach have no effect so Havok puts on a weak full nelson. A backbreaker sets up some choking in the corner, followed by some hard running kicks to the jaw. Solo avoids another kick and comes back with some of the lamest shots to the ribs that I've ever seen. Havok's powerbomb is countered with a hurricanrana but a chokeslam ends Darling in a hurry.

Rating: D. Just a squash here but Darling's offense looked pathetic. To be fair though this was back when Havok was interesting (and employed) so it was cool to see her built up as someone who could fight Kong in a big showdown. Ignore the fact that the showdown wound up being lame of course. Finally, what was up with the tail? I mean....actually no. I don't want to know.

Post match Kong's music sounds like it's starting but Havok says they'll fight tonight.

And now, since filling in two hours and forty minutes when you have music videos, interviews and a twenty five minute promo, here's a fifteen minute match from Impact on November 19, 2014.

Knockouts Title: Havok vs. Gail Kim vs. Taryn Terrell

Havok is defending and this is one fall to a finish. The challengers go right at Havok but get dropped with a double clothesline. Havok throws Gail onto Taryn and then sends her shoulder first into the post. A spinebuster plants Taryn but Gail tries AJ Lee's Black Widow on the champ. Havok is in trouble and Taryn adds an Indian Deathlock for good measure. Somehow Havok powers out of it and they all fight to the floor with Havok catching Terrell, only to have Gail dive on both of them as we take a break.

Back with Havok still on the floor and Taryn rolling Gail up for two. A running flip neckbreaker puts Gail down again but Havok pulls Taryn from the ring and drops her throat first across the barricade. Gail heads outside also but gets spinebusted onto the floor. Back in and Havok splashes both girls for two but Gail is up first and drapes Havok across the top rope.

A kind of Fameasser from the top puts Havok on the floor but Taryn jumps Gail from behind. Terrell takes her to the top but Havok comes back in to make it a Tower of Doom. The champ stacks them up again but misses a middle rope splash. Taryn and Gail break out of a double chokeslam attempt and hammer away until Gail scores with a DDT. A cross body gets two each before Eat Defeat and an RK0 get two for Terrell. Gail rolls up Taryn but gets caught in a sunset flip to give Terrell the title at 14:32.

Rating: B-. This was the best Knockouts match in awhile but it doesn't mean what TNA wants it to be. First of all, as mentioned, Havok has won something like five matches in TNA over the course of six weeks with one of those being a battle royal. That's hardly taking the title off Roode after seven months. Also, Terrell pinned Gail, which likely sets up a showdown later. It's a good match but nowhere near the moment they were hoping for.

Taryn says she wants the crown. These promos have been the exact same thing every time.

Su Yung vs. Taryn Terrell

Yung dances to the ring and freaks out that she's actually getting to face Terrell. So she's Bayley's original character. Feeling out process to start with Taryn grabbing a headlock followed by a shoulder block. Taryn slams her down a few times so Yung shakes her hand in thanks. A monkey flip sends Su down as this is one sided so far. Yung gets in some of her first offense by putting Taryn in the Tree of Woe for some running dropkicks to the ribs. That's about it for Su though as she gets slammed off the top, followed by a missile dropkick and high cross body for two. The Hot Mess (RK0) sends Taryn to the gauntlet.

Rating: D+. It's hard to argue with find fault when I have to look at Taryn Terrell for a few minutes. Young had more charisma than any jobber not named Cherry Bomb yet and that made the match a lot easier to sit through. However, it's still a pretty lame match as we're merely killing time before the gauntlet match.

Speaking of killing time, here's a history of the Knockouts Title video.

Brooke makes fun of Robbie E. and says she wants the crown.

Brooke vs. Mia Yim

First bad sign here: the announcers call Mia by her new name of Jade, even though no one had called her that on this show. That's the extent of talk about Mia though, as they switch over to talking about Brooke's figure. A fall away slam sends Brooke flying to start and Mia gives her a quick Stink Face. Oh yeah we have a theme here.

Mia channels her inner Kevin Owens by telling the crowd to get ready before slapping on a regular chinlock. Brooke avoids a running book in the corner but stops to shake her hips, giving the announcers a new reason to talk about her. After a quickly broken surfboard, Mia misses a Cannonball in the corner, allowing Brooke to come off the top with a mostly missing hurricanrana. Another Stink Face sets up the Teshhocker to

give us another full time Knockout in the gauntlet.

Rating: D. Comedy match without the comedy here as the main roster Knockouts' dominance is getting really old by now. As has been the case with everything else on this show, the squash matches have felt like a way to kill time because they have nothing else to do. Mia is talented but there's nothing she can do in a five minute comedy match.

Video on Awesome Kong (not Amazing Havok) being dominant.

Awesome Kong vs. Mary Kate

You might remember Mary Kate as Rosie Lottalove, though she's since lost well over 120lbs and looks far better. Before the match, Mary talks about talking out Knockouts in her first run (meaning she was so big and horrible in the ring that she injured Daffney) but now she's here to dominate. It makes sense as everyone else seems to be here to do exactly that.

They test out power to start with Mary forearmring Kong in the back. We get a test of strength and Kong takes over almost instantly. They slug it out with Mary actually getting in some shots and putting Kong down with a dropkick. Kong shrugs it all off though and takes Mary's head off with a spinning backfist, followed by a chokeslam for the pin.

Rating: D+. I'm rating this higher because of the remarkable weight loss for Mary and that spinning backfist, which knocked Mary's head off. They're not really hiding the fact that Kong is the one to beat in the gauntlet match so why bother pretending that they're going with anything else?

Havok and Kong stare each other down in the aisle.

We recap the six person elimination tag being set up earlier tonight.

Menagerie vs. Angelina Love/BroMans

It's Crazy Steve/Knux/Rebel for the carnival freaks. Robbie starts with a war/rain dance, followed by a cartwheel. Knux does the same and it's time for a comedy match to fill in time. Steve gets slammed onto Robbie

for two so it's off to Jesse, who can't figure out Steve either. Remember a few months ago with Robbie was scared of clowns? Don't worry because TNA doesn't either.

Off to the girls (you know, the point of the show) with Angelina scoring with a running knee lift. Rebel fights back with kick to the ribs and a delayed slam, followed by the splits legdrop for the elimination. Jesse runs in to roll Rebel up to tie up a second later, meaning we're now stuck with the men fighting on the Knockouts show. The good guys take over with Knux slamming Steve on Jesse for two more but some BroMans' double teaming takes over again.

Robbie's sleeper slows Knux down but he's still able to counter a cross body into a powerslam. Steve comes in to clean house, causing Spud to call the clown a crazy fool. Jesse grabs a quick rollup to eliminate Steve, which JB says makes it 3-1. Knux gets rid of Jesse with a cross body (yes a cross body) before a Sister Abigail puts Robbie away.

Rating: D-. I don't think the men having most of the action in a match on the women's show really requires that much of an explanation. Rebel continues to be there because of how good she looks in trunks and that's about it. Love is out of things to do in TNA and there's no real reason for her to stick around. Granted the same thing is true of the Menagerie, who I actually liked.

In case you haven't had one in too long, here's a video of how the Knockouts got to the gauntlet. You know, all but one of the main roster set, with the one aspiring Knockout being a former title holder in TNA.

Gauntlet Match

Royal Rumble style until it's down to the final two when it's pin/submission. Thea Trinidad is in at #1 and Gail Kim is in at #2. They trade what would have been rollups had there been covers to start until Gail takes over with a neckbreaker. Madison Rayne is in at #3 after what seemed to be a two minute interval. Some clotheslines put Gail and Thea down to start before choking in the corner kills even more time.

After almost nothing interesting in two minutes, Havok is in at #4.

They're barely doing anything here and it's borderline depressing. Thea kicks away at Havok but gets dumped as Taryn Terrell is in at #5. Taryn starts cleaning house until they pair off to get this back to dull. Havok rams Gail and Madison together and it's Brooke in at #6, with Spud wanting us to sing her song. Madison gets eliminated and Gail gets a Stink Face from Brooke. You can ink (not pencil) in Havok vs. Kong as the final from here.

Kong comes in at #7 and if you can't keep track of who is still in there at this point, you're beyond my help. Brooke is thrown out almost immediately and Taryn follows her a few seconds later. Gail tries a high cross body to both monsters and gets dumped out with ease. Now it's one on one with pins or submissions for the win. They trade big shots and Kong scores with a cross body before sitting on Havok's chest for two. Havok's choke takedown (you have to go into the air for a slam) gets two and Kong's chokeslam gets the same. A second chokeslam gives Kong the crown.

Rating: F. We waited two hours for a boring fifteen minute main event with the most obvious winner in the history of obvious winners. The fact that this might have been their best idea is disturbing and makes these shows even more worthless than they seemed to be in the past. I didn't think that was possible but as usual, TNA manages to get worse than anyone thought they ever could.

Kong won't wear the crown and beats up the referee to end the show.

Overall Rating: L. As in a loss, both for and by the Knockouts. This was one of the worst shows that I've ever seen, bar none. They completely failed at any of the objectives they were attempting to achieve and made the division look like the least interesting thing in the history of their promotion. On top of that, it was clear that they didn't even have time to fill in an hour and a half, let alone two hours and forty minutes.

Let's look at the things they used to fill time here: multiple music videos, a TWENTY FIVE MINUTE OPENING SEGMENT, a fifteen minute match from the previous year (plus an extra three minutes for entrances), a bunch of

worthless interviews and recap videos. This show felt like it was nearly half recap/filler and above all else, the BroMans got WAY more time than any of the women with a twenty five minute segment and a ten minute match. Well nearly ten minutes (9:50), or the longest new match on the show by two minutes.

This thing was a disaster and made the entire division look boring and horribly uninteresting. They would have been far better off airing a Best Of show instead because these things aren't working. It was mainly the same women fighting that we've seen for years in some of the worst matches I can remember. Instead of adding time to the matches, they aired an old match and had a long, unfunny comedy segment. I would LOVE to hear someone from TNA defend this mess because I'm convinced it can't be done.

I know TNA had a bad reputation on a lot of things and some of it is unfair, but then you have something like this and how in the world can you argue for them? How? This is their bright idea for the month and something they think is worthy of airing. Instead of ANOTHER gauntlet/tournament, why not just have the girls go out there and have some long twenty minute matches? TNA loves to brag about how awesome the Knockouts are and this is what they give us. This was unacceptable and easily one of the worst shows I've ever seen.

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Smackdown – September 10, 2015: The Red Show

Smackdown

Date: September 10, 2015

Location: Mohegan Sun Arena, Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania

Commentators: Rich Brennan, Booker T., Jerry Lawler

We finally got to the point and had Sting destroy the statue on Raw to end the teasing for the last few weeks. Other than that we also have John Cena vs. Seth Rollins II coming up, which should be a better match and might even get us the US Open Challenges back on Raw. Let's get to it.

Opening sequence.

Here's the Wyatt Family to get things going. Harper says Bray's words will show you the way. Bray talks about how smart Roman Reigns really is but he doesn't care about any single fan or about what any of the fans think about him. If Reigns is ever to fulfill his destiny and become WWE World Heavyweight Champion, the people must get on their hands and knees to bow down to Reigns. Anyone but you Roman.

Dean Ambrose on the other hand is cursed with loyalty to someone he believes to be his brother. Ambrose is missing a few pieces upstairs and deserves a warning. The two groups have become a modern day Hatfields and McCoys and will fight each other forever. It doesn't matter who is joining Reigns and Ambrose at Night of Champions and everyone will fall to the Wyatts. Run.

Cesaro vs. The Miz

Rematch from Monday when Big Show interfered. Miz takes a few moments to take the glasses off so Cesaro, with his ribs taped again, hiptosses him down. The big dropkick knocks Miz off the top and out to the floor, leading to a chase scene. Back in and Miz starts kicking at the ribs before dropping Cesaro across the top rope. Off to a waistlock with Miz's legs but Cesaro turns around and muscles Miz up into a suplex. As usual,

that's scary strength. Some more shots to the ribs have Cesaro in trouble but he grabs the leg and rolls over into the Sharpshooter for the submission at 4:38.

Rating: C-. Basic match here but that's all it needed to be. The rib work was fine and I'm glad they didn't have Cesaro win with a power move while barely selling the ribs. I can live with lifting Miz up into the suplex as it's a single spot instead of doing the same thing over and over again. Also, how nice is it to see Cesaro get a clean fall for a change?

Jimmy Uso is very excited to be Reigns and Ambrose's partner tonight.

Paige vs. Sasha Banks

Again. Both teams get in a brawl before the match and the other four are ejected. Paige grabs a quick rollup and backslide for two each and a sunset flip gets another near fall. With the quick wins not working, Paige knees Sasha in the face to send her outside. Sasha gets in a shot to the ribs to leave Paige laying as we take a break. Back with Sasha choking on the ropes and getting two off the double knees in the corner.

We hit a quickly broken chinlock before a shot to the ribs sets up chinlock's sequel. Paige fights up with a running knee in the corner and some kicks to the face but Sasha pokes her in the eye. Paige bails into the corner before spearing Sasha down, triggering a brawl for the double DQ at around 9:00.

Rating: D+. I really wasn't feeling this one and it came off like a bit way to fill in time instead of having a good match. You would think Charlotte would have played a bigger role here as she has a title shot in four days, though you can almost guarantee that she doesn't, likely due to a Paige heel turn.

Both groups come out to brawl until referees break it up.

We see most of the end of Monday's six man tag and Sting destroying his statue. This eats up ten minutes.

Rollins calls Monday the low point of his career because Sting destroyed the proof of his talent. He's requested a lumberjack match with Ryback

tonight so all of the lumberjacks can see that he's still the best in the world. Sheamus comes up and says Rollins might have three matches at Night of Champions. Or maybe two matches tonight.

New Day vs. Jimmy Uso/Dean Ambrose/Roman Reigns

No trombone this week. Woods goes behind Reigns to start but eventually gets his jaw jacked by an uppercut. Off to Ambrose who stalks Woods around the ring until Big E. comes in and takes Dean's head off with a clothesline. That goes nowhere until Jimmy comes in to clean house as Ambrose takes Woods out with a suicide dive. Uso dives on Woods and Kingston but Big E. pulls Jimmy over the top and out to the floor as we take a break. There's really no reason for this match to continue, other than this match needs to fill in time on this meaningless show.

Back with Jimmy in trouble and Woods busting out the trombone. Kofi slams Jimmy head first onto the mat but Woods charges into a superkick. Roman gets the hot tag and cleans house with a nice tilt-a-whirl slam to Xavier, followed by a string of clotheslines in the corner. The apron kick knocks Woods even sillier and the Samoan drop puts Big E. down. Dirty Deeds does the same to Woods and there's a Superman Punch for good measure. Jimmy goes up top for the splash but the lights go out. When they come back, Jimmy is out cold on the stage. Wyatt's voice says "they all fall down" and the match is a no contest at 13:08.

Rating: C-. So in other words, this was Jimmy Uso substituting for Randy Orton after a long match that didn't change anything. Not a good match for the most part but it got a lot better once Reigns came in and cleaned house. It's a good story but I'm scared of who they might bring in as a partner, especially if it winds up being Erick Rowan or Kane.

Lucha Dragons vs. Ascension

Stardust is with the Ascension and we're just supposed to forget that they got squashed on Monday. Or maybe we're supposed to forget everything they do here because only Raw counts. I lose track sometimes. Cara hits his springboard cross body to Viktor before it's off to Kalisto for some kicks to the face. Everything breaks down for a few moments until Viktor takes Kalisto down with the ST0. The Fall of Man puts Kalisto away at

1:40.

The Dragons get beaten down until Neville makes the save.

Nikki Bella accuses Charlotte of being jealous of her. Charlotte comes in and says Nikki's record attempt ends Monday. Nikki can call her whatever she likes tonight because on Monday, she'll be calling Charlotte champion.

Seth Rollins vs. Ryback

Lumberjack match and non-title in a rematch of Ryback pinning Rollins on Monday. A shoulder puts Rollins down to start but the champ flips out of a suplex. That's fine with Ryback as he throws Seth to the floor, only to have Rollins run back inside and send Ryback into the post. All of the lumberjacks are about to fight and we take a break. Back with Rollins getting two off a Sling Blade but charging into a fall away slam. Ryback starts cranking it up with clotheslines and a sitout powerslam for two.

Big Show starts beating people up at ringside and knocks Mark Henry out. All the other lumberjacks tell him to get out, leaving about half of them left at ringside. A spinebuster puts Rollins down again and Ryback backdrops him onto the remaining people. The heel lumberjacks come in and beat Ryback down until the good lumberjacks make the save. Neville dropkicks Stardust to the floor and moonsaults onto everyone.....this match is continuing. Apparently lumberjack matches are No DQ, meaning Kevin Owens is allowed to trip Ryback, allowing Rollins to hit the Pedigree for the pin at 11:55.

Rating: D+. I'm so glad they threw in the fact that this was No DQ with a minute and a half to go so they could have all of the insanity. It felt like the gimmick was there because it helped them get to the finish, which was their beloved 50/50 booking. I'm so glad that Ryback got to beat Rollins on Monday, only to have Rollins come out on top here to make sure it's all even. You wouldn't want Ryback to get away with a meaningless win. People might start caring about him and that would just be a disaster.

Overall Rating: D-. What a waste of my time. You had four matches and

three of them were rematches from Raw. The one original match was a way to hammer in the exact same point that we covered on Raw with Orton. In case that's not enough Raw for you, how about showing the last ten minutes of the show to fill in even more time? This was a huge waste of two hours and basically a commercial for Raw, which is going to be a commercial for Night of Champions. In other words, this was the least important episode of Smackdown in a long time and that covers a lot of ground.

Results

Cesaro b. The Miz – Sharpshooter

Paige vs. Sasha Banks went to a double DQ when both women brawled

Jimmy Uso/Roman Reigns/Dean Ambrose vs. New Day went to a no contest when the Wyatt Family interfered

Ascension b. Lucha Dragons – Fall of Man to Kalisto

Seth Rollins b. Ryback – Pedigree

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Ring of Honor TV – September 9, 2015: Where They Shine

Ring of Honor

Date: September 9, 2015

Location: 2300 Arena, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Commentators: King Corino, Kevin Kelly

This is a special show as we have a pair of title matches with the Young Bucks challenging the Addiction for the Tag Team Titles and World Champion Jay Lethal defending against Roderick Strong in a rematch from their pay per view draw. This is where Ring of Honor is supposed to shine so let's see how good they can be. Let's get to it.

Truth Martini and Jay Lethal say Strong has already had his shot so this is his final chance for the title.

Strong says he's Mr. Ring of Honor because he wrestles as hard as he can every time he's out there. There will be a winner tonight and he'll be the new World Champion. Good night please get this guy a mouthpiece.

Opening sequence.

Tag Team Titles: Young Bucks vs. Addiction

The Addiction is defending. Sabin is at ringside with Kazarian and Daniels. The Bucks double superkick Daniels during the big match intros and the champs are in early trouble. Matt tosses Nick into a dropkick to put Daniels down again but Sabin pulls Kaz to the floor for a save. That goes badly as well with Sabin superkicking Daniels by mistake, earning him an early ejection. He tries to run back in but gets a double superkick for his efforts.

Kazarian gets kicked off the apron again as we're still waiting on this to get down to a regular tag match. There's a superkick to Daniels but Kazarian shoves Nick off the top to finally take over. Back from a break with Daniels pounding on Matt and dropping him with a gutbuster. We hit

the waistlock on Matt to stay on the ribs and Daniels throws his feet on the ropes because he knows how to be a heel.

Matt comes back with a top rope flip into a Stunner (so much for the ribs) and makes the tag off to Nick. The slingshot X Factor gets two on Kaz and a Cannonball sets up the Swanton Bomb as Kaz is draped over the ropes for two. Daniels comes back in for the save for a release Rock Bottom but the BME hits knees. Kaz slingshots Nick into a cutter but Matt kicks his head off to put everyone down. It's Addiction up first and a downward spiral puts Matt down, followed by a choke but here's the Kingdom to go after Nick.

That goes nowhere as the Bucks get back up for a buckle bomb into an enziguri. The Meltzer Driver plants Kaz but Daniels makes the save, only to blame it on the Kingdom. The referee goes after the Kingdom, allowing Daniels to hit Nick with the title. Matt takes it away and cleans house with the belt until Maria takes it away. The distraction lets Kaz grab a quick rollup for the pin to retain at 13:50.

Rating: B. This was fun but could have been great had there not been quite as much interference. Still though, the Bucks are tailor made for this kind of a promotion and the Addiction are able to back up their antics in the ring. Either way, this was a very fun match and some of the Bucks' stuff defies physics. I wouldn't call this a well done match, but it was incredibly entertaining and that's very good as well.

Wait a second though as cue Nigel McGuinness who says that's not happening on his watch. Since the Bucks just got ripped off, let's add them to All-Star Extravaganza on September 18 in San Antonio.

ROH World Title: Jay Lethal vs. Roderick Strong

Lethal is defending and has the entire House of Truth with him. The fans are split as the guys shake hands because being a heel means nothing in this company. They slug it out to start until Lethal kicks Strong out to the floor. The champ scores with a suicide dive but Strong runs back in for a great looking dropkick as we take a break.

Back with Strong sending Jay into the barricade but Roderick has to fight

off the House of Truth, allowing Jay to get in a superkick. We hit the chinlock back inside before Lethal's fireman's carry into Snake Eyes staggers Strong again. It's back to the chinlock as Roderick is bleeding a bit from the forehead.

Jay finally mixes things up a bit by sending Strong to the floor so the House of Truth can get in some cheap shots as we take another break. Back again with Strong hitting a quick backbreaker, followed by a string of chops in the corner. Lethal blocks another backbreaker out of the corner but Strong starts running the ropes and hitting a quick elbow to the face every time.

Strong misses a jumping knee to the face and the Lethal Combination gets two. The champ's superplex is broken up and Roderick drops a top rope elbow for two of his own. The announcers start talking about Bill Belichick for some point that takes far too long to get to as the guys chop it out again. There's the jumping knee to the head and Lethal is staggered.

Strong's superplex connects but Jay grabs a small package out of nowhere for two. The jumping knee to the face is no sold (oh here we go) and Lethal loads up the Lethal Injection but gets countered by the Sick Kick for two and we take a third break. Back one more time with the referee taking the Book of Truth out of the ring, allowing Strong to hit another pair of knees to the face. Lethal comes back with two more superkicks and a belt shot. The Lethal Injection gets two and the fans are WAY into this. I believe the seventh superkick of the match sets up a second Lethal Injection to retain Jay's title at 25:12.

Rating: B. This is an interesting case as it's a more exciting and better match than the Tag Team Title match but my goodness the repetitiveness of the superkicks and jumping knees really held this back. There's other stuff you can do and it makes the match feel like a video game where you find a single move that works and keep doing it over and over. The drama was solid, but mix that stuff up again. Also, stop no selling a jumping knee to the face, especially when the same move knocked you silly thirty seconds earlier. Not only are you not Hulk Hogan, you're a heel. No selling is a face idea, not for the guy you're booing.

ReDRagon comes out to stare Lethal down to end the show.

Overall Rating: B+. Like I said, this was supposed to be where Ring of Honor shined and they did that here. This felt like a big preview for All-Star Extravaganza and it's a good idea to set up the bigger matches here and give the fans a preview. There are still some things on here that get on my nerves but it could be a lot worse. Fun hour of wrestling here which really did feel like something different than WWE and TNA, which could be seen as a major compliment.

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Impact Wrestling – September 9, 2015: I Just Don't Care

Impact Wrestling

Date: September 9, 2015

Location: Impact Zone, Orlando, Florida

Commentators: D'Angelo Dinero, Josh Matthews

The invasion is on in full force but there's a chance we're just a week away from it ending. Last week both sides agreed to a winner take all

match to air a week from tonight with the winning side owning all of TNA. Other than that we're just a few weeks away from Bound For Glory and the card hasn't been announced yet. Let's get to it.

We open with a recap of last week's events, including the challenge for the winner take all match, as well as Ethan Carter III retaining over Matt Hardy and winning Jeff Hardy in the process.

The announcers talk for a bit before Ethan and Tyrus come to the ring. Ethan talks about the invasion before saying he really doesn't care. There's a rare instance of a wrestler speaking for the masses. Last week Ethan entered God Mode and defeated Matt Hardy to earn Jeff, so now he would like his personal assistant out here. Jeff isn't allowed music but is asked to bring Ethan and Tyrus some water.

Unfortunately he gets the temperature wrong with a totally unacceptable 73 degrees instead of 72. Ethan throws the water on him in a "first day rib" before handing him a big Ethan Carter head on a stick to hold up. Jeff has to read an introduction off a card, making sure to call Ethan very handsome. The champ approves before announcing himself/Tyrus vs. Matt Hardy/Rockstar Spud.

Tyrus/Ethan Carter III vs. Matt Hardy/Rockstar Spud

Matt beats Tyrus up to start before getting to do the same to Ethan. A Russian legsweep gets two and it's off to Spud for some Poetry in Motion, though Carter catches him in midair. Matt helps him out though and a double suplex gets two on Ethan. Tyrus does his job by pulling Spud out to the floor and drives him spine first into the apron to take over. Back in and both villains work over the ribs and back to show some common sense. Spud tries to fight back but gets taken down again with a drop toehold.

Jeff is told to get in a shot with the sign but he holds it up instead. The distraction lets Matt come in off the tag and house is cleaned, including a clothesline for two on Tyrus. Spud doesn't have the same level of luck on Tyrus as he's thrown across the ring with ease. Ethan pulls Jeff in the way of Matt's right hand and tells his new assistant to hit Spud with a chair. Jeff won't do it so Tyrus picks Spud up and hits

the spike to the throat for the pin at 7:30.

Rating: C-. This story isn't very interesting. That's the best way to put it: there's no real reason to care about this story because Jeff can't get in the ring at the moment. Once he does, that's the best they can do? Jeff Hardy vs. Ethan Carter III? That's really not a great match on paper, as I'm sick and tired of seeing Jeff Hardy on top of the promotion, especially when he can't even stay healthy because he's off on a dirt bike somewhere.

We recap Brian Myers and Trevor Lee stealing the Tag Team Titles from the Wolves last week.

Drew Galloway and the Wolves are ready for war.

Taryn tells Rebel to take out one of the Beautiful People.

The Dollhouse jump Madison Rayne until the Beautiful People make the late save.

Here are the Jarretts for their weekly interview. Tonight they start by winning the man advantage in next week's winner take all match and then next week they complete the hostile takeover. First up though, he wants Bobby Roode to come out here and return the King of the Mountain Title. Roode brings out the belt and says he's not giving the belt up because it belong to TNA and the fans.

Bobby takes his shirt off but Karen tells them to chill out because they're acting like children. Karen reminds Jeff that he's a week away from everything he wants and tells Roode that everyone in TNA is outnumbered. The two of them have worked together a lot over the years and Roode needs to think about that.

Eli Drake talks to Kenny King and Jesse Godderz about the invasion but Galloway comes up and says it's time to get serious. They question how good he is in a war so Galloway introduces them to three men who will stand up for TNA: Micah, Tigre Uno and Robbie E., who are promptly beaten down.

Ethan yells at Jeff Hardy for not hitting Spud with the sign. As

punishment, Jeff gets to sell some new EC3 merchandise.

Jesse Godderz/Kenny King/Eli Drake vs. Robbie E./Micah/Tigre Uno

So I guess Bram beat the face turn out of King last week. Micah and King start but a single butterfly suplex sends King off for a tag to Jesse, who is run over by Robbie. Tigre comes in for some headscissors on Drake before it's back to Micah to start in on the arm. Micah is taken into the corner and some triple teaming has him in trouble. That only lasts a few seconds before a double clothesline allows the tag to Uno. Tigre grabs a tornado DDT on King before the BroMans are both tagged in. Everything breaks down and we hit the parade of secondary finishers, capped off by the Boom Drop finishing off Jesse at 7:00.

Rating: C. It was fine and a pretty decent six man but this six guys doing moves to each other for a few minutes. It's rarely a good sign when you have a match going on for the sake of having a match going on but that's what these six guys were doing here. The invasion and the impending (still potential) cancellation has crippled this show, which didn't really have a lot of energy in the first place. However, what does it say when a match with barely any story is one of the better things they've aired in a few weeks?

Knockouts Title: Gail Kim vs. Brooke

Brooke is defending but the announcers immediately start bowing down to Gail, just in case we forget that she's the most awesome and amazing Knockout of all time. A headlock has Gail in trouble to start and Brooke kicks her out to the floor. Back in and a middle rope X Factor gets two for the champ but Gail grabs an armbar/headscissors combo to slow things down.

They roll around on the mat until Brooke lays on Gail's back and puts on a chinlock at the same time. It's kind of like a bad Last Chancery but the way she's looking makes it look like the hold wouldn't have much effect. Both of them try cross bodies but here's Lei'D Tapa to grab the title belt. The Tess Shocker gets two but Brooke lets up when she sees Tapa with the title. She dives on Tapa but stops to pose, allowing Tapa to hit her with the belt for the DQ at 6:08.

Rating: C-. The match was good enough except for the fact that NO ONE CARES ABOUT LEI'D TAPA. No one cared about her when she somehow got the Gut Check win over Ivelisse, no one cared about her first run in TNA and no one cares about this run in TNA. She's just there to look intimidating and can't do anything else, basically making her a less talented version of her uncle. As for the match between the female Lance Storm and Billy Gunn, I've seen worse but taking the title off Taryn and putting it on Brooke was a bad idea and killed whatever momentum they had.

Post match Awesome Kong comes out and beats up Tapa before picking up the title.

Jeff Jarrett gives Team GFW a pep talk.

Jeff Hardy talks to Galloway about standing up for TNA but Ethan comes in to give him gear to clean. Hardy tells Galloway to take the title away soon. That sounds like a Bound For Glory tease.

Tag Team Titles: Brian Myers/Trevor Lee vs. Wolves

Myers and Lee are defending after winning the belts last week. The Wolves meet them in the aisle and clean house, followed by a double suicide dive to take the champs down. Back in and the brawling continues with Trevor hitting a kind of running belly to belly (that's a very new one) for two on Edwards as we get into a standard formula. Eddie fights out of the double teaming and makes the tag to Davey for the "make a guy DDT his partner" spot, followed by a superplex for two on Lee.

An enziguri into a German suplex gets the same with Myers making a save. Myers hits a quick downward spiral to set up Lee's German suplex for two on Edwards as the tagging has already been forgotten. Edwards avoids a running knee to the face and the powerbomb/Backstabber combination plants Lee. Sonjay Dutt makes the save and decks the referee but here's Earl Hebner to shove Dutt down, leaving Edwards to tombstone Lee to regain the belts at 7:10.

Rating: C. WELL THAT WAS POINTLESS. We just spent a week

freaking out over Myers and Lee winning the belts and the Wolves have them back a week later? As usual, TNA has to rush through everything because they're about to be canceled and they think the worst invasion of all time is going to be enough to save them. This lack of drama over the belts didn't make me care and continues to make the GFW guys look like losers who have to cheat to come close to being on TNA's level.

Here's Sgt. Chris Melendez to say he doesn't mind missing his leg. He's still on his last leg so he's willing to fight Eric Young one more time. Young brings out the leg with the words "my leg" written on it like a trophy. If Melendez is a hero, Young never wants to be one because heroes always fail. Kurt Angle learned what it was like to face Eric Young and now he's out on his couch. Melendez says he'll never quit because he's always here to fight. Young offers to fight right now but shoves Melendez down. He'll fight Chris again but Eric will never give the leg back.

Team TNA is ready for the captains' match tonight.

Josh Matthews sits down with Mahabali Sheera, who can't believe he's here. He arrived and met Manik, who introduced him to James Storm and the Revolution. Sheera promises that he's coming for James Storm and will get his revenge. Some of this was in whatever foreign language he speaks but thankfully there were some subtitles. He gets Abyss next week.

Drew Galloway vs. Chris Mordetzky

Lumberjack match and the winner's team gets the one man advantage next week. Drew clotheslines him down and we take a break less than a minute in. Back with Galloway and Mordetzky taking turns being sent outside for some interference from the lumberjacks before Chris scores with a big clothesline. A camel clutch doesn't get Chris very far so he plants Drew with a Sky High for two. Both guys go outside again and the lumberjacks stand around because they can't even get that job right.

Back in and the Future Shock puts Mordetzky down but the GFW lumberjacks

pull Drew to the floor. The Wolves take them down with suicide dives but Jarrett runs in with the guitar. Cue Eric Young to take it away though, only to have him knock Drew cold to give Mordetzky the pin at 11:58.

Rating: D+. Oh joy we get more Eric Young. So I guess the question now is does Bobby Roode join TNA to counter Young or does the combined forces of Team Canada take TNA down for good. Mordetzky is fine in the ring but he sounds like a shop teacher in a 90s high school movie. Not a good match here but at least we're getting close to the end of this stupid invasion.

Overall Rating: D. What is on this show that I should care about? We have a boring invasion where most of the wrestlers are either WWE rejects or people that have to cheat to even stay on the level of TNA's midcard. We have Ethan Carter III vs. the Hardys in a feud over Jeff being a personal assistant. We have the Knockouts doing their thing which seems destined for ANOTHER Gail Kim title reign. Finally we have Chris Melendez vs. Eric Young XIV or so over whatever Melendez has left.

That's almost all of TNA right now. There is almost nothing else going on with this show and for the first time, I really don't care about anything on this show. On top of that, we have three shows before Bound For Glory and I doubt we'll get anything announced next week either. I'm actually hoping they go away for awhile, if nothing else so they can get some fresh ideas in here. Really dull show this week as the lame stories are dragging down some actually watchable wrestling.

Results

Tyrus/Ethan Carter III b. Matt Hardy/Rockstar Spud – Spike to Spud's throat

Robbie E./Micah/Tigre Uno b. Jesse Godderz/Kenny King/Eli Drake – Boom Drop to Godderz

Brooke b. Gail Kim via DQ when Lei'D Tapa interfered

Wolves b. Brian Myers/Trevor Lee – Tombstone to Lee

Chris Mordetzky b. Drew Galloway – Pin after Eric Young hit Galloway with a guitar

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Monday Nitro – April 17, 2000: Russo and Bischoff's Bogus Adventure

Monday Nitro #236

Date: April 17, 2000

Location: Metrocentre, Rockford, Illinois

Attendance: 4,345

Commentators: Scott Hudson, Tony Schiavone, Mark Madden

Now this is an interesting show as we're officially into the Russo/Bischoff Era. They've had a week and a pay per view to set everything up so now they have no real excuses left. This is going to be the show where we see what their vision is supposed to be, complete with Jeff Jarrett and the New Blood on top. Let's get to it.

We open with a stills package from last night, including Hart vs. Mancow. The worst part: we're not done with Mancow this year.

Opening sequence.

New York, New York plays as papers fall from the ceiling. All of the new champions (sans Funk of course and Jarrett) come out as they're covered in balloons for a big celebration. Russo says all the booing doesn't change the fact that he's better than everyone here. Last night, the New Blood took over just like they promised they would. Russo introduces the new champions one by one and promises to come for Funk's Hardcore Title.

The fans are popping the balloons and it sounds like a war has broken out. Russo rips on Jim Ross for never believing in him holding Jeff Jarrett down. That would be your weekly insider shot that most fans didn't get/care about. Jarrett comes out and says this is the greatest day of his life (after the day his child was born that is). He rips on JR as well before talking about not being in Ready to Rumble, even though the stars are beneath him. This brings us to Slamboree, where Jarrett will hang the World Title above the triple cage used in the movie.

Russo brings out Bischoff and Kimberly and we've got a riot squad at ringside. Bischoff makes sex jokes about Page (because that's what the bosses of this company do) and says last night was the whipped cream on the cake of torturing Page. Kimberly goes off about Page making it all about him for years but now it's time for her to be the star.

She starts talking in the third person and calls Bischoff her opportunity. Bischoff goes on and we see Page beating up security in the back. He comes into the arena (in a Sopranos shirt) and goes right into the ring for a beating. The riot squad reveals themselves as the Millionaires Club and the New Blood is cleared out.

So to recap: the bosses get to say their adversaries are shall we say small, Russo gets to take shots at Jim Ross and Bischoff gets to imply that he's sleeping with Kimberly Page. This is more proof that WCW is the playground for whoever is running the company and if the fans get to enjoy it, consider it a bonus.

Here's a recap of what we just saw, in slow motion for no apparent reason.

Bischoff yells at a bunch of guys over what happened. Booker asks why they're supposed to be security so Bischoff tells him he has a short

amount of time to get on his good side. Everyone leaves and Bischoff makes Page vs. Awesome. The security from outside comes in and quits. Hogan calls in and promises to beat Bischoff up in about five minutes. All of this happened in just over a minute.

The announcers recap things, in case the recap we saw or WATCHING THE EVENT ITSELF wasn't enough.

Shawn Stasiak vs. Curt Hennig

Miss Hancock comes out before we get going because they're not even letting the matches start before getting to the angle. Stasiak starts punching in the corner as Hancock takes notes. They slug it out on the floor and Madden takes a bottle of water to the face. Back in and Hancock plays with her pen as Hennig knees Stasiak in the chest. There goes the referee and Curt hooks the HennigPlex. No count so Stasiak gets a foreign object to knock Curt silly, setting up a layout F5 (the Perfect Plant) for the pin.

Rating: D-. This is a good example of everything that is wrong with the way Russo books the shows. Last week Stasiak debuted and attacked Hennig, setting up this match. The ending gives them a reason to continue their feud. However, we still don't know why they're fighting. Stasiak just showed up and started a feud, but given how lame the first match was, I really don't want to see them fight again and with no story, why would I want to keep watching when they come on? It's lazy booking and takes away the most important part of wrestling because Russo still doesn't get it.

Stasiak starts stomping Curt down but we IMMEDIATELY cut to a camera inside a motorcade which brings Hogan, wearing a very 80s bandana, to the arena. Cops stop him but he stares them down and they step aside. Hogan comes in and beats up Stasiak before we take a break. Back with Hogan saying he's heard all the fans talking about him and they're sure that Hulkamania is going to live forever. His critics say he's getting older, but so is every other wrestler in the back. He has a lot left to offer wrestling though (true) and he's not leaving.

Right now though, if anyone wants to come out here and take his spot, come get it. You can mess with his character and his gimmick, but when

you get to what Russo and Bischoff did last week, you're messing with Terry Bollea. They tried to take food out of his kids' mouth (how?), you're messing with the wrong man. That brings him to Kidman, who has been whining and crying for years about all the promoters not using him right. Kidman and Torrie come up on screen with Kidman telling Hogan to come fight him right now. Hogan goes after them and the camera pans back to show Bischoff standing next to the Hummer.

Jarrett doesn't care about Hogan and company because tonight there's an open contract to any non-millionaire for a World Title shot tonight.

Hardcore Title: Terry Funk vs. The Wall

Funk is defending and hits Wall in the head with three chair shots to get it going. Wall will have none of that and knocks Funk to the floor with a chair shot of his own. It's Funk's turn again as he chairs Wall down some more, followed by a moonsault out to the floor. Well of course he did. I mean, his feet hit Wall in the head and he didn't rotate all the way but he did a moonsault at fifty six years old.

Wall piledrives him on the table, which doesn't break, but Funk barely sells it. With that not working, Wall breaks off a piece of barricade and crushes Terry's head. They fight up to the entrance where Funk's head is crushed over and over again in the door of a one person cage. Then a stack of tables falls on Wall, allowing Terry to cover him to retain.

Rating: D+. So after building Wall up for months, they have someone (who I doubt is ever going to be named) drop a pile of tables on him like something out of a screwball comedy so Terry Funk can pin him. To keep track of things, that means Sid and Funk are the two men to pin him. As usual, WCW sets someone up but the old guys are the ones that get to knock him back down.

Kronik (Brian Adams and Brian Clark, better known as Wrath) comes in to ask Russo when they're on for their title match. Russo says whenever he says so but not tonight.

Someone signs Jarrett's open contract but the camera panning over to see the signature is too much to ask.

Page is taking out Awesome and then coming for Bischoff.

Kronik beats up the Harris Twins and come to the ring to do the same to the Mamalukes. Adams grabs the mic and says the tag division is on notice now that they've shown up. Russo better hurry up with their title shot.

Here's Vampiro with something to say. Sting knows nothing about pain and still knows nothing after last night. That was just a taste of what Sting had to go through, because Sting is being devoured at Slamboree. Cue Sting from the rafters with some ball bat shots and talk trash about learning from Flair and Luger. The Death Drop leaves Vampiro laying.

Hogan is still looking for Kidman.

Jarrett tells Russo to deal with the open contract. Russo says he'll go fix him. Of course this is one of those backstage conversations where they never say what they're talking about in a completely unnatural manner.

Diamond Dallas Page vs. Mike Awesome

Page slugs away to start but Awesome runs the corner and back elbows Page in the jaw for two. After a few suplexes, Page gets sent to the floor and Awesome springboards to the top rope for a clothesline to the floor. Since this is WCW, the announcers are all "Oh. That was cool.", before moving on to talking about the storyline. WCW really needed a JR who could act like a big spot was the most awesome thing he had ever seen and take a break from the same plot points over and over again. Awesome misses a charge into the barricade and gets chaired in the back. That goes nowhere so Canyon runs in for the quick DQ.

Awesome loads Canyon up for a powerbomb through a table but Nash comes through the crowd for a save. This would be the second time in about ten minutes where someone looked towards the stage but the other guy came up from behind. The Jackknife puts Mike through a table.

Russo tries to talk someone down but they're behind a door. Another segment that doesn't even try to look natural.

Tank Abbott is here and Madden freaks out.

Douglas and Bagwell are ready for their singles matches with Team Package at Slamboree. Shane wants Luger tonight so here's Luger to agree to a match, with a stipulation that if Russo shows up, Team Package gets the titles. From a singles match.

Here's Tank Abbott to call out Goldberg for the week. His victim this week is the owner of the Chicago Blackhawks, who gets dragged into the ring for a beating. One of Madden's favorite hockey players (Bob Probert, the Blackhawks' enforcer) gets in as well to help break it up.

Hogan gets a tip that Kidman is outside.

Jarrett and Russo bicker some more. Russo will get back to him with an idea of how to solve the problem.

Shane Douglas vs. Total Package

It's Luger in control to start as he pounds away in the corner and kicks Shane in the ribs a few times. Shane comes back with choking but here's Bagwell to keep Shane in control. Bagwell interferes and Douglas gets in a low blow, neither of which lead to a DQ because those don't exist in WCW. A guy in a Sting mask hits Shane in the back with a ball bat and as everyone swears it's Russo (because NO ONE ELSE HAS EVER DRESSED UP LIKE STING), it's Flair, in his second costume of the night. The ball bat shot inside the ring counts for the DQ as it's totally different than the one outside.

Rating: D-. Luger doesn't work as a face or a heel these days, but what can you expect from someone who seemingly has no desire to do anything and has been using the same three or four moves for years now? Shane isn't any help either as he's never been anything great in the ring and is almost all talk.

Russo pulls Shane to the floor and shouts SCREW YOU FLAIR a few times. Again, I don't think we've been told why Russo and Flair hate each other but they hate each other now and that's all that is supposed to matter. Bagwell and Shane shout at Russo for not being here to save them. Yes, because the savior that two champion wrestlers need is a skinny guy from Brooklyn, not the rest of the New Blood.

Hogan finds Kidman but Torrie hits him in the back with a 2x4. Hulk chokes her up against a beam and pulls back to hit her but Kidman makes the save. Kidman gets thrown in the dumpster so Bischoff gets in the Hummer....which won't start. Bischoff runs, allowing Hogan to get in the Hummer and ram the dumpster. Yeah those seventeen years of building up Hogan's character? Screw those. Let's have him turn into a psycho who wants to punch women and uses cars to try to murder people. Oh wait: this is Terry Bollea so it's fine. So the man behind the character is a woman beating attempted murderer. That makes it ok.

Kidman gets stretchered out.

WCW World Title: Jeff Jarrett vs. ???

Oh well. No time to grieve. Instead we have to see the reveal of the mystery man as....Scott Steiner. So a day after the New Blood wins all of the important titles, we already have champion vs. champion and the team already fighting. Steiner gorilla presses Jarrett down to start but charges into a boot to the face. Jeff's high cross body gets two but he gets caught in mid air, followed by a belly to belly for two. The sleeper is countered by a low blow and Steiner puts on the Recliner, drawing in Booker for the DQ. Booker: "You're welcome punk."

Rating: D. Another night, another match ending before it can get anywhere, though well done on having the World Champion look like he can be beaten in three and a half minutes. Booker coming in to redeem himself is one of the few things all night that made sense but it came at the end of another one of Russo's overbooked shows, making it too late to matter.

Again we IMMEDIATELY jump off to see Hogan going after Bischoff with a pipe. Hogan chases him into the arena. A low blow drops Bischoff but here are Vince Russo and Bret Hart. Bret shoves Russo down and gets in the ring with a chair. He looks at both guys, pulls back the chair, and we're done before we can see who he was aiming for.

Overall Rating: D. So that's the first episode of Russo and Bischoff's vision. Put simply, this isn't very good. The story is pretty boring with the old guys going all psycho to protect their spots and the new generation being comprised of slightly less older guys who aren't too

interesting. People like Wall, Booker and Vampiro are regularly losing to the old guys or going out of their way to bow down to Russo and Bischoff, because they're the stars of the show, along with Hogan of course.

On top of that, the show isn't put together well either. This show had 18:32 of wrestling, or 13 seconds less than Ryback vs. Seth Rollins on Raw this past week. Three of the five matches ended in DQ, one ended with someone dropping tables onto the Wall and the other one had a ref bump and foreign object to set up the pin. This was of course after Russo and Bischoff's 15+ minute speech to open the show with shots at JR for no real reason. Oh and don't forget Hogan's five or so segments.

It's becoming clearer and clearer that Russo's hype of change is a bunch of hot air. The show is still all about Hogan, the young guys are being treated like nothings (Buff Bagwell is a champion. You couldn't put say, the Wall with Shane? One talks, the other is a monster. It's kind of a proven formula you know?) and we have a massive heel stable. 1997 is here again, but unfortunately the audience isn't back with them.

No Thunder this week. Not that WCW bothered to tell you that of course.

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NXT – September 9, 2015: Not Everyone Can Be A Horsewoman

NXT

Date: September 9, 2015

Location: Full Sail University, Winter Park, Florida

Commentators: Rich Brennan, Corey Graves

The Dusty Classic continues this week as we get to see a few more first round matches tonight. The tournament has taken the promotion by storm and it's already more interesting than I was hoping for it to be. We're also just about a month away from the next Takeover, which needs a card built up in a hurry. Let's get to it.

Opening sequence.

Peyton Royce vs. Carmella

Royce used to be K.C. Cassidy but this is billed as her debut. Feeling out process to start as they trade rollups, followed by Carmella busting out a moonwalk. A suplex gets two more on Carmella and we hit the chinlock. Carmella fights back up an elbows Royce in the jaw before slapping on a chinlock of her own. Back up and Royce fires off some nice kicks in the corner, followed by a middle rope cross body for two. They're already showing more energy than the Bellas have displayed in a long time. Carmella comes right back with that crossface with her legs for the submission at 5:03.

Rating: D. That's one of the lower ratings I've given an NXT match in a long time but this didn't work. A five minute match doesn't need two extended chinlocks. The sudden finish didn't do it any favors either as this felt like they jumped to the ending instead of building there like a normal match. Royce has some good potential but needs more molding.

Samoa Joe asked Finn Balor if he's ready. The champ certainly is but Joe tells him not to forget his belt. Joe hands him the title, after staring at it a bit first.

In other first round matches, Enzo Amore/Colin Cassady beat Sawyer Fulton/Angelo Dawkins and Scott Dawson/Dash Wilder beat Elias Sampson/Tucker Knight. It's really smart to not air the whole thing on TV as we don't need to every single first round match.

Nia Jax is still coming.

Dusty Classic First Round: Tommaso Ciampa/Johnny Gargano vs. Bull Dempsey/Tyler Breeze

Ciampa and Breeze get things going with Tommaso getting in a great slap to the jaw. It's off to Bull, who is dubbed as gorgeous by the crowd. Ciampa takes him down to the mat so it's quickly back to Breeze, who is taken into the corner and rolled up for two by Gargano. Tyler is trying to recover in the corner and tags out to the big man, who gets kicked in the head upon arrival. Ciampa's running knee to the head gets two and we hit the chinlock.

Back from a break with Ciampa on Bull's back in a sleeper, so Dempsey just falls backwards for the break. Use the natural assets man. Gargano comes in and knocks Breeze off the apron, meaning there's no one there for Bull to tag. Bull fights back on his own with a Bionic Elbow but knocks his partner off the apron again. Gargano grabs a sunset flip and Ciampa makes it a jackknife rollup to pin Dempsey at 8:44.

Rating: C-. This was more of a story than a match though it's always cool to see some indy stars brought in to NXT. Dempsey vs. Breeze could be an interesting match if they have Bull act like his old self, though I'm not sure how far the Bull Fit gimmick can really go. Ciampa and Gargano were fine here but there's only so much you can get out of a short match like this.

The Lucha Dragons are ready for their match and warn Joe/Balor to not overlook them because these dragons breathe fire.

Dana Brooke is mad (though not because she hasn't patted Devon on the head recently) for having to see Bayley win that Women's Title. She turned down a spot in the Arnold Classic in Spain to be here and now she wants her title.

Video on Tye Dillinger.

Dana Brooke vs. Billie Kay

They trade headlocks to start with Billie taking it down to the mat. A headscissors messes Brooke up even more as a weak Total Diva chant breaks out. Brooke slams her into the corner for some shoulders to the ribs as the confidence is back. The handstand choke sets up a chinlock on Kay which quickly switches to a headscissors choke. Brooke stops a comeback with an enziguri and the fireman's carry driver is good for the pin at 5:23.

Rating: D+. These new girls are a far cry from the Four Horsewomen but Brooke is probably the furthest along of all of them and one of the best options to face Bayley. Billie is another one where we can't really tell what's going on in such a short performance, especially when most of it was spent on the mat.

Apollo Crews calls the fans the Apollo Nation. They're ready to take over NXT. Can we please stop calling everything a nation or a team? You can come up with something more creative than that.

Bayley's biggest fan Izzy was at the WWE Performance Center to meet Bayley in person. That's always cool.

Bayley is back next week.

Dusty Classic First Round: Samoa Joe/Finn Balor vs. Lucha Dragons

This is from a Smackdown taping in Providence, Rhode Island with Tom Phillips and Jimmy Uso on commentary. Balor and Cara get things going and a loud NXT chant starts up. The champ tries to slow things down with an armbar but gets caught in a headlock instead. Jimmy is asked advice on how to win the tournament. Jimmy: "Don't get kicked in the face like that!" Balor sends Cara to the floor and dives on both guys and we take a break.

Back with Joe tagging Balor in and the champion being slammed down in the corner. Kalisto gets two off a flipping splash and puts on a waistlock. Finn fights up and gets in enough shots to make the tag to Joe. The

Dragons are thrown all over the ring but Cara comes back with a sloppy tornado DDT for two. Cara tries to charge at Joe in the corner and has to slip out of the Muscle Buster. Kalisto tags himself in and gets two off a quick hurricanrana, only to charge into the release Rock Bottom. The Muscle Buster into the Coup de Grace eliminate the Dragons at 11:16.

Rating: C+. This got a lot better as it went on and the last two minutes or so were really good. The best part here is either team winning would have made sense as the Dragons have been successful in NXT and it's pretty clear that Balor vs. Joe is coming in the near future. It wasn't a great match or anything, but it picked up a pretty lame show otherwise.

Overall Rating: C-. Definitely not their best show but the tournament kept it from being dull. They're rapidly approaching the next Takeover and you can see some of the card, but I wouldn't be surprised if they had the semi-finals and finals at the show to fill in some time. The wrestling wasn't great tonight though and the new featured women need some work. Then again, I said the same thing about Sasha and Bayley about a year ago and they've turned out very well.

Results

Carmella b. Peyton Royce – Crossface leg lock

Tommaso Ciampa/Johnny Gargano b. Tyler Breeze/Bull Dempsey – Jackknife rollup to Dempsey

Dana Brooke b. Billie Kay – Fireman's carry driver

Samoa Joe/Finn Balor b. Lucha Dragons – Coup de Grace to Kalisto

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KB's Review: The Opiate Of The Internet Masses

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Reviewing the Review – Monday Night Raw: August 31, 2015

So....yeah I've missed these for a few weeks. I know I missed the week before this but it's a stretch to do one of these for this show and going back another week would be even worse. Anyway, it's eight days after Summerslam and Sting is back to go after Seth Rollins, despite having losing his only match in the company. Let's get to it.

We opened with Sting and that still doesn't feel right in WWE. Sting was out there to talk about Rollins, but this somehow turned into a love fest for HHH. His speech was about how losing to HHH (who hit him in the head with a sledgehammer) earned his respect and Rollins will never be half the man that HHH is. Sting is going to prove that Rollins hasn't earned the respect that he's claiming, which is Sting's entire character in a nutshell.

In other words, this feud is now going to be about HHH, because it sets

up the feud with HHH vs. Rollins, which has been coming for months now it seems. I like the idea, but it would be a bit nicer if these were shades of gray instead of just making it clear that this is where the feud is going. I'm still not sure if Sting wins the title or not, though they seem to be making it a bit too clear that Sheamus is cashing in. I know WWE likes to beat things over our heads because they think we're idiots, but this is almost too obvious. Therefore, I'm thinking Rollins retains over Sting, which almost guarantees that Sting gets the belt.

Rollins wanted his statue so Stephanie made sure to praise HHH a bit (made sense here for a change) before telling him to go ask Sting. This would be another segment that really didn't change anything but why bother with something like that?

Rusev and Ziggler had a long match that ended in a DQ because this is destined to end in a mixed tag. Well at least it was. Now the interesting part here was where this went for the rest of the night, as Summer would be seen sneaking into Ziggler locker room before then running off screaming as Ziggler came out mostly sans clothing.

This got us into a soap opera which has been going ever since and I hate to admit the fact that I'm kind of loving it. Above all else: they've given me a reason to care. There's a story here that is so over the top and ridiculous that it's hard not to get sucked in, even though I know it's bad. It helps that Rusev is left playing the role of muscle while everyone else does the drama, which is a much better fit for him. Well done all around Well that and Lana's new outfit. That's kind of a big plus too.

The best thing about this story though is I'm not sure if Ziggler cheated on Lana or not. Granted it's about as low stake as you can get, but there's always something good about not knowing where a story is going. It could be either ending here, though hopefully it ends with Ziggler going full on heel again because Dolph being noble and loyal to Lana doesn't fit him in the slightest.

One of the other big stories of the night was Team PCB having a Beat the Clock Challenge for the right to face Nikki Bella for the title at Night

of Champions. Charlotte wound up winning in something not really surprising, but I lost almost all interest in the Divas division (yeah it's not a revolution, no matter how many times they've hammered it into our head that it's a revolution) after the last month wasting our time. The matches were nothing special because of how short the time was, but at least we're FINALLY getting to the title hunt, even if it means we have to listen to Nikki talk about being some empowered woman or whatever.

Ryback beat Big Show in a short match thanks to Miz, which seems to be the blowoff for this feud. I can't say I'm complaining as I really didn't need to see these three fight any longer. Big Show still seems to want to go after Miz, but at least they can't be fighting over a title anytime soon. The match was short and a way for Ryback to show off his power, which he's done about a dozen times on Big Show, which is why the company thinks it's so impressive.

Kevin Owens beat Cesaro in a really good Summerslam rematch where Owens knocked him ribs first into the announcers' table to injure Cesaro's ribs. This was a good win for Owens and wraps up their feud, unfortunately with Cesaro getting swept but fortunately with no rubber match that WWE loves to put on. Owens seems primed for a shot at the Intercontinental Title and that's a great spot for him right now, whether he wins the title or not.

Braun Strowman squashed Dean Ambrose, which is the best thing that he could have done for his first official match. The guy is a monster and he can tear a path of destruction for a few months until someone finally knocks him off. Just don't make it obvious that he's going to eventually be knocked off and everything will be fine.

The Dudleyz beat New Day in a non-title match because they have to have a champion lose once every few weeks, just to keep them interesting you see. Also because they don't have any other teams to beat down besides the ones with the titles. More on that next week.

The big segment to end the show had Rollins demanding his statue back but being told by the Authority that he has to defend both titles at Night of

Champions. Stephanie talked a lot but I usually get lost when she talks because all I can hear are buzzwords and charities that I'll never hear of again because Stephanie has moved on to something else for her cause of the month. She does quite a few charity bits no?

Overall, Raw was a really solid show this week with almost everything serving a purpose or at least being good. Night of Champions is looking like an awesome show instead of the filler show that it so often is. We're still waiting on that statue to be destroyed but I'm sure it's going down soon enough. Good week this time though as they're actually hot right now.

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Kurt Angle Taking A Break From Wrestling, Will Not Re-Sign With TNA In January

[Source](#)

Good. For two reasons.

1. Most importantly, Angle's health. His body is a wreck and

he needs to just go sit at home and relax. There's no need to destroy yourself over and over in a wrestling ring. Go train Olympic wrestlers or something, but stay out of the ring.

2. TNA relies WAY too much on Angle. I get that he's awesome and one of the best ever, but one of the major things holding TNA back over the years has been going back to Sting and/or Angle instead of building up many new talents. With Angle gone (and assuming the company survives), they have to put it on someone new. Or Jeff Hardy because he has star power. Not that the star power does much for them but he does in fact have it.

Angle has said he'll be at Bound For Glory, though not wrestling.