

Summerslam Count-Up – 1999: The Pre-Game Show

Summerslam 1999

Date: August 22, 1999

Location: Target Center, Minneapolis, Minnesota

Attendance: 17,130

Commentators: Jim Ross, Jerry Lawler

This is the end of the summer for an interesting year in the WWF. The main event is the now mega heel HHH and the returning Mankind challenging Austin for the world title, but there's another main attraction: Minnesota Governor and former wrestler Jesse Ventura is the guest referee for the second time in the history of this event. 1999 is a year remembered for a lot of flash and little substance but hopefully that doesn't hold true here. Let's get to it.

The opening video talks about various guest referees over the years, including Mike Tyson and both McMahons. Jesse Ventura talks about how he'll be the law in the ring and doesn't care what happens.

Jesse lectures Chyna and HHH about not cheating. Chyna is allowed to be out there but the pinfall has to be in the ring and it has to be legal.

The recently debuted Chris Jericho yells at Jericholic Howard Finkel for being late.

Intercontinental Title/European Title: Jeff Jarrett vs. D'Lo Brown

Brown holds both titles coming in and Jarrett's manager Debra is in a bikini with a coat over it. Jeff sends her to the back to make sure the fans completely hate him. In the back, Debra offers to escort Brown to the ring to get back at Jarrett. Jeff jumps D'Lo to start but the champion comes back with a powerslam for one. Another powerslam gets two and Jeff can't bail to the floor for a breather. A leapfrog is countered into a short powerbomb for two but Jeff comes back with a sleeper.

Brown is sent to the floor and a baseball slide sends him into the barricade. Ross gets in one of his eye roll worthy lines by saying Brown wasn't safe on that one. I love JR but when he gets bad it's hard not to cringe. A clothesline puts Jarrett over the barricade and Brown pounds away. This is basic stuff so far but not bad at all. Back in and Jarrett gets in some shots to take over as the fans are behind the champion.

Jarrett hits a tornado DDT on the arm and wraps it around the post. The fans are more interested in the recently named Puppies. Jarrett misses a running crotch attack and gets caught in a running Liger Bomb for no cover. A tilt-a-whirl powerslam gets two and a quick legdrop gets two. Brown misses a modified Swanton but here's Debra on the apron. Jeff gets the guitar but here's Brown's training partner Mark Henry to destroy the guitar over D'Lo's head to give Jarrett the titles. Debra of course rejoins Jeff eight minutes after leaving him.

Rating: C+. Nice opener here but the scent of Russo is strong in this one. Debra turned twice within a span of ten minutes in addition to interference and a run-in during a match for two titles at once. These two could clearly have a good match on their own but we had to bog it down with extra stuff anyway. That's Russo 101: yeah it can make things interesting, but at other times it gets in the way of good wrestling.

Edge and Christian are ready for Tag Team Turmoil (a tag team gauntlet match) tonight. They outgrew Gangrel and are ready for his new team: the Hardys.

Tag Team Turmoil

As mentioned, Edge and Christian start against the Hardys which is a layup for a good start. The Canadians are good guys here and we have six teams involved with the winners getting a tag title shot tomorrow on Raw. Naturally it's a brawl to start until we get down to Edge vs. Matt. A DDT puts the Hardy down and it's off to Christian for a double hiptoss for two. Christian BADLY misses a spinwheel kick but it's Gangrel interfering to give the Hardys control.

The Hardys take their shirts off to almost no reaction so you know they're evil here. Jeff hits a slingshot springboard moonsault for two

followed by Poetry in Motion to crush Christian in the corner. Matt takes forever to cover and brings in Jeff for a senton (not yet the Swanton) Bomb for two.

Edge makes the save and allows Christian to hit a double reverse DDT to set up the hot tag. Everything breaks down and it's Edge and Jeff running the barricades to set up a spear in midair. Christian dives onto them both followed by Matt mostly missing a moonsault to take everyone else out. Back in and Edge pulls Matt off the top, setting up a top rope elbow to give Christian the pin.

The third team in is Mideon/Viscera and the big man is starting with Christian. Viscera hits a quick Samoan drop for no cover and it's off to Mideon for a double elbow drop. A knee drop gets two but Christian avoids a middle rope elbow. Off to Edge who speeds things up but gets drilled by a spinwheel kick (again it barely connected but it's more excusable with Viscera). Edge avoids a charging big man and a double shoulder puts Viscera outside. Mideon is speared down for the pin.

Droz/Prince Albert (Tensai) are the fourth team and it's Albert quickly throwing Edge into the corner. JR gets on Jerry for not knowing anything about Albert but Lawler makes a great point: "Look at him and you know everything you need to know." Albert gets two off a neckbreaker as the announcers argue whether football careers matter in wrestling (Hint: most of the time they don't). Christian chop blocks Albert and the Downward Spiral sends Edge and Christian to the next match.

The Acolytes are here before the three count and it's Bradshaw working over Edge to start. Edge comes back with a swinging neckbreaker and a missile dropkick as JR is whiny because Lawler pointed out how stupid the football stats were. Bradshaw powerbombs Edge out of the corner for two and it's off to Faarooq. ANOTHER spinwheel kick barely connects (the production staff isn't on their game tonight) but Bradshaw gets a tag before Christian does.

A belly to back suplex gets two for Bradshaw and it's back to Faarooq for more basic power offense. We hit the chinlock for a bit before the Faarooq spinebuster sets up an arrogant cover for two. Edge gets up for a

DDT and it's a double tag to Christian and Bradshaw. Everything breaks down and Christian gets two off a tornado DDT. Edge drops Christian onto Bradshaw as the Hollys come out before the pin. The distraction lets Bradshaw kill Christian with the Clothesline to get us down to the final two teams.

Faarooq hits a quick Dominator on Crash but Hardcore makes the save. The cousins get in an argument over who gets to fight Faarooq but it's the Acolytes getting to beat up Hardcore. It's back to Crash who has no effect on Faarooq so the announcers bicker some more to entertain us. Hardcore finally gets the tag and dropkicks Faarooq, triggering a brawl between the cousins. Faarooq hits a quick spinebuster on Hardcore for the pin and the title shot.

Rating: C-. This match had the same issues that almost all gauntlet matches have: if these teams can get wins this fast, why don't they do it all the time? The matches are just quick segments instead of actual matches with the longest being a slightly longer version of a TV match. However there was hope on the horizon as Edge and Christian and the Hardys would have a rematch with ladders in two months. Also, a team is coming from Dudleyville in about two weeks. The magic approaches.

The Hollys fight again.

Big Show and Undertaker arrive.

Al Snow grooms his dog Pepper and warns him of Boss Man singing Ethel Merman songs. Good advice actually.

Road Dogg comes out to watch the next match. He wants a shot at the Hardcore Title tomorrow night but here's the brand new Chris Jericho to interrupt him. He's on a raised platform in front of the crowd and this is his PPV debut. Jericho is disappointed in this whole show. He can't believe it but Raw is Snore has been topped by Summerslam. The people here have been conned into paying for it and now they look like fools.

Jericho rips on the roster and says the worst is standing in the ring right now. No one cares about Roadie and his spelling. If Dogg wants to be impressive, spell lugubrious. He makes fun of Dogg's clothes and

haircut and says DX sure sucks. Road Dogg tells him to shut up and Jericho is SHOCKED. Dogg's mama cares about him but he's not sure if he should do the catchphrase because Jericho might take him up on it.

Hardcore Title: Al Snow vs. Big Boss Man

Boss Man is defending and Dogg is doing commentary. Before the match Snow leaves Pepper in a small kennel in the back. Snow: "You know Head came to the ring with me." Snow is waiting on Boss Man on the set and hits a high cross body to get us going. Dogg gets up and is going to be a roving reporter. Snow hits Man with a chair and they go to the back almost immediately.

Boss Man comes back with right hands and breaks a chalkboard over Snow's head. Pepper's case goes upside Snow's head but Snow hits him with the board. Boss Man steals a crutch to blast Snow in the back before sending him into the Pepsi machine. Snow avoids the falling machine and throws Boss Man into the side of an SUV. They open a garage door and head outside before going across the street to a bar.

They're fighting in front of the door and a superkick gets two for Snow. Snow is thrown through the patio furniture for two and we head inside. A shot with the Yellow Pages puts Snow down but he gets up to hit on some chick. Snow hits him with a magazine rack and they slug it out with broomsticks.

We hit the restroom for the required "comedy" spot with Boss Man taking soap in the eye. A beer to Boss Man's face slows him down and Snow chokes him with a chain. Snow moonsaults him through a table but Boss Man is up first. They head into the pool hall and Boss Man hits Dogg with a drink. Roadie comes back with a nightstick shot to give Snow the title in an abrupt ending.

Rating: C. This is one of the more famous hardcore matches and it's pretty harmless goofy fun. The division was at its peak here but the 24/7 Rule was coming to make it a total parody. It was less than eight minutes so it's hard to really complain about this one. Yeah it's bad but it's completely harmless for the most part.

Snow runs back across the street to check on Pepper but has to beat up Stevie Richards and Blue Meanie for some reason.

Jesse warns Mankind about using chairs and how it won't be allowed, but Mankind would rather talk about Geraldine Ferraro's electability.

Women's Title: Ivory vs. Tori

Ivory is defending and Tori is just horrible for the most part. Ivory painted the word sl** on Tori a few weeks ago to set this up. Tori charges in and hits a powerslam for two and it's time for a breather. The crowd is already dead for this and a back elbow gets two for the champion. Tori hits a pair of suplexes and some lame kicks for two. Ivory is loudly calling spots to keep Tori from screwing everything up. The fans chant TAKE IT OFF as Ivory hooks a big swing. Tori comes back with a horrible spear and a middle rope cross body for two. They horribly botch a sunset flip so they do it again with Ivory sitting on Tori for the pin.

Rating: F+. Tori looked good in a bra and tight pants and that's about it. Seriously, she was TERRIBLE and makes the modern Divas look like ring generals. Ivory was trying out there but she was hardly a miracle worker. Trish would debut soon but wouldn't get good for about four more years.

Post match Ivory tries to take Tori's top off but Luna Vachon makes the save, becoming the heel of the segment.

Rock verbally massacres Michael Cole by insulting his tie and implying Cole is a bit coome ci coom ca. Not that it matters as Rock is going to destroy Billy Gunn tonight. This was a bad time for Rock as he had a bunch of nothing feuds until he got back into the title hunt to close out the year.

Billy Gunn has a surprise under a tarp.

We recap Steve Blackman vs. Ken Shamrock. Blackman is recently back from an injury and they've been beating each other up for weeks. The result is another Lion's Den match with weapons hanging from the cage. JR and King do the narration here for some reason.

Ken Shamrock vs. Steve Blackman

This is in the Lion's Den which is that small cage which is NOT ripping off UFC. Not at all. You win by escape only. Blackman starts with the nunchucks but Shamrock comes back with profanity. Blackman chokes him down but gets caught in an armbar. Ken throws the nunchucks away and rams Blackman into the cage. Shamrock pounds Blackman down and whips him into the cage for a high kick to the head.

Blackman blocks a kendo stick shot and fires off kicks of his own before sending Ken into the cage. An atomic drop puts Shamrock down again and Blackman pounds him in the back with his martial arts sticks. Shamrock gets up and runs the cage wall to ram into Blackman with a kind of elbow to the face. A belly to back suplex puts Blackman down but Ken can't quite follow up.

Back up and Blackman hits a quick DDT but Shamrock snaps off a powerslam. An enziguri puts Ken down and Steve pounds away with a kendo stick. A big shot to the head puts Ken down but he comes back with a wicked belly to belly to take over. Ken hits Blackman in the head (shoulder) with the stick...and that's it. No reason is given but I'd assume a knockout, even though the announcers said you had to leave to win.

Rating: D+. This didn't do anything for me. It was basically a hardcore match in a confined area which isn't the most interesting thing in the world. It's a far cry from last year's version with Owen keeping up with Shamrock every step of the way. Granted this is Steve Blackman, a black hole of charisma instead of one of the best of all time. Nothing to see here but it wasn't horrible.

We see Shane attacking Test earlier today.

Test says this is serious tonight.

Test vs. Shane McMahon

This is a Greenwich street fight with love her or leave her rules. Test is dating Stephanie but Shane doesn't approve. If Test wins, Shane stays out of their lives but if Shane wins then the relationship ends. Test has bad ribs but Shane has no backup due to Test injuring every member of the Mean Street Posse. Scratch that theory actually as they come walking out

before the match. Thanks for wasting my time on the video of Test destroying all of them. The Posse has a couch set for them in the front row.

Test takes Shane down to start but Shane hits a quick spear back inside, only to be pounded in the corner. A backdrop puts Shane down as the Posse drinks champagne. Shane is sent HARD into the steps and then into the crowd for a drink to the head. Test catches Shane diving off the barricade and powerslams him down onto the floor. Shane staggers around ringside so Test launches him at the Posse to tip the couch over.

The injured Posse goes after Test and give Shane a mailbox of all things to crack over Test's head. A street sign stuns Test again and there's a framed portrait of the Posse shattered over Test's head. That's only good for two and the fans are getting into this. Shane does a great looking leapfrog and this a jumping back elbow to the face to put Test down. A corkscrew senton (Spiral Tap) of all things misses and Test comes back with right hands.

Another leapfrog is countered into a sweet powerbomb but Rodney of the Posse distracts the referee. Test's big boot hits the referee but he clotheslines Shane to the floor. The street sign puts Shane down again but here's the Posse again to take Test down. They load him onto the announce table so Shane can hit the top rope elbow through Test. For a non-wrestler, Shane can drop a gorgeous elbow.

The referee is back up (why did he need to be bumped? It's a street fight) but Test kicks out at two. The fans are really getting into this. Pete accidentally hits Shane with a sign but Rodney hits Test with his cast. That's only good for two and now the fans are fired up. Patterson and Brisco run out to take care of the Posse and make it one on one. Shane charges into the post and it's a pumphandle slam followed by the flying elbow to get Shane out of Test and Stephanie's lives.

Rating: B. This took a little bit to get going but the fans got into it at the end. It's a great example of a story carrying a match rather than the wild brawling. This was full of weapon shots and interference, but the story behind the match made people care about it. The people were

invested in Test and wanted to see him fight for the woman he loved. That's a classic story and it's going to work every time. Good stuff here.

Stephanie comes out to celebrate post match.

We recap the tag title match. With Vince having been revealed as the Higher Power, Undertaker has been dropped down to an evil tag team with Big Show. They're challenging X-Pac and Kane, who are in the beginning of a nearly year long story. Pac is Kane's first real friend and the other monsters hurt him, so Kane wants revenge.

Tag Titles: Kane/X-Pac vs. Big Show/Undertaker

Kane is in the always awesome inverted attire, meaning it's more black than red. The mash-up of Big Show and Undertaker's themes really doesn't work at all. It's a big brawl to start with Undertaker easily knocking X-Pac to the floor. Kane gets double teamed in the corner but he clotheslines Big Show out to the floor and Pac gets two off a high cross body to Taker. We start with X-Pac against Taker with the big man cranking on the arm. Pac escapes and wisely tags out to give us brother vs. brother.

Taker is knocked to the floor and Pac dives off the apron to take him down. The crotch chop earned X-Pac an elbow to the face and a smile from me. Kane saves his little buddy and takes Undertaker down with the top rope clothesline. Taker comes right back with his running DDT but Kane is up almost immediately. Big Show comes in to throw Kane around and drops him with a superkick.

Since this is a battle of the giants it's time for some choking but we're not to the bearhug yet. A powerslam gets two on Kane and it's back to Undertaker to pound away in the corner. They slug it out and both guys go down with a double clothesline. The hot tag brings in X-Pac who catches Undertaker with a spinwheel kick (actually connects) but Big Show pulls the small man down. Everything breaks down and Pac is crotchted against the post. Show slams Pac down and drops a knee to his chest. The size difference is remarkable when you see them next to each other.

There's the bearhug but X-Pac bites his way out of it. A cross between a chokeslam and the Boss Man Slam gets two for Show but Kane breaks up the chokeslam. X-Pac hits Show low and it's off to Kane to clean house. Everything breaks down again and X-Pac sends Taker into the post. There's a Bronco Buster to Big Show but he pops up and chokeslams X-Pac down....for two? Taker is MAD and goes after X-Pac in the corner before ending him with a tombstone for the titles.

Rating: D. This didn't do it for me at all. I couldn't stand X-Pac around this time and this is a great example of why. The whole idea of his character at this point was he wouldn't give up, which led to him beating a lot of guys FAR bigger than him. I don't have much of a problem with X-Pac against smaller guys, but when he's beating people Taker's size it was very annoying. The match was an extended squash.

Jesse gives Austin the same speech.

Billy Gunn vs. The Rock

The loser has to, shall we say, kiss up to the winner. Billy brings a fat chick with him for Rock to kiss if Rock loses. Gunn jumps him to start but Rock comes back with right hands of his own to send Gunn to the floor. They head up the aisle with Billy being sent into a metal barricade. Rock is sent into it as well and clotheslined down as Billy takes over. Rock comes back with a clothesline of his own as they fight by the Lion's Den. This is really dull stuff so far.

They head back to ringside with Gunn sending him into the steps but being rammed face first into the announce table. Rock puts the King's crown on Billy's head for a right hand. Back in and Billy chokes away before getting two off a neckbreaker. Gunn drops an elbow to the chest and gets two off a bulldog.

A Stinger Splash crushes Rock but he explodes out of the corner with a running clothesline. The floatover DDT takes Gunn down but Rock can't follow up. Rock gets two off a swinging neckbreaker and a Samoan Drop but the Rock Bottom is countered into a Fameasser. The fat woman comes into the ring but Billy goes face first into her. Rock Bottom and People's Elbow ends this a second later.

Rating: D+. What were you expecting here? Like I said, Rock was in a funk at this point and going from lame feud to lame feud with nothing for him to work with. I mean, BILLY GUNN is the best they can do for him at Summerslam? The match wasn't terrible but it was just killing time until the very obvious ending.

We recap the main event. Chyna actually won a #1 contenders triple threat over Undertaker and HHH but HHH went on a power trip, saying it was his shot. Mankind cost HHH a one on one match against Chyna for the shot and then beat Chyna for the title shot himself. HHH attacked Mankind's leg, leading to a fourth #1 contenders match, resulting in a double pin and a threeway tonight.

Jesse comes out first and says he's proud to be a wrestler. Here here!

WWF World Title: Steve Austin vs. Mankind vs. Triple H

Triple H and Austin start fast in the ring but Mankind pulls HHH to the floor and sends him onto the announce table. All three head into the ring with HHH being ping ponged back and forth by right hands from both guys. Mankind offers Austin a handshake but gets punched in the face instead. HHH is knocked to the floor and Mankind misses a charge at Austin to send him to the outside as well.

All three are on the floor now with no one having a clear advantage. Austin clotheslines Mankind down before slugging it out with HHH, allowing Chyna (HHH's manager) to send Mankind into the post. Jesse tries to separate Chyna and Mankind as HHH hits Austin's bad knee with a chair. Ventura asks the crowd if HHH hit Steve with a chair but doesn't do anything about it once they say yes. Mankind is back in now but gets pounded down in the corner by HHH.

A quick Mandible Claw slows HHH down but Chyna breaks it up by crotching Mankind on the post. That earns her an ejection and a lecture from Ventura. Austin is back up now and pounding away on HHH in the aisle. They fight back to ringside where Austin's bad knee is wrapped around the post. A chop block puts Austin down but Mankind is getting back up again. He breaks up a stomping from HHH to Austin, only so he can stomp Austin instead. Now they stomp Austin together to a loud chorus of boos.

HHH puts on a spinning toe hold but breaks up a cover attempt by Mankind, starting a fight between the two of them. HHH is knocked to the floor but Mankind misses a dive off the apron. Austin's knee is almost wrapped around the post again but Mankind intercept it and brawls with HHH into the crowd. A piledriver on the concrete is broken up and Austin fights HHH again. Everyone heads back inside and there's a low blow from Austin to HHH.

The Stunner takes down Mankind but HHH breaks it up with a chair shot. Ventura yells at HHH about it before HHH knocks Mankind out with the chair as well. HHH covers Mankind but Jesse isn't counting a cover off an illegal move like that. Shane runs in to plead HHH's case but gets Stunned for his efforts. Ventura throws Shane out but HHH and Steve clothesline each other down. Mankind loads up Socko and both guys get a mouthful of it but Austin kicks Mankind low to break it up.

HHH loads up the Pedigree on Mankind but Austin clotheslines HHH down to break it up. Austin punches both of his challengers and hits a Stunner on HHH but Mankind breaks up the count at two. Austin sends Mankind into the post but walks into the Pedigree. Mankind pops back up though and knocks HHH down before hitting the double arm DDT on Austin for the pin and the title in a surprise.

Rating: D+. This wasn't all that great of a match. At the end of the day it was a pretty slow paced brawl and HHH wasn't on this level yet. Still though, it wasn't terrible and Jesse added some good moments to the match. This wouldn't wind up meaning much for reasons I'll get into in a bit. It's a nice moment though.

Post match HHH destroys Austin and his knee with a chair, putting him on the shelf for a month.

Overall Rating: D+. This show is a product of the times and political issues kept it from having the big moment it was looking for. HHH was scheduled to win the title to end the show but Jesse didn't want to raise a heel's hand to end the show. The title change would take place the next night on Raw and HHH would have his first title defense on a new show called Smackdown later this week. The show is totally forgettable though

with only the street fight and the main event being notable at all. Not worth seeing but there are worse shows.

Ratings Comparison

Jeff Jarrett vs. D'Lo Brown

Original: B-

Redo: C+

Tag Team Turmoil

Original: B-

Redo: C-

Big Boss Man vs. Al Snow

Original: B

Redo: C

Ivory vs. Tori

Original: F

Redo: F+

Ken Shamrock vs. Steve Blackman

Original: B-

Redo: D+

Shane McMahon vs. Test

Original: B

Redo: B

Unholy Alliance vs. X-Pac/Kane

Original: D+

Redo: D

Billy Gunn vs. The Rock

Original: B-

Redo: D+

HHH vs. Steve Austin vs. Mankind

Original: B+

Redo: D+

Overall Rating

Original: B-

Redo: D+

WOW and I thought 1990 was screwed up.

Here's the original review if you're interested:

<http://kbwrestlingreviews.com/2011/08/03/history-of-summerslam-count-up-1999-the-body/>

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Ring of Honor – August 5, 2015: Taped Shows Can Work

Ring of Honor

Date: August 5, 2015

Location: Terminal 5, New York City, New York

Commentators: King Corino, Kevin Kelly

These marathon TV tapings are starting to become an issue as they're still in the same venue, even after a pay per view elsewhere and as we're coming up on the next pay per view where the cycle starts all over again. Last week's show really didn't work for me but maybe things can pick up again in another stand alone show. Let's get to it.

Roderick Strong is in the back and talks about proving himself against Jay Lethal at Death Before Dishonor in their hour long draw. They went toe to toe for sixty minutes but Lethal couldn't beat him. Nighel McGuinness needs to understand that Lethal's next defense is a rematch with Strong. What Strong needs to understand is that he needs a mouthpiece because he just can't talk.

Opening sequence.

War Machine vs. Young Bucks

Oh joy, another match of hearing SUPERKICK over and over. It's a brawl to start with Hanson and Rowe destroying the Bucks with ease. An old Harris Twins H Bomb drops Nick and Rowe launches him over the top and onto his partner. The Bucks' stereo apron moonsaults are easily caught in midair and War Machine throws them into each other for a cool crash.

Superkicks (what else?) break up a chokeslam off the apron but Hanson shrugs off the Bucks' flippy splashes and takes them down with a double clothesline. That earns him a double superkick to the floor and Nick

follows with a flip dive, only to come up lame. Back from a break with Hanson throwing Matt Jackson back inside as Nick is still down on the floor. War Machine has Matt two on one but here's AJ Styles to check on his Bullet Club teammate.

This also presents another problem with the taping schedule as Styles is still announced as the IWGP Heavyweight Champion but he lost the belt over a month ago. Matt's rollup is countered with a wicked clothesline from Hanson, but he's able to roll away when Rowe tries to powerbomb Hanson onto him. Cue Styles onto the apron as the new partner to help clean house, only to clothesline the referee down by mistake. It's superkick time with Nick Jackson running in, totally fine of course, to help out. The Styles Clash puts Rowe away at 14:12.

Rating: C. So the Young Bucks. I'm still not sure what I think of them as the idea of being cool heels is played out but well done, but at the same time, I really don't like the huge wink at the camera and breaking of the fourth wall as they're as close to flat out saying "yeah we're faces but saying we're cool heels and cheating to make the whole face/heel dynamic worthless." I really can't stand that kind of character but it's something you have to deal with in Ring of Honor and other similar companies as they have to try to be smarter than the fans who want "real" wrestling.

Adam Cole knows where he is in Ring of Honor after his surgery. As far as he can tell, his handshake with Kyle O'Reilly a few weeks back didn't cause any problems in the Kingdom, because he and Kyle have been friends for years. Tonight's match is about respect.

Cedric Alexander vs. The Romantic Touch

Touch is a masked man and an over the top, stereotypical, uh, romantic, I believe played by Rhett Titus. Alexander dropkicks him in the corner during the entrances as Cedric's former partner Caprice Coleman is on commentary, taking issue with Cedric's recent heel turn. A big right hand drops Touch but he sends Cedric to the floor for a flip dive and pelvic thrusting. Veda Scott grabs Touch's leg though, allowing Alexander to kick the middle rope for some crotching. A belly to back suplex into a

backbreaker (Lumbar Check) puts Touch away at 2:45.

Post match Veda says Cedric should be tired of waiting on his time to come. She would never lie to him and Alexander knows what she needs to him: to rip off the Touch's mask and expose him as Rhett Titus. This brings Coleman to the ring for the save but here's Moose for the real save as Cedric runs off.

Jay Lethal and Truth Martini admit that Strong took Lethal to the limit at Death Before Dishonor but now he's going back to the end of the line.

Kyle O'Reilly vs. Adam Cole

These two used to be partners in a team called Future Shock and Christopher Daniels is on commentary. They wrestle around to start and tease a superkick, because that's the one move you always get in Ring of Honor. Kyle grabs a headlock on the mat (fans: "HEADLOCK CITY!") and takes Adam over with another one for good measure as we take a break. Back with Kyle headlocking Adam down a third time.

Cole flips to the apron but Kyle grabs him by the head and drags him back inside. Adam's belly to back suplex still can't break the headlock so Cole bails to the floor. That earns him another headlock with Kyle DIVING off the apron to grab the hold again. Well at least they're trying something different. Cole goes after Daniels for no apparent reason, drawing Daniels in for the no contest at 8:24.

Rating: D+. The headlock thing was an idea and was actually getting entertaining by the end but then they cut the match short to set up the post match stuff. That's fine in this case as they were talking about respect so not really going after each other makes sense. These two probably could have a good match with time and an ending but they got cut off here.

Kazarian comes down to help Daniels but Kyle gets back in and Future Shock clears the ring. Cole says they're tired of this nonsense from the Addiction, so why not settle it right now?

Addiction vs. Future Shock

Non-title. Cole grabs a neckbreaker on Kazarian to start before backdropping Daniels (in street clothes). It's off to Kyle for some chops and kicks to the chest as Future Shock is already rolling with their tandem offense. We take a break and come back with Daniels begging off from Kyle and getting hit in the face for his efforts. Addiction finally takes over and gets to double team for a change with Kazarian suplexing O'Reilly down for no cover.

A running flip neckbreaker drops Kyle again as we're into an old school tag formula here, which is probably why I'm enjoying this as much as I am. Kyle manages to crotch Daniels, allowing the hot(ish) tag to Cole. A Shining Wizard gets two on Daniels and it's time for a Figure Four but Kazarian makes the save with a springboard legdrop. For those days when a regular legdrop just doesn't do it you see. Addiction's powerbomb/neckbreaker combo puts Kyle down but Cole rolls Daniels up for the surprise pin at 8:37.

Rating: C+. I liked the ending here as the wrestlers beat the cocky team when the cocky team started showboating a bit too much. Cole as a face has potential but I'm hoping they keep ReDragon together for a bit longer as I don't see O'Reilly as a solo act. I'm sure this sets up a title shot, which likely sets up Cole's split from the Kingdom. Nice little match here.

Chris Sabin and Bobby Fish run in to keep up the brawling with ReDragon and Cole cleaning house. The Kingdom comes out to stare down the three of them as the show ends.

Overall Rating: C+. This was a better stand alone show than last week as the stories felt like they were advanced better, with the promos from Strong and Lethal making a big difference. Sure they were just basic speeches but it made you feel like you were watching something a bit more important. The matches were all decent at worst and the talking worked well. Good enough show here as we get close to some fresh shows soon enough.

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Smackdown – August 6, 2015: The Lamé Duck Can Kind Of Fly

Smackdown

Date: August 5, 2015

Location: Sleep Train Arena, Sacramento, California

Commentators: Jimmy Uso, Tom Phillips, Jerry Lawler

Summerslam is mostly set at this point so it's time for another supplemental show that can help firm up the midcard a little bit. We aren't likely to see much in the main event scene tonight after everything we saw on Monday, but that's what Smackdown does these days. The show has been fun lately so hopefully that keeps going. Let's get to it.

We get the Piper tribute video and a nice chant from the crowd.

Opening sequence.

Here's Roman Reigns to get things going. After a quick sucking up to the crowd, Reigns says he wants to talk about Bray Wyatt. He thought Battleground was going to be a one on one match but that wasn't quite what happened. Instead it was a family reunion with Luke Harper, and Reigns only has one family member. Reigns asks if the fans want to see a

family war, and shockingly enough, they're more than up for it. That's a challenge for Summerslam and you can believe....fans: "THAT!" So he's got a catchphrase.

Cue Rusev and Summer Rae, as Rusev has Reigns later tonight. Rusev tells Reigns to get out of the ring right now because he has more interesting things to talk about. Reigns thinks this sounds important but Rusev tells him to be worried about their match later tonight.

Roman wants to know what Rusev has to talk about and wonders if it's about turning Summer into a Lana clone. Reigns: "She's not a Barbie." Uh....yeah she kind of is actually. Rusev rants in Russian but Reigns is one step ahead of him again. "This is America baby. We have NO idea what you just said." Rusev is welcome to come down here and have a chat with Reigns in a language that everyone understands but Rusev just walks away.

New Day vs. Mark Henry/Prime Time Players

Didn't we see this a few weeks back? Well to be fair we saw a rematch from last week's show on this week's Raw so I guess this is payback. Kind of? Big E.: "RETIRE ALREADY!" Woods hides from Darren in the corner to start before going right after Young with right hands and headbutts. We get a nice little back and forth wrestling sequence with Darren getting two off an atomic drop and boot to the head.

It's off to Kofi but he's quickly taken to the apron for a belly to back suplex. A big staredown takes us to a break. Back with Titus chopping the skin off Kofi's chest (Jimmy: "THERE GO THE NIPPLE!") before it's off to Henry for a right hand to the ribs. Kofi makes a blind tag to Big E. as Jimmy says he thinks the Lucha Dragons should be #1 contenders. How rare is it to hear someone make an actual pick instead of just saying "oh it could be anyone."?

Big E. sneaks in and takes Darren down as the New Day finally takes over. Woods whips Darren into a kick from Kofi, followed by a superkick. Big E. adds a Warrior splash for two but Young drops him with an enziguri, allowing for the hot tag to Titus. A powerslam plants Kofi but everything breaks down, allowing Henry to tag himself in. Titus catches Woods diving at him and fall away slams him into the World's Strongest Slam for the

pin at 10:56.

Rating: C. Well the ending was cool and I'm hoping this drops New Day out of the title match at Summerslam, or at least opens the doors for another team to get a chance. We've seen the Players vs. New Day twice already and it's really not that interesting. This was a fine match though with everyone doing their thing and even some nice wrestling sequences to fill in the holes between spots.

Clip of Swerved.

Post break New Day says Mark Henry just beat them, not the Prime Time Players. Henry should have retired a long time ago and they will NOT stand for this negativity. They are clean and pristine and the next Tag Team Champions. There's a new chant: "HEY! WE WANT SOME NEW DAY!"

Video on Charlotte.

Charlotte vs. Naomi

Feeling out process to start until Charlotte is taken into the corner for Naomi's headscissors shake, which is still really stupid. Charlotte doesn't take kindly to it either and slaps Naomi in the face, setting up an early Figure Eight but also drawing in Sasha Banks for the DQ at 1:56.

Time for a tag match playa! Who knew Mike Chioda was Teddy Long in disguise?

Charlotte/Becky Lynch vs. Naomi/Sasha Banks

Charlotte takes Sasha down to start before it's off to Becky for a double elbow. Naomi comes in and elbows Becky in the head to take over but Lynch grabs some nice rollups for two each. Some snap legdrops from Becky set up a kneedrop from Charlotte for another two, followed by the rolling headscissors. Tamina offers a distraction because she's still a thing, setting up a superkick to knock Charlotte out to the floor as B.A.D. takes over.

Naomi scores with a basement clothesline for two of her own and it's chinlock time. Jimmy brings up Nikki being the Divas Champion and says

until then, Team Bella is the winning team. I'm digging the stable wars idea, but Nikki needs to defend the thing already. Give her a squash win or something but she hasn't defended the thing since Beast in the East. Sasha's Backstabber sets up a double arm choke with her knees in the back instead of the Bank Statement, allowing Charlotte to roll free and flip Sasha backwards.

The tag brings in Becky for a bouncing kick to Naomi's face, followed by a t-bone suplex for a near fall. That earns her a superkick and legdrop from Naomi and it's time for another chinlock. We take a break and come back with Sasha kneeing Becky in the back and Naomi taunting Becky by making her look at Charlotte. Nice touch there.

Back to Sasha for a double arm choke until Becky is able to dive over for the tag off to Charlotte. A quick spear gets two on Sasha but Naomi comes in without a tag and takes Sasha's place. They fight over a small package and Naomi gets the clean (well as clean as you can be while being in there illegally) pin at 14:58.

Rating: C+. Treat them seriously, get a good match. That's one of the major things about this whole Divas Revolution idea: they're treating the Divas seriously for a change and it's become a much better division. This was another quality match which was given the time to get somewhere, which helps quite a bit. However, GET TO THE TITLE STUFF ALREADY.

Clips of Neville vs. Rollins on Raw.

Stardust vs. Zack Ryder

Before the match we get clips of Stardust calling out Stephen Amell on Raw, setting up a showdown on next week's show. Ryder works on the arm to start but Stardust does a kind of handstand to kick Zack in the head. Off to a bow and arrow hold on Ryder but Zack flips out and scores with a flapjack. A middle rope missile dropkick sets up the Broski Boot but the Rough Ryder is countered, setting up the Queen's Crossbow for the pin on Zack at 3:55.

Rating: D+. I'm not sure where this Stardust/Neville/Amell feud is going (though in theory it's just a match at Summerslam with Amell in the

corner) but I'm getting into this more and more every week. Then again it could be that I'm a comic book geek and really like Arrow and both guys are pretty awesome in their roles.

Stardust is thrilled that Amell is coming to Raw on Monday.

We see Heyman's last rites promo from Raw. The line of "the match bigger than Wrestlemania" is a great touch.

Big Show is throwing punches in the back and says Ryback is like Rocky. The idea is fine, but Show's Rocky voice is horrible. As for Miz, he's trying to turn this part time role into a full time role, and if he doesn't drop it, Big Show is going to turn his face into a Halloween mask.

Roman Reigns vs. Rusev

We get a big staredown to start in a vain attempt to recreate the awesome ending to the battle royal last year. They shove each other around to start with Rusev running Roman over, only to have Reigns do the same, followed by a headlock. Back up and Reigns is flipped over to the apron, where he punches and kicks Rusev in the face like a good gladiator should. Rusev is able to post him though and it's off to a commercial.

We come back with Rusev holding a nerve hold to kill some time. A spinning belly to back suplex gets two on Reigns but he avoids a middle rope headbutt. Reigns finally scores with a clothesline, followed by another clothesline and then a series of clotheslines in the corner. After hitting the apron boot and spitting a bit, Reigns charges into what's called a spinning heel kick but looked more like a flying hip to the face.

Rusev hammers away in the corner until Reigns powerbombs him down for two more. The Superman Punch connects but Summer starts lurking. Cue Lana for a catfight but Rusev nails Reigns with the superkick for two. Rusev freaks out over Reigns getting up at two and walks around long enough for Reigns to spear him down for the pin at 15:30.

Rating: C. Remember when pinning Rusev was a big deal? Well now it's

happened twice in a few weeks with Cesaro and Reigns both getting three on him. It's not the biggest shock in the world as that's the nature of undefeated monsters but it's still a bit disappointing to see. This was fine for a Smackdown main event but not much more.

The show looks to be over but Bray Wyatt's clapping hands appear on screen. He tried to warn Roman that Bray's hands would be the ones that would tear down the Roman Empire. The challenge for Summerslam is accepted. Roman can bring his lunatic because Bray will bring his brother, because Bray welcomes this war.

Overall Rating: C+. This was fine. That's about as much as I can think of for it though. The show had some good wrestling, some story advancement and absolutely nothing that is really going to matter once the next Raw comes and goes. It's the nature of Smackdown: they can do whatever they want and it means nothing, which is likely going to be the case after they move to USA as well, but I can hope at least.

Results

Prime Time Players/Mark Henry b. New Day – World's Strongest Slam to Woods

Charlotte b. Naomi via DQ when Sasha Banks interfered

Naomi/Sasha Banks b. Charlotte/Becky Lynch – Small package to Charlotte

Stardust b. Zack Ryder – Queen's Crossbow

Roman Reigns b. Rusev – Spear

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Lucha Underground – August 5, 2015: Marvel-0us

Lucha Underground

Date: August 5, 2015

Location: Lucha Underground Arena, Los Angeles, California

Commentators: Michael Schiavello, Matt Striker

It all ends here. Well at least it all ends here until they make the announcement of season two. This is the final night of Ultima Lucha and it's a two hour episode, making the biggest show of the year a full on three hour special. The main event is Prince Puma defending the Lucha Underground Title against Mil Muertes, as well as the fallout of Black Lotus and the Cuetos. Let's get to it.

This show is dedicated to Roddy Piper. That's appropriate as he was a huge deal in Los Angeles.

We hear a clip of Cueto's speech on the first show, leading to Konnan pitching Prince Puma to Cueto on the same episode. The rest of the video recaps the rest of tonight's matches. That image of Muertes in the casket and opening his eyes is just chilling. I'm really, really impressed by how well they've set this show up and I've been looking forward to it all week.

Johnny Mundo vs. Alberto El Patron

This is quite the way to open a show. Mundo starts running at the bell and they wind up in front of Cueto's window, which started this whole thing. A big kick to Johnny's head gets things going and Alberto whips him into Cueto's wall, followed by the announcers' table. Alberto starts

after the arm but the referee pulls him away, allowing Johnny to hide under the ring and find some powder to blind Patron.

Johnny cuts out the shenanigans and kicks Alberto in the head like a villain should. They actually get inside for a Mundo chinlock, followed by a running knee to the face. Alberto fights up and hooks a reverse superplex before it's time for a slugout. Patron takes over and hooks a tilt-a-whirl backbreaker followed by the Backstabber, which is kind of an odd series of offense when his finisher is an armbar. I've always like Alberto's simple psychology but if he's going for the arm later, this doesn't make the most sense.

The low superkick misses and Johnny nails an enziguri for two. Mundo loads him onto the top for a big Backstabber of his own for two but Alberto clotheslines him to the floor. His suicide dive hits a knee to the head though, allowing Johnny to hit a flip dive over the top. Back in and Alberto grabs the armbar out of nowhere but Johnny is into the ropes almost immediately. With nothing else working, Alberto ties him in the Tree of Woe for some kicks but misses a baseball slide, sending him shoulder first into the post.

Patron gets tied up in the ropes, allowing Johnny to hit a top rope double stomp as Alberto tries to get up. The End of the World connects for two and Johnny is stunned. Alberto gets up and tries the superkick but Johnny pulls the referee in the way, only to get caught in the armbreaker. There's no referee but it doesn't matter as Johnny escapes and stomps away. Alberto grabs another armbreaker over the top rope but cue the debuting Melina to hit Patron with the AAA Title belt, setting up another End of the World to give Mundo the pin.

Rating: B. Oh yeah this show is going to ROCK. This was awesome stuff and Melina running in is a smart move as she fits in perfectly with the show, especially at Mundo's heel side. You have to expect that at least one of these two is going to get into the title hunt next season, but I'd be down for a rematch. Finally, these two were brought in as the big names and they delivered in their big match. Well done.

Alberto is livid and throws Mundo into some chairs and then through a

window. Melina goes after Alberto like the fire cat she is, earning her a spanking. Striker: "I'm going to rewind that on my DVR." Alberto holds up the title as Mundo is COVERED in blood.

El Dragon Azteca comes in to free Lotus but Dario is waiting on him. The punishment for Azteca entering the temple is death, but as Cueto is distracting him, Lotus reaches through the bars and chokes Azteca. Cueto watches and Lotus hits Azteca in the back, seemingly killing him. Cueto lets her go but she says she's done what she came here for. Now she needs his protection and they're going to "the new temple" but first they unlock Matanza's cage and let out the camera that's inside.

Pentagon Jr. vs. Vampiro

I'm hoping we find out the master, and I'll be surprised if it's anyone but Konnan. Vampiro comes to the ring in what looks like a zombie Pope outfit. Unfortunately it's not a zombie D'Angelo Dinero, which would be a much more interesting look. This is a Cero Miedo match, meaning No Fear. I have no idea what that means but I'd assume it means hardcore/street fight. It seems that I'm right as Pentagon hits him with a chair at the bell and they head outside for more chair shots.

Vampiro, still in the robes, is knocked into the crowd for more of a beating before they head back to ringside. The mats are pulled back for an AA onto the concrete as this has been entirely one sided so far. With Vampiro on the floor, Pentagon just unloads on him with chair shots as Striker wants the match stopped. The referee throws up an X (he's Straight Edge Society?) and we take a rare break.

Back with Vampiro staggering back to the ring for one more swing. He takes Pentagon down with a spinwheel kick and it's time for a bag of tacks. Pentagon screams when he's slammed down onto the tacks but Vampiro is stupid enough to go up top for a flip dive WHEN HIS OPPONENT IS LAYING ON A PILE OF TACKS. He deserves all the holes in his back from the crash.

Pentagon busts out a light bulb tube to break over Vampiro's back before CARVING UP HIS NECK with the pieces. I'm more impressed by that than Pentagon licking the blood off his arm. Vampiro fights up again and slugs away before hiptossing Pentagon through another light tube in the corner.

After doing that, why not rip at the eye holes of Pentagon's mask? He smashes a third tube over Pentagon's head (where do they store those things and WHY ARE THEY IN A WRESTLING ARENA???) but Pentagon backdrops him onto the tacks. As usual, the old, banged up man is able to not only survive this but also gets up and belly to belly superplex Pentagon onto the tacks. It's table time and Vampiro finds a lighter for good measure. The table is lit on fire but, as is the rule in wrestling, if you set up a table you get thrown through it, meaning Vampiro is left rolling around on fire, allowing Pentagon to get an easy pin.

Rating: C+. This was your above average hardcore war with the ridiculous weapons and big spot to end things. Pentagon has somehow turned into a hardcore brawler after spending weeks building himself up as the arm breaker extraordinaire. Fun enough match though, especially given how banged up Vampiro is from all the years in the ring.

Post match Vampiro holds out his arm and demands that Pentagon break it. Pentagon does as he's told and says he's done what he promised his master. Here's the master and it's....Vampiro. Now THAT is awesome as they played up Vampiro and Ian Hodgkinson as two different people, making this about as well done as it could have been. I was thinking it might be Vampiro when he offered Pentagon his arm but I never thought they would actually go through with it. Well done indeed.

Gift of the Gods Title: Big Ryck vs. King Cuerno vs. Sexy Star vs. Bengala vs. Fenix vs. Aerostar vs. Jack Evans

This is basically Money in the Bank but you have to announce a week in advance and the winner will have to defend it, which is a concept that Money in the Bank could REALLY benefit from. The match is without tags and one fall to a finish. It's a wild brawl to start (a recurring theme tonight) with Ryck throwing everyone outside until Aerostar tries his luck with a waistlock.

That earns him an ejection of his own before all six of them get inside and go after Ryck at the same time like a smart group of people would do. Back up and everyone is sent to the floor, leaving Aerostar to hit a big flip dive to take Fenix down, only to have Fenix powerslam him off the

apron. Back in and Evans kicks Cuerno in the head to send him outside for a big dive, which only hits mat as Cuerno is smart enough to step aside. It's Ryck breaking up Bengala's pin on Star before Ryck just starts throwing people around with ease.

As Ryck beats up various luchadors like a cyclops would destroy villagers, Aerostar crawls up to the balcony to dive down onto three masked men, only to have Marty Martinez come in to get in a slap fight with Star. After easily dispatching Marty (because he's a freaking moth), Star dives onto the same pile of masked men, only to be stomped down by Cuerno inside. The Thrill of the Hunt puts Star down but Cuerno opts to roll her outside instead of covering.

It's Bengala coming back in though and cleaning house and monkey flipping Cuerno into Fenix in the corner. A big corkscrew dive takes Fenix down again, only to have Cuerno hit that awesome suicide dive of his to put Bengala down as well. Evans remembers he's in the match and puts Aerostar in a guillotine choke, only to get DDT'd down to break the hold. It's Star back in to beat up Aerostar over a copyright issue I'd assume but here's Daivari to destroy Ryck with a chair for reasons that aren't entirely clear.

Evans hits a springboard splash on Ryck for two but Cuerno makes the save and puts Evans in a surfboard. It's Fenix's turn for a save but he gets caught in something like AJ Lee's Black Widow from Evans. That's fine with Fenix as he flips him up and fires off a bunch of knees to Evans' head, followed by a fire driver (over the shoulder tombstone) to give Fenix the pin and the title.

Rating: C-. These really aren't my thing. They're just a bunch of insane spots with people staying on the ground for long stretches of time until it's time for another spot. Fenix winning probably makes the most sense as Bengala hasn't been around, people would have issues buying Star as the winner (though it would have been interesting), Ryck is an enforcer and Evans is a spot monkey. Cuerno or Aerostar could have been options, but it was really Fenix's match to lose.

Blue Demon Jr. vs. Texano

Yeah and now there's this match because Blue Demon needs a payday or something. Demon has the Crew with him, which likely means this was going to be Chavo Guerrero until he got hurt, which at least would have been a better option. Before the match, Demon hands the announcer a card, saying Cueto has made this No DQ. Ok, enough of the brawls with no rules. We get it already, now go have a regular match. Texano goes right after him to start but has to go after Cisco and Castro.

It's back to the people actually in the match with Texano doing a cool little move in the corner where he'll chop with the right hand and swing through with a left handed clothesline on the follow through. A spinebuster and a powerbomb get two on Demon but the Crew comes in for the save. Cue Chavo with a chair to nail Texano, allowing Demon to get the pin with one foot on the chest, because why let a young guy get a big win when you can give it to a guy pushing 50?

Lucha Underground Title: Prince Puma vs. Mil Muertes

Puma is defending and sans Konnan tonight. There must be a winner, which I really, really hope doesn't mean anything goes. The bell rings and Muertes gets right in the middle of the ring to say bring it. Muertes pounds the champion down with ease when Puma is stupid enough to go right at the monster. They head into the crowd with Muertes continuing his destruction and throwing Puma down the steps. Striker: "This isn't a football stadium or a bingo hall!"

With nothing else working, Puma picks up Catrina and swings her at Mil, driving one of the high heels into Muertes' eye. That's fine with Mil, who whips Puma into the chairs. Puma finally sends Muertes into the barricade, allowing him to use the apron as a springboard to kick Mil in the mask. We get a table, because where would we be without a table, but Muertes rams Puma face first onto the wood. Muertes powerbombs Puma onto the wooden stairs before finally tossing the champ back inside.

Puma gets a breather and tries a suicide dive, only to get knocked out of the sky with a chair shot. Muertes can't send him into a chair in the corner though and gets kicked, down, setting up a big double stomp to put both guys down. Puma tries some flips and gets punched in the face for

his efforts. As usual, why over complicate anything? The champ sidesteps a charge to send Muertes into a chair, setting up a GTS (with a kick instead of a knee) for two.

Muertes just unloads in the corner with forearms to the face until Puma backflips into a kick to the head because he can. Puma is somehow able to roll through some northern lights suplexes (fans: "SUPLEX CITY!" Wouldn't that be ciudad de suplex?) Catrina is freaking out so she holds up the magic stone (that's so stupid but it works here), causing Muertes to rise to his feet and spear Puma through the ropes onto the corner of the table (freaking ow man!), followed by a powerbomb onto the wreckage.

Somehow that's only good for two so Muertes hits a wicked chokeslam. Appropriate since he's basically the Mexican Undertaker. Puma fights up again and kicks Muertes in the head, setting up the 630 for a very near fall. A second attempt misses though and an even bigger spear cuts Puma in half. The Flatliner gets two (I thought that was it) and even Muertes is stunned. Another kick to the head sets up another 630 (Striker: "How many times can you use the same weapon if it doesn't work?" Until it gets a pin you nitwit.) but Muertes gets up and runs the corner for a super Flatliner for the pin and the title.

Rating: A-. The ending was obvious as Puma has basically beaten everyone else in the main event and now we need a new hero. This was a great back and forth brawl with Puma fighting with everything he had but ultimately not being able to overcome the monstrous power that was Mil Muertes. It's really, really hard to get me interested in a match with an obvious ending but they pulled it off really well here.

One last note: notice how big it felt when Muertes kicked out of the 630 and when Puma kicked out of the Flatliner. Those felt like important moments because they're not something we ever see. In other words, it's not like the AA where you see it get two on any given episode of Raw and are then asked to believe in the near falls. Look what happens when you can use this stuff in a big match, as it worked like a charm here.

Catrina gives Puma the lick. Well at least he gets something. Catrina, Muertes and the Disciples of Death pose in the ring as the credits roll.

Since this is Lucha Underground though, the cool stuff is after the credits. Black Lotus and Cueto are packing as much money into a bag as they can before running off. They get into a car hauling a trailer, which has a small hole cut open. We actually see Matanza's mask looking out and growling in a nice touch.

Fenix gets in his car and drives away.

Marty Martinez is in a dark room where he has Sexy Star tied up. She won't this is so funny when she meets his sister. Martinez laughs maniacally and rocks back and forth in a creepy shot.

Angelico tells Son of Havoc and Ivelisse that they're getting those titles back before riding off on a motorcycle. Havoc asks Ivelisse if she wants one more ride but she tells him to shut up and get on.

Drago and Aerostar meet but Drago turns into fire and I guess flies away.

Pentagon asks Vampiro where they're going now.

Dragon Azteca puts his mask back on and looks at a Lucha Underground sign with a question mark over it.

Cueto stares into the camera as lights go off behind him. To Be Continued.

Overall Rating: A-. Well that was amazing. This is a rare occurrence where I'm sitting here watching and wanting to see more because I care about these characters and want to know where they're going from here. That's a feeling I haven't had about WWE or any other wrestling company (well other than NXT) in a long, long time.

The wrestling wasn't great here, but this wasn't about what happened in the ring. This was about advancing the drama, wrapping up the stories and setting up more stories going forward, all of which they did in spades. The key thing here is that I WANT to see more, not that I'll see more because it's on next week. Outstanding stuff here and well worth checking out, either on its own or with the previous week as a bonus.

Now why does this show (the series as a whole) work so well? I could go

into a long list of why, but above all else, I'll go with because they had a vision of what they wanted to go with and ran with it. This show established itself from the start and never gave up on that idea. It never became WWE-lite like TNA or got silly like so many WWE shows became. This felt like something genuinely different and that made it feel special. I'd love to see another season of this and hopefully they can get the funds together for another one. Great stuff here and check this show out, from the beginning if you can.

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Summerslam Count-Up – 1998 (2015 Redo): This Year's Wrestlemania

Summerslam 1998

Date: August 30, 1998

Location: Madison Square Garden, New York City, New York

Attendance: 21,588

Commentators: Jim Ross, Jerry Lawler

This is the Summerslam you guys requested that I do for the third time

and I'm very glad that you picked a good one. 1998 was the year where the WWF really turned things around in the Monday Night Wars and Summerslam was the biggest show of the year, easily surpassing a two match show at Wrestlemania. The main event here is Undertaker vs. Austin for the title, but there are questions about Undertaker's loyalties to Vince and Kane. Let's get to it.

Unfortunately the opening video isn't the one set to AC/DC but instead a well done video of Austin wondering if Undertaker and Kane are in cahoots (I love that word) against him. Vince has guaranteed that Undertaker will win the title with Kane helping him out tonight.

Before the first match, we get a quick announcement that Austin attacked a hearse that either Kane or Undertaker might have been inside. Thank goodness this is 1998 because today we'd get a series of videos from WWE.com and the YouTube channel showing how it happened and speculation over who was in it and words from 10 people on what it means. Instead just mention it here and move on because there's other stuff to get to than a million recaps.

The entrance is a black gate over a red background with smoke in the aisle, directly opposite the hard camera. That's such a cool visual and it works really well here.

European Title: D'Lo Brown vs. Val Venis

Brown is defending in a match that doesn't have any real backstory, but it does have a sixth minute time limit. I love the name graphic covering Val's gyrating crotch. Val's pre-match speech is about coming, seeing and coming again. Brown is billed from Helsinki because he's a real European.

Venis tries to chop the champ but hurts his arm on the chest protector, because of a very slow healing injury. A Russian legsweep works a bit better and Brown bails to the floor. That means it's time to gyrate and the high pitched screams suggest it worked well. Back in and a spinebuster gets two on Brown as we see the mysterious rookie Edge watching from the crowd.

Venis misses a splash and since JR is JR, he points out that the splash

would have hurt Val even more because of the chest protector. Brown gets in his first big move with an (appropriately) Irish whip into the corner to put Venis down. Back up and an overhead t-bone suplex of all things gives Val a breather, only to have the champ slam him down and drop a leg for two. JR gives us a great stat: Brown is 27 and Venis is 26. It's a really good idea to bring up how young these guys are, especially when they're doing well like this.

Another slam stays on Val's back and Brown is smart enough to slap on a Texas cloverleaf for some psychology. D'Lo slams him again with Lawler saying "here comes some more!", which I think was a soundbyte in WWF Attitude, a Nintendo 64 game. Val goes up but dives into a modified Sky High for no cover as Brown took himself out too. A DDT plants Val (really good one too) for a near fall and the New York fans are appreciating this match.

Brown goes up but opts for the second rope, allowing Venis to catch him in a powerslam for another near fall. Val drops him with a butterfly suplex but the Money Shot hits knees. You would think hitting the chest protector would have hurt just as much but close enough at least. Brown can't get him up for a powerbomb and almost drops Val on the back of his head in a scary spot.

The second attempt gives us a Liger Bomb, allowing the referee to make sure Val doesn't have a broken neck. The champ misses the Low Down (Lawler: "How does Val Venis continue to rise up like that?) and they slug it out from their knees. Val finally wakes up and takes off the chest protector, only to put it on himself. The referee isn't pleased and accidentally crotches Venis on top, causing Val to shove him down for the DQ.

Rating: B. This is one of the biggest "WHERE DID THAT COME FROM" moments in wrestling history as both guys had the match of their lives here but never got close to it again. They were just beating the tar out of each other out there and working as hard as I've ever seen them go, making for one heck of an opener and a borderline classic. Give this an ending and it's even higher.

Venis beats up the referee and gives him the Money Shot post match.

Mankind laments the destruction of the hearse and plugs the Brisco Brothers Body Shop. Maybe he can use his sledgehammer after all.

Kai En Tai vs. Oddities

This is a 4-3 handicap match but more importantly, the Insane Clown Posse play the Oddities to the ring and blow the roof off the place. As usual, Kurrigan dancing badly is one of my favorite things in wrestling due to how serious his face looks. Golga (the 6'8, 450lb Earthquake) starts with Light Heavyweight Champion Taka Michinoku and all four Kai En Tai members are destroyed in about eight seconds.

Golga steals Yamaguchi-San's (Kai En Tai's manager) shoes and almost falls down from the smell. Kurrigan comes in to face Funaki and is nice enough to get on his knees so they can be the same height. I always appreciate a polite dancing monster. Kurrigan throws all four of them around just as easily as Golga did as this isn't going well for the Japanese contingent. Off to Giant Silva, who is about 4 inches taller than Kurrigan, who could look down at Undertaker.

All four try Silva at the same time and the Oddities go 3-3 in their dominance. Silva puts all four of them in the corner before his partners come in to help whip everyone across the ring. Now it's Taka being launched over the top onto the other three. This is getting hilarious with how one sided it is. Funaki and Men's Teioh come in and double dropkick Golga before actually slamming him down.

Four straight top rope splashes keep Golga in trouble and four straight legdrops get no cover. The referee is fine with letting all four of them in there but can you blame him at this point? Golga clotheslines all four of them at once (that looked cool) and all three Oddities come in, leaving Yamaguchi-San to get beaten up by Luna Vachon. A triple quadruple chokeslam lets Golga pin all four men at once for the win.

Rating: C+. I know they're not very good and they were never going anywhere, but I'll always have a soft spot for the Oddities. They're a total guilty pleasure for me but I have such a good time watching them.

It's an act where you know what you should be getting and that's exactly what you got. Total comedy match here but I had fun.

Jeff Jarrett vs. X-Pac

This is hair vs. hair with Howard Finkel in X-Pac's corner due to Jarrett and his cronies Southern Justice (the heel Godwinns, in an even worse gimmick) shaved his hair earlier in the night. We even get Howard doing the crotch chop to really pop the crowd. Jarrett is told to suck it and goes after X-Pac to start, only to get kicked in the face to send him outside, followed by a nice middle rope plancha.

Jeff tries a sunset flip back inside but X-Pac just steps to the side. I don't remember seeing that anywhere else but it's a very smart counter. X-Pac is very talented in the ring, all of his outside the ring shenanigans aside. Things get a bit too quick though and X-Pac gets crotched against the post to stop his momentum cold.

Back in and a powerslam gets two for Jeff as they're keeping this quick enough to not bore the New York crowd with Jarrett's Memphis style. We hit the sleeper on X-Pac and it's so strange to hear Fink's familiar voice as a cheerleader. X-Pac does the same sequence to counter the sleeper that has happened in every Jeff Jarrett match ever but Jeff puts him on the top instead of suplexing him down.

The middle rope cross body misses, just like the spinwheel kick and Jarrett is in trouble. Like any good southern villain with his opponent on the mat, Jeff slaps on a figure four, despite not touching X-Pac's legs so far. A rope is quickly grabbed and now the belly to back puts Jarrett down but X-Pac can't follow up.

Jarrett gets two off a high cross body but his leapfrog is countered into a sitout powerbomb for the same. A Bronco Buster attempt hits a raised boot but Finkel distracts the referee (Fink: "HE KICKED HIM IN THE BALLS!"), allowing X-Pac to hit a quick X Factor for no cover. Instead here's Southern Justice to slide in a guitar but the distraction lets X-Pac take it away from Jeff and knock him silly for the pin.

Rating: C+. It's another match where both guys were working hard to get a

pretty uninteresting match over and that's exactly what they did. Jarrett is in his element here as a bully midcarder who gets his comeuppance at the hands of a popular act. Read as: NOT A MAIN EVENT WORLD TITLE CONTENDER.

The New Age Outlaws, Droz and the Headbangers come out to make sure Jarrett gets his hair shaved. Jeff arguing with the referee about the guitar as he's held in the chair is great stuff.

Doc Hendrix previews the Lion's Den, a UFC knockoff.

Rock is pleased by attacking HHH's knee on Sunday Night Heat earlier in the night. We get a guarantee that Rock is retaining the title tonight, if you smell what he's cooking. Kevin Kelly: "Well there you ha..." Rock: "Shut up."

Sable/??? vs. Jacqueline/Marc Mero

Sable needs a mystery partner to help her out here after Mero dumped her for Jacqueline. This led to some contests between the two with Jacqueline getting the upper hand most of the time due to a combination of Mero and, you know, being a wrestler. Sable comes to the ring alone but introduces her partner as....Edge. The guys get things going with Mero stomping away in the corner until Edge comes back with some Japanese armdrags.

Lawler isn't sure if this is Edge or The Edge. Jacqueline comes in so Sable demands a tag, sending Jacqueline scurrying off to the floor. It's back to the guys but Jacqueline grabs Edge's leg to let Mero take over again. Edge escapes the TKO and takes Mero down with a DDT to give himself a breather. The double tag brings in the women and it's catfight time. A chase sends Jacqueline to the floor but Mero is waiting on Sable.

That's fine with her as she loads up a powerbomb, only to have Jacqueline jump her to take over again. That earns Jacqueline a half decent TKO but it's Mero making a save this time. Back up and Jacqueline hits Mero by mistake, giving Sable the opening to fix her hair. Edge comes in and dives on Mero to fire the crowd up again. Jacqueline gets a spanking to keep them rolling, followed by a high cross body for two on Marc.

More heel miscommunication puts Jacqueline on the floor and Mero gets crotched on top. Sable busts out a top rope hurricanrana for two, followed by the worst “accidental falling headbutt into a low blow” from Jacqueline to Mero. Edge plants Mero with the Downward Spiral (actually called that) and picks Sable up for a splash to give her the pin.

Rating: D. Yeah I still don't care for this one. Sable was a very popular character and it made sense to put her on this show, but it's still not a good match. Edge getting a big spot like this is a nice touch, but it's still not an interesting match or story. Thankfully the Sable vs. Mero stuff would wrap up soon after this and Edge would go on to be part of the Brood.

Mankind is told that Kane can't be his partner tonight so maybe he should just forfeit the titles. If the fans want their money's worth though, maybe Michael Cole can be his partner. Or better yet, maybe Mankind can go play in the traffic. Vince comes in and brings up Mankind hitchhiking to Madison Square Garden as a teenager. The boss thinks Mankind can defend the titles against the Outlaws on his own, even though he doesn't have a sledgehammer.

Vince hands him what looks like a candelabra and a cookie sheet. That's enough to inspire Mankind and he has thirteen words for the Outlaws: “How much would a woodchuck chuck if a woodchuck could chuck wood?” Well no one ever accused Foley of making the most sense. I have no idea why but I always loved this segment as Mankind was so perfect for this character and Vince manipulating him was always entertaining.

We recap Owen Hart vs. Ken Shamrock, which is more about Dan Severn and his manly mustache against Shamrock in a UFC feud. Severn was Owen's trainer and taught him how to fight with submissions, setting up the Lion's Den match here.

Owen Hart vs. Ken Shamrock

This is in a small theater adjacent to MSG. The match is held in a small, circular cage which is about as blatant of a ripoff of a UFC cage as you can get. You win by submission or knockout. Hart is a member of the Nation but Severn is the only person here with him. Shamrock easily takes

him down to start until Owen counters into a leglock. Ken gets dropped with a spinebuster but floats over and unloads with right hands.

A low blow is shrugged off as well and Shamrock takes Owen's head off with a clothesline. The cage starts coming into play with Shamrock climbing the cage into another clothesline, only to miss a charge into the steel. The fans are entirely behind Shamrock as he gets thrown face first against the cage. Lawler isn't sure what to call the structure. JR: "How about the Lion's Den?" Lawler: "Uh, ok." Owen can't piledrive him and his hurricanrana is countered into a nice powerbomb.

Both guys are bleeding from the face and Owen scores with a powerslam and a nice belly to belly. The Sharpshooter is on but Ken crawls over and climbs the cage to escape in a nice counter. Something like a tornado DDT out of the corner drops Owen but he grabs the dragon sleeper, only to have Shamrock climb the cage and roll over into the ankle lock for the submission.

Rating: C+. Again, they tried something different here, even though it was just a glorified cage match. Both guys were trying hard out there, which really is a theme for the show so far. Shamrock looked like a gladiator, but it really doesn't need to set up a feud with Severn. At the end of the day, neither guy can talk and one of them is Dan Severn, so how far can this really go?

Austin will do whatever it takes to retain the title tonight.

Tag Team Titles: New Age Outlaws vs. Mankind

Mankind is defending on his own and comes out with a big metal dumpster because this is a hardcore match. The Outlaws are in South Park shirts, which still look weird at this point. Mankind and Billy duel with chairs until Road Dogg sneaks in from behind to take over. They start cracking Mankind in the head with whatever metal objects they can find but a swinging neckbreaker on the floor gets two on Gunn.

That earns Mankind more double teaming and a ram into the side of the dumpster. It's table time back inside, but it's one of those old tables that looks a bit more realistic than the common ones. Billy is sent

through it as well though and Mankind has a breather. Lawler is freaking out because Vince might have been right but a reverse 3D drops the champ again. A double powerbomb through two open chairs only gets two and Dogg stops to jaw with the referee. Instead it's a spike piledriver onto the belt to give the Outlaws the titles back.

Rating: D+. There isn't much to talk about here as this was a glorified squash for obvious reasons. Mankind is a tough guy but having him beat a top level team like the Outlaws on his own would have been way too much. This also sets up more stuff with Kane for Mankind so what else can you really ask for?

The Outlaws put Mankind in the dumpster but Kane is inside, sledgehammer in hand. With Mankind out of camera range, Kane slams the hammer down into the dumpster and everyone goes silent.

We recap HHH vs. Rock, which was disguised as DX vs. the Nation. Rock won almost every major match leading to this final blowoff, including costing HHH the European Title. Tonight it's a ladder match for Rock's Intercontinental Title, which he's held for a remarkable nine months. The only solution was to hold the title above the ring and channel Shawn vs. Razor at Wrestlemania X.

Intercontinental Title: The Rock vs. HHH

Rock is defending and of course this is a ladder match. Chris Warren and the DX Band sings HHH to the ring because 1998 was a time when people actually knew who Chris War was. HHH destroys the band's equipment for reasons that aren't exactly clear but here's the Rock to turn things serious. The seconds here are Chyna and Mark Henry, which aren't exactly fair. I mean, at this point Chyna was kind of awesome and Henry was....well he was Mark Henry. The title isn't hung above the ring yet so we have to wait a few seconds for it to go up.

Rock drops a few F Bombs before it's time to slug it out. A big clothesline puts Rock down and HHH hammers away, followed by the facebuster. Neither finisher can hit and HHH is backdropped over the top to give HHH a reason to limp on his legitimately bad knee. They slug it out in the aisle with HHH getting the better of it but limping back

inside so Rock can hammer away again.

It's already time to go for the ladder but instead of just picking it up, Rock whips HHH face first into the ladder instead. Why bother with anything but violence if you don't have to? Rock starts a climb but HHH dives off the top to break it up, only to have the ladder fall onto his back. There isn't much effect though (HHH is allowed to no sell at least once in every big match) and HHH climbs up, only to get nailed in the knee to bring him back down.

Rock goes in after the knee with elbows before realizing he has a ladder at his disposal. The leg gets crushed between the ladder but now it's time for a chair to crush it even worse. He wraps the leg around the post as well before driving the knee into the ladder for good measure. Ever the cocky one, Rock climbs up as slowly as he can, allowing HHH to knock the ladder over for the save.

You don't cut the Rock off on the second rung though so he takes HHH and the ladder to the floor for a catapult into the steel. I'm sure it happened at some point before but someone should catapult the ladder into a person instead. Rock keeps it going by backdropping HHH onto the ladder and this is getting ugly.

Henry thinks (yes seriously) the ladder is too busted up so he throws in another so Rock can climb faster. Chyna forearms Henry in the face, allowing HHH to dive in for the save. A baseball slide puts the ladder into Rock's face and HHH has his first control in a long time. The bloody Rock is able to pull the ladder down again before setting the second ladder on the top rope. I don't see this ending well, but that could be because I've seen this many times.

HHH is smart enough to break up whatever Rock had in mind though and plants him with a DDT. They climb the ladder again and Rock shoves him down and into the ladder in the corner, only to have HHH bounce into the standing ladder to knock Rock throat first into the top rope. Rock is up first and grabs a ladder, only to have HHH blast it with a chair over and over to get a breather.

Back up and Rock wins a slugout before slamming HHH onto the ladder for

the People's Elbow. Neither guy can follow up though and it's HHH climbing first, only to dive into a Rock Bottom for no logically explained reason. HHH is able to get up again and pulls Rock (and his trunks) down, followed by the big Pedigree to give himself the best chance he's had all match. As he's getting up though, Henry throws powder in his face. The blind HHH climbs, only to get punched in the face by Rock. This brings in Chyna for a low blow on Rock, allowing HHH to finally pull down the belt to win.

Rating: A. This is one of my favorite matches of all time and it still more than holds up. It's a match that launched both guys up the ladder to the next level with HHH becoming an upper midcarder and Rock becoming a main eventer who would pick up the World Title in November. The key thing here though is they focused on the wrestlers and the drama instead of the ladder and the spots, which almost always make for the best matches. Check this one out if you want a great brawl with some awesome back and forth action which meant a great deal going forward.

We get some exclusive home video footage of Rock stumbling to the back and swearing revenge that wouldn't come for years. He's still the People's Champ.

Quick recap of Undertaker vs. Austin, minus the awesome video package, which is built around where Undertaker's loyalties lie. He may or may not be in league with both Kane and Vince, but there's no actual proof either way. It feels like a conspiracy against Austin, which really isn't all that shocking when you consider who he had gone to war with all summer.

WWF World Title: Steve Austin vs. Undertaker

Austin is defending. They get in each other's faces to start before trading wristlocks. A rollup with tights gets two for the champ and he puts on a Fujiwara armbar of all things. It's off to a regular armbar as Austin could never look right with a technical hold like a Fujiwara armbar. Then disaster strikes as Undertaker ducks his head and gets kicked in the face, only to have Undertaker snap his head up and nail Austin in the jaw, knocking him silly for the rest of the match.

Once Austin can stand again, a quick Thesz press attempt is countered

into a hot shot for two as you can see Austin is WAY off. Undertaker slowly punches and stomps away but Austin is coherent enough to go after the leg and wrap it around the post. It's not enough though as Undertaker comes back with the running clothesline and some good old fashioned choking. Old School is easily broken up and it's back to the knee as there's only so much they can do here aside from striking.

Cue Kane as a 3:16 chant starts up. The distraction lets the referee make sure Austin knows what planet he's on but Undertaker tells Kane to head back because he wants to do this himself. Austin goes after Undertaker on the floor again but takes too much time, setting up a nearly falling chokeslam from the apron back inside. Undertaker can't cover though, allowing Austin to clothesline him out to the floor and right onto that bad knee.

They brawl up the aisle and into the crowd, which is probably best for Austin as it's a lot less complicated for a scrambled brain to deal with. Undertaker backdrops him onto the concrete as the knee seems fine. Austin goes spine first into the post, heads back inside, and is promptly thrown right back to the floor in an awkward landing. It's time for the big spot as Undertaker lays Austin onto the announcers' table and heads up top for a HUGE legdrop, crushing Austin but not the table for maybe the biggest spot Undertaker has ever done.

Somehow it only gets two, which is only right as Undertaker's foot was under the bottom rope. You would expect a better enforcement of the rules from Earl Hebner. This time it's Undertaker missing a charge into the corner and running into a double clothesline to put both guys down. It's time for the hero comeback with Austin winning a slugout and hitting the Thesz press. Something like the Stunner is mostly botched as Undertaker falls backwards with Austin landing on top of him for two.

Undertaker comes back with the chokeslam but Austin escapes the tombstone. They have an awkward exchange in the corner with Austin getting crotched on the top rope, followed by a Russian legsweep from Undertaker to put both guys down. Old School is loaded up again but Undertaker dives into a low blow, setting up the Stunner to retain Austin's title.

Rating: B-. This is a really hard one to grade after the injury to Austin. It's much more a collection of spots loosely tied together instead of a match, but the big spots worked well enough and Austin won as clean as he was going to win in a main event match in 1998. It's also really nice to not have all the interference for a change because that was the norm for so long at this point. Good match, but it's definitely a few steps beneath Austin's usual greatness.

Undertaker hands the belt to Austin and Kane comes out to stand by his brother's side to end the show.

Overall Rating: B. Oh yeah it still holds up. This is a great show with some awesome matches that capped off stories while also setting up some stuff for the future. Above all else though it felt like a major show, which isn't really the case at any other show all year. It's still one of the best Summerslams and a show you kind of have to see at least once.

Ratings Comparison

Val Venis vs. D'Lo Brown

Original: B

Redo: C+

2015 Redo: B

Oddities vs. Kai En Tai

Original: C-

Redo: C-

2015 Redo: C+

Jeff Jarrett vs. X-Pac

Original: B

Redo: C

2015 Redo: C+

Marc Mero/Jacqueline vs. Sable/Edge

Original: F

Redo: C-

2015 Redo: D

Ken Shamrock vs. Owen Hart

Original: B-

Redo: B

2015 Redo: C+

Mankind vs. New Age Outlaws

Original: D+

Redo: D+

2015 Redo: D+

HHH vs. The Rock

Original: A+

Redo: A+

2015 Redo: A

Steve Austin vs. Undertaker

Original: B-

Redo: B-

2015 Redo: B-

Overall Rating

Original: B

Redo: A-

2015 Redo: B

This is a good example of why I don't do a third take of shows very often. Most of the ratings are either the same or really close to the same with the World Title and Tag Team Title matches having the same rating every time. I think we've found my definitive take on those matches and I really don't have anything else to say about most of them. I'll do a different Summerslam next year and a fresh review of each of the big four every year though, as it's a fun thing to look back at, especially a good show like this one.

Here's the original review if you're interested:

<http://kbwrestlingreviews.com/2011/08/01/history-of-summerslam-count-up-1998-the-biggest-summerslam-ever/>

And the original redo:

<http://kbwrestlingreviews.com/2013/08/03/summerslam-count-up-1998-rock-and-hhh-ascend/>

Remember to follow me on Twitter @kbreviews and pick up my new book of NXT Reviews: The Full Sail Years Volume I at Amazon for just \$3.99 at:

<http://www.amazon.com/dp/B011T13PV4>

And check out my Amazon author page with cheap wrestling books at:

<http://www.amazon.com/Thomas-Hall/e/B00E6282W6>

Read Jim Duggan's Book

And it made me proud to be an American. Or Canadian for like three weeks.

This was a cheap buy so why not. I met Duggan at Axxess last year and he couldn't have been a nicer guy so it was a pretty easy choice. The book was a lot more straightforward than Holly's but in a way that makes it more fun. Duggan is far nicer than most wrestling writers as he rarely throws anyone under the bus or says bad things about anyone, save for himself at times.

It's an easy, fun read that took me about three days to get through and doesn't get boring. Above all else, Duggan has an interesting take on people like the Radicalz and most modern young wrestlers: yeah they can do all kinds of moves that he could never dream of, but isn't it interesting that he got more over by shouting H0 and chanting USA while holding a board than they got by doing all those moves? It's not about all the moves you can do, but rather about connecting with the fans in some way. If you can do that, they'll never abandon you, but there's always going to be someone who can do a flashier move. The only one that got more popular than Duggan (arguably of course) was Eddie, who had a story that the fans can connect to. Imagine that.

Duggan's book is worth reading and can be found pretty cheap so check it out if you're a fan of 80s/90s wrestling.

Impact Wrestling – August 5, 2015: One More Time

Impact Wrestling

Date: August 5, 2015

Location: Impact Zone, Orlando, Florida

Commentators: D'Angelo Dinero, Josh Matthews

Tonight is No Surrender as TNA presents another major show as a regular TV episode. The main event will see Matt Hardy challenging for the World Title against Ethan Carter III in a Full Metal Mayhem match, along with Austin Aries vs. Rockstar Spud for the Rockstar moniker. Let's get to it.

We open with a quick Roddy Piper tribute. That's nice of them.

Bram vs. Mr. Anderson

This has been a well built match with Anderson worrying about putting his career on the line against a monster like Bram. Bram has the microphone that he used to bust Anderson open a few weeks back. Anderson goes right after Bram to start and knocks him out to the floor with a clothesline. Back in and Anderson clotheslines him out to the floor again. This time Anderson clotheslines him on the floor to mix things up a bit but Bram is able to get in a few shots and take Anderson to the floor on his own terms.

Anderson gets dropped face first into the apron and Bram ties him up in the ring skirt for good measure. They've done a good job here of having Anderson try to wrestle and Bram sticking with the brawling. A chinlock has Anderson in more trouble but he fights up with right hands and the Regal Roll for two. Bram gets the same off a superplex as they've now switched their styles. An Edge-0-Matic and spinwheel kick get two each for Bram and now it's his turn to hit some clotheslines. It's microphone time for Bram but Anderson counters into a small package for the pin at 9:29.

Rating: C. I liked this one a lot more than I was expecting to but it wasn't the most interesting match in the world. Bram just being violent against midcarders has gotten him about as far as it can and now it's time for him to have a major feud against someone. They told a decent enough story though and that's really all that matters.

Bram nails Anderson with the mic and calls him Mr. Pathetic. That's the

best line they can come up with?

The Hardys talk about always defying the odds and promise Matt wins the World Title tonight.

Here's James Storm to rant about his loss last week. There's one man to blame for the loss and that's Khoya. Storm demands that Khoya get out here because Storm got him out of that horrible country and gave him a life. He slaps Khoya in the face and that's enough to make Khoya snap and lay Storm out. Khoya rants about how he's proud of his heritage and is a proud Indian man named Mahabali Shera. Now, DO SOMETHING WITH HIM.

We recap Gail Kim vs. the Dollhouse, which sets up a three on one handicap match tonight.

Storm wants Shera tonight.

Gail Kim vs. Dollhouse

One fall to a finish and tags are required so Gail rolls away from Marti Belle to start. Taryn sends the lackeys after Gail to start but a glare sends Taryn running back to the apron. A dropkick to Jade's back gets two as Pope starts reading tweets from fans. Jade gets two off a German suplex but heel miscommunication lets Gail take over again. A running tornado DDT plants Marti and Taryn runs off, leaving Gail to beat up both other members. The referee won't count a pin on Jade because she's not legal, even though all three are in at the same time. Eat Defeat is enough to pin Marti at 5:10.

Rating: D+. Hey, did you know that Gail Kim is like, a serious wrestler and doesn't tolerate silly gimmicks? She's basically Lance Storm and that's not something I'm really all that interested in watching, especially not on and off for the better part of ten years. I don't need to see her do the same feud she did with the Beautiful People, but that's how the Knockouts work: someone new gets over and then here's Gail Kim to remind everyone how great a wrestler she is while putting half the audience to sleep.

Drew Galloway talks about Eli Drake and how he didn't build the Rising

for one man to tear it down.

Drew Galloway vs. Eli Drake

Grudge match after Drake cost Galloway the World Title a few weeks back. It's a brawl on the outside before the bell with Drew in full control and dropping Drake on the floor. A clothesline off the step drops Eli again before they head inside for the opening bell. The threat of a Future Shock sends Drake running up the ramp but Drew is there with another clothesline.

Eli finally gets in some shots of his own to take over, allowing for some choking in the corner back inside. A release German suplex sends Drake flying into the corner. Drew: "STAND UP!" Like a good villain, Eli goes to the eyes and rolls Drew up with a handful of trunks and a hand on the ropes for the pin at 3:50.

Rating: C. Nothing special here but Galloway and Drake are clearly stars of the future. The fallout of the Rising is already more interesting than the Rising ever was, which says a lot about how lame of a group they really were. I'm sure we'll see these two fight again before Drew goes on to something bigger.

We recap Aries vs. Spud with Aries shooting his mouth off and putting his career on the line as a result.

Bobby Roode comes in to see Bully Ray (remember him?) and threatens to help Aries win tonight. Ray implies he'll be at ringside to make sure that doesn't happen.

Rockstar Spud vs. Austin Aries

The winner gets to keep the Rockstar moniker but Aries' career is on the line as well. Aries quickly takes Spud to the mat for the Last Chancery but, as almost always, the move doesn't work. A nice armdrag puts Spud down again and Aries nails a basement dropkick to send Spud into the corner. Aries keeps his full control with an ST0, followed by the Pendulum Elbow for two. So are we just not getting Roode and Bully after that segment?

Back up and Aries charges into a boot in the corner, followed by a dropkick to the knee. Spud starts firing off some running forearm but the Underdog is broken up. Aries scores with a belly to back for two and we hit the Last Chancery again. That goes nowhere so it's brainbuster time, only to have Spud small package his way out for two. This is really starting to pick up.

Some discus forearm rock the Rockstar and the brainbuster connects for two. Aries is stunned but Spud makes the big hero comeback. The big wind-up punch takes too long but the second attempt knocks Aries outside. A big flip dive takes Aries down again and a high cross body gives Spud a near fall. The Underdog is broken up but Aries sets him on top, only to be countered into a super Underdog to give Spud the pin at 11:20.

Rating: B. This started slowly but got much better as things kept going. Spud is awesome in the underdog role and Aries can make almost any match work. I can't blame him for leaving though as there's nothing left for him to do in TNA, especially since they're not going to put him back in the World Title hunt anytime soon.

Aries raises Spud's hand post match.

Post break, Aries and Roode say goodbye, saying they know they'll both land on their feet.

Mahabali Shera vs. James Storm

Shera is in jeans. Storm takes him into the corner to start and shouts in his face. Shera will have nothing to do with these right hands to the face and makes his comeback, only to take the cowbell to the head for the DQ at 1:42.

Bully is down in the back.

Post match Jeff Jarrett comes in to see Dixie Carter, who is worried about Bully. Jeff offers to let Global Force help by offering to run the show for one week. Dixie isn't sure but it seems to be a deal for next week. I guess this is where the invasion begins and for some reason I'm expecting this to be disappointing.

Ethan Carter III says he'll retain the title tonight as Tyrus holds up the belt.

TNA World Title: Matt Hardy vs. Ethan Carter III

Carter is defending in Full Metal Mayhem, which is TNA's version of TLC. The champ takes over early on with a chair to the back before sitting down so he can punch Matt from eye level. That earns him a Side Effect through the chair and it's already ladder time, which goes upside Ethan's face. The ladder is laid across the middle corner so Carter can be rammed face first as Matt is in full control.

It's time to go up but it's WAY too early on, allowing Ethan to chair Matt in the leg. Why would you ever go up that early on? Back from a break with Matt breaking up Carter's attempt at the belt by sending Ethan down into the buckle. Matt isn't done yet as he drives the ladder into Ethan's crotch to prevent another generation of Carter's from populating the earth. That's still not enough for Matt to get the title so he plants Ethan with the Twist of Fate.

A moonsault through the table is broken up with a quick crotching and a powerbomb through the wood but Matt is up again with a powerbomb of his own to break up Carter's climb. They head outside with Matt bridging a ladder between the steps and the ring, only to get slammed head first onto the ladder. Since we haven't had enough near climbs yet, Matt makes another save and hits a Side Effect onto the apron.

A guillotine legdrop drives Carter through the table on the floor but Matt takes way too long to climb, allowing Ethan to chair him in the leg. They already have to repeat spots for the saves? Carter climbs up, shoves Matt down and pulls the title off the hook to retain at 20:10.

Rating: B. Fun enough match but there was no reason for this to involve ladders and weapons other than so TNA could have a match involving ladders and weapons. It's their first match against each other for the title and they used the big gimmick already. Matt became #1 contender for thrown together reasons and that's not how you want to have a major match like this. It was fun, but I have no desire to watch it again. At least Carter won on his own for a change too.

Overall Rating: B-. As usual, TNA can do the big shows well enough but they'll likely be back to the same dull stuff in a few weeks. If you believe the reports, none of this really matters as they'll be off TV in less than two months anyway so at least we still had one good show on the way out. Their midcard continues to be lame, but the wrestling was good enough to carry things for a week.

Results

Mr. Anderson b. Bram – Small package

Gail Kim b. Dollhouse – Eat Defeat to Belle

Eli Drake b. Drew Galloway – Rollup with a handful of trunks

Rockstar Spud b. Austin Aries – Super Underdog

Mahabali Shera b. James Storm via DQ when Storm used a cowbell

Ethan Carter III b. Matt Hardy – Carter pulled down the title

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New Column: Great Scot

Why was Roddy Piper so great?

<http://www.wrestlingrumors.net/kbs-review-great-scot/38187/>

And remember to check out the rest of [wrestlingrumors.net](http://www.wrestlingrumors.net) for a bunch of other cool stuff.

NXT – August 5, 2015: This Is How We Do It

NXT

Date: August 5, 2015

Location: Full Sail University, Winter Park, Florida

Commentators: Rich Brennan, Corey Graves, Byron Saxton

We're on the road to Brooklyn and most of the card can be seen from here. With just three shows left, it's time to add some build to a lot of the midcard matches as the main event is pretty much set. There's a good chance we'll be seeing more of Charlotte vs. Bayley tonight as Bayley is aiming for the Women's Title again. Let's get to it.

In memory of Roddy Piper.

Opening sequence.

Charlotte vs. Bayley

They're starting fast this week as the bell rings less than three minutes into the show. After a handshake, Bayley grabs a headlock and takes Charlotte over, only to have Charlotte nip up to her feet. A hammerlock and headscissors earn similar results for Bayley but Charlotte comes back

with the rolling figure four headscissors to put Bayley down hard. Things get a bit more aggressive as Bayley scores with some ax handles to the chest, only to get kneed in the face for two.

Back from a break with Bayley countering the Figure Eight into a small package for two of her own, followed by the middle rope elbow to the jaw. Bayley lifts her up onto the top rope for a hurricanrana (that's a new one), dubbed awesome by the fans. They slug it out (fans: "WOMEN'S WRESTLING!") and a spear gets two for Charlotte. The young Bayley fan in the crowd freaking out on these near falls is great to see. Charlotte gets the Figure Eight but Bayley is too close to the ropes.

They fight over a backslide with Bayley climbing the ropes and flipping over Charlotte into the Bayley to belly for.....two? That's a very rare kickout. Now a German gets two more on Charlotte so she rolls Bayley up, sending Bayley head first into the middle buckle for a cool move. Charlotte goes up but Bayley grabs a super Bayley to belly for the upset pin at 12:22. The same fan that freaked out on the kickout is shown crying.

Rating: B. This was a really fun back and forth match with both of them working hard to one up the other. The big spot to end the match makes more sense as Bayley had to bust out something big to finally beat Charlotte and prove she's worthy of getting a shot. Above all else though, the young girl being happy tells you all you need to know about Bayley. Wrestling has rarely had a character girls her age can look up to and Bayley is nailing the role to perfection.

Post match Bayley gives the girl her headband. That's awesome.

We get a sitdown interview with Kevin Owens, who doesn't like Michael Cole implying that his apology for jumping Finn Balor and William Regal wasn't sincere. Regal said he wanted to see Owens lose and it takes a real man to say that behind someone's back. "Or a real man's man should I say."

Owens needs the NXT Title back, not just because it's worth more money, but because it reminds him of what he did to Sami Zayn and he likes that feeling. However, he's scared of Regal screwing him like Montreal, which

is where Owens is from after all. Therefore, why not make the rematch a ladder match? Cole asks if Owens can beat Balor and Kevin walks off. I like making it a ladder match as we've covered a regular match so why bother doing it again?

Bull Dempsey doesn't like the video of him trying to get in shape last week and wants to do it right. This doesn't go well either but it's to be continued.

Baron Corbin vs. Steve Cutler

I'm starting to recognize these jobbers. The jobber would be the guy losing to Corbin via End of Days at 22 seconds.

Bayley comes in to see William Regal and nervously asks him for a Women's Title match. Regal thinks she deserves one, but so does Becky Lynch. Therefore, next week it's Bayley vs. Becky for the shot at Sasha in Brooklyn. Regal throws in that Bayley is his niece's favorite wrestler. I'm getting into this story more and more every week. I want to see Bayley win the Women's Title and it's going to be an awesome moment when she finally does.

Tyler Breeze vs. Aaron Solo

We haven't see Tyler in the ring in awhile. Breeze stomps Solo down in the corner to start, then pounds him down on the mat, then hits the Beauty Shot for the pin at 52 seconds. Well that worked.

Post match here's Regal to announce Tyler's opponent: Japanese legend Jushin Thunder Liger. The fans are STUNNED and we get a Liger video, which is one of those things you never expected to see in WWE.

Uhaa Nation video, who is now known as Apollo Crews. His debut is in Brooklyn.

Finn Balor gets a sitdown interview of his own and talks about what an honor it is to be NXT Champion. He's known Kevin Owens for about a year now and after getting to know him, he really isn't surprised by what happened at the contract signing. Owens may be a man of words, but Balor is a man of actions, and Owens' actions don't back up his words. Sami

Zayn has been helping Balor get ready for the title match and Finn doesn't care if it's a ladder match, a cage match or a street fight, because he's going to prove that Tokyo wasn't a fluke. When asked if the Demon will appear, Balor gives a vague "we'll see."

Dash and Dawson vs. Hype Bros

Mojo and Dawson get things going with Rawley cranking on a wristlock and bringing in Ryder for the double knees in the corner. We get a WOO WOO WOO chant to the New Day rhythm but a Dash distraction lets Dawson pull Ryder off the middle rope and take over. Ryder takes a quick double teaming before slipping over for the hot tag to Mojo. Rawley cleans house and holds up Dash for the elevated Rough Ryder and the pin at 3:33.

Rating: C. This tag division continues to have depth and I'm so glad that Ryder is getting some TV time out of the deal. I've never liked how WWE wasted him and it's nice to see him getting something other than a jobber's treatment. Mojo and Ryder compliment each other in a weird way and should be fine as a meal for some big heel team.

Dash and Dawson beat up Ryder post match and lay him out with the Shatter Machine.

The Vaudevillains are given a rematch for the NXT Tag Team Titles in Brooklyn. Regal advises them to come up with a way to counter Alexa Bliss.

Bull Dempsey has some more success with his training and seems to be making progress, even being able to turn over a big tire.

Rhyno vs. Samoa Joe

This should be a hard hitting ending to a pretty nothing feud. Joe fires off right hands to start but Rhyno rams him face first into the buckle. That's fine with Joe who sends Rhyno outside and scores with the suicide dive. Back in and the corner enziguri drops Rhyno again but he comes back with a spinebuster as we take a break.

After the commercial it's Joe coming back with an STO, earning him a TKO for two. Joe's middle rope boot to the face puts Rhyno down but he grabs

a belly to belly. The Gore hits a boot so Rhyno settles for a clothesline for two instead. Rhyno makes the mistake of going to the middle rope, earning himself another enziguri and the Muscle Buster for the pin at 12:57.

Rating: C-. It's a good enough power brawl but Joe is still "Samoa Joe: that guy you've seen elsewhere". He hasn't been wasted but after a big debut, Joe has just been a midcarder doing nothing of note since. I could see him being the opponent for Corbin in Brooklyn though, followed by a run higher up on the NXT ladder.

Overall Rating: C+. As usual, NXT provides a great blueprint for how to build up a big show. They didn't have much of a midcard set for Brooklyn but in an hour they set up a Women's Title match, a Tag Team Title match and a match with a legend, along with (for all intents and purposes) adding a stipulation for the title match. I had a good time with this show, but swapping the opener and main event would have been a good idea.

Results

Bayley b. Charlotte – Super Bayley to belly

Baron Corbin b. Steve Culter – End of Days

Tyler Breeze b. Aaron Solo – Beauty Shot

Hype Bros b. Dash and Dawson – Middle rope Rough Ryder to Dash

Samoa Joe b. Rhyno – Muscle Buster

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Monday Nitro – March 13, 2000: Ghosts of Cruiserweights Gone By

Monday Nitro #231

Date: March 13, 2000

Location: Civic Center, Providence, Rhode Island

Attendance: 5,996

Commentators: Mark Madden, Tony Schiavone

It's the go home show for Uncensored 2000, meaning we might finally get a breather from all this nonsense if we can just get through one more week. The big draw tonight is the return of Hogan and Sting, because that's what the world needs right now. Other than that we might even be treated to more Jarrett vs. Sid build. Let's get to it.

Ric Flair is in the back with Liz and Luger and tries to apologize for Arn making a scene on Thunder. Ric is never going to ride with the old truck again because he's going to be riding with the Luger Ferrari. Luger says Arn is part of Team Package.

Opening sequence.

Here's Ric Flair with the Hogan weightlifting belt and something to say. He isn't happy to be in this God forsaken part of the world but he has a point to prove. Let's get right to it and get Arn Anderson out here, which gives us what might be the best thing of the night: the Four Horsemen music. Ric cuts Anderson off before he can say anything and declares Team Package the replacement of the Horsemen and promises the old life can rise again.

Anderson says that would be the easy thing to do, but he's been thinking about all those years of bleeding all over this country and proving that they were the best wrestlers in the world. What Flair is trying to do with Luger is taking the easy way and it's guaranteed for destruction, so Anderson wants to step away as Flair's friend, because it's not going to work.

This brings Anderson to the strap match with Hogan at Uncensored so Arn wants Hogan to come out here right now. Cue Hulk and Flair loses his mind. Hogan cuts Flair's ranting off but Anderson promises Hulk that he won't be there at Uncensored because he's taking himself out. Flair: "WHAT???" Arn walks away but Hulk comes down the aisle, talking about being the man in wrestling for twenty years. He doesn't want to wait until Sunday and the brawl is on but Luger runs out to blast Hogan with the bat. Flair and Luger get in some shots before leaving Hogan laying, clutching his shoulder.

Just like it has been for weeks, this was one of the best segments they've done in a long time, but it's all about old guys who are going to eventually have a horrible match. That's where these segments are wasted: the matches are going to suck because the two wrestlers are about 100 years old. Yeah they were talented back in the day, but those days were a long time ago and WCW never found a way around that.

Spring Break Out preview with Rachman and the Nitro Girls.

After a break, Hogan is being checked out as Jimmy Hart and Arn Anderson look on.

3 Count vs. Jung Dragons

The Dragons are Kaz Hayashi/Jamie-San/Yang. It's a big brawl to start and I don't think I'm going to be able to follow most of this. Jamie-San (Noble in a small mask) hurricanranas Helms into the corner to start before it's off to Yang for a high cross body. That earns him a superkick to the jaw but there isn't time to sell because Kaz comes in to throw Shannon to the floor for a huge flip dive.

It's time for the parade of dives with everyone getting one in, including

Shannon who gets back in and dives onto the pile. Back in and both teams have one guy break up a pin with a top rope splash or elbow, followed by Shannon hitting a sleeper drop to finally get the pin Jamie-San.

Rating: C+. I need a commercial to catch my breath. This is the old lucha style tag that made WCW work in the first place and it was still awesome here. These six guys were out there going nuts and showing off everything they could squeeze into four minutes. The fans were blown away here and that's exactly the idea they were going with. Get used to seeing these guys because they're going to be fighting a lot in the future.

Luger yells at Ric in the back and they're going to take care of Hogan tonight. Ric is way too thrilled at Luger being willing to take him back.

Curt Hennig tries to get Anderson to stay but Arn is going to see his kids.

Silver King and El Dandy are reading their fan mail when Miss Hancock comes up. Dandy: "Do we not excite your groin?" How is that not a more famous line?

The Wall vs. Bam Bam Bigelow

They brawl into the corner to start where Wall handcuffs Bigelow to the ring for the DQ in 45 seconds.

Wall goes after Bigelow in the corner but Crowbar comes in with a big metal pole, only to get another chokeslam on the bad neck for his efforts. David Flair and his crowbar (the object) get the same treatment. Bigelow: "GET ME A KEY!!!" Wall chokeslams David through Crowbar through a table and gets in a few shots on Bigelow before we go to a break.

Here's the NWO with something to say, but first they need to eject the girls. Jarrett says not so fast though because the fans might want to see some skin. If they do, they can look down their shirt so the girls can get out of here. Now for the serious business. Jeff has been hearing about how Sid has his number, so Jeff has a highlight reel of all the guitar shots to Sid's head. Madden: "I might watch that one when I'm alone with my baby tonight." As for tonight, the Harris Twins want to

fight Sid and anyone he can find. Sid comes out and accepts the challenge and rambles for a bit before saying Vampiro is his partner.

Crowbar is taken into the ambulance as Bigelow says this is his fault. He wants Wall at Uncensored, even though it went pretty badly about ten minutes ago?

Harlem Heat is ready for Disco Inferno tonight and Booker/Kidman on Sunday. This was nothing.

Nitro Girls.

Clip of Paul Orndorff trying to sign a guy with massive arms at Arnold Schwarzenegger's bodybuilding show. More on this later, because we're just that lucky.

Booker/Kidman vs. Lane/Rave

Yeah Lodi is Rave now because changing his name every few weeks is the big solution. Kidman and Lane get things going as Miss Hancock comes out to do commentary. Rave breaks up a tag attempt to do some double teaming as Hancock talks about Kidman looking good to her. Somehow Torrie hears this despite being twenty feet away and gets in Hancock's face but nothing comes of it. Kidman dropkicks Lane out of the air as everything breaks down. Booker's kicks put Lane down and he goes up for the missile dropkick but Kidman rolls Lane up for the pin instead.

Curt Hennig vs. Total Package

Before Curt comes to the ring, Hogan returns in the ambulance. Oh dear, oh dear. It's a brawl to start with Hennig sending Luger into the buckle a few times and scoring with a running knee lift. A shot with the cast drops Luger but here's Flair for the DQ. I see this is another one of those wrestling shows minus the wrestling.

Post match Hogan (with two good shoulders) comes in for the save and wants a tag match tonight.

Vampiro is in the boiler room or whatever they're ripping off this week and broods about how much he hates Jeff Jarrett. Tonight, Jeff can't run

and hide from this freak.

Brian Knobbs is looking for the Dog and finds him drinking from a toilet.

More Spring Break Out stuff.

The tag match is set for tonight.

Nitro Girls.

Sid is ready for Jarrett on Sunday. Powerbombs are promised.

Norman Smiley vs. The Dog

Dog has a hood on his head to calm him down so Norman comes up behind him for the spanking dance. Knobbs goes after Norman until the Demon comes out to even things up, Lane and Rave come out to take out Demon, and Norman makes the Dog tap to the Norman's Conquest. This took about a minute total.

Knobbs says he's hardcore and wants a fight with anyone right now.

Brian Knobbs vs. Terry Funk

Brian meets him with a trashcan shot as Funk gets in before a second puts Funk right back outside. Funk comes back by crashing some trashcan lids over Knobbs' head before they fight into the crowd. Back in and they fight over a trashcan by lifting it into the air with both guys pulling it down onto the other's head over and over. This brings out Evan and Shannon from 3 Count (Shane is still injured from earlier) to knock Brian out with the Hardcore Title to give Terry the pin.

Terry comes back in with the chicken to clean house (because that's still a thing) but Dustin Rhodes runs out with the bullrope (because that's still a thing) to lay out Funk.

Finlay is going to beat up Vampiro in their hardcore match on Sunday. That's Vampiro's reward for all his main event stuff because the US Title is being held hostage by the NWO. Again.

Vampiro/Sid Vicious vs. Harris Twins

Sid pounds on Don in the corner to start but the Twins quickly take over on Vampiro with Don getting two off a side slam. Ron charges into a spinning kick in the corner but the Twins cheat to stay in control. Vampiro is all like "whatever. Raven never said BRING IT ON so why should I?" The H Bomb puts Vampiro down but Sid tagged himself in to powerbomb Don for the pin.

Rating: D. So again, Vampiro is just kind of there as the rest of the boring people do their thing. To be fair, it's not like Vampiro ever had a chance to do anything in the main event scene because he's young and has flashes of charisma, meaning he had to be crushed at the soonest possible opportunity.

More Spring Break Out stuff because this is supposed to be interesting. I love how WCW insisted that everything had to be live but 3 Count is at these things so they're not even trying to hide it here.

Flair and Luger are ready for tonight's main event.

Stevie Ray vs. Disco Inferno

We cut to the back where the Harris Twins are beating up the Mamalukes to make Disco come out here alone. Not knowing this, Disco says the Mamalukes will put the belts on the line against any two members of Harlem Heat right now. Disco thinks he has the night off but Big T. and Cash disagree. Stevie drapes Disco over the top and kicks him in the face to start as Disco shouts for the Mamalukes to come save him. Back in and Disco grabs a swinging neckbreaker but Stevie Slapjacks him down for the easy pin. I'm not sure what the point of this was but it did fill in five minutes.

Hogan and Hennig are ready for the main event as well.

Team Package vs. Curt Hennig/Hulk Hogan

Team Package bail to the floor to start until it's off to Hogan vs. Luger. Hogan wins a slugout in the corner as a big WWF sign can be seen over their heads. There are the running clotheslines and it's off to Hennig as Madden talks about the power of adrenaline. Flair comes in as

well to trade chops in the corner but is quickly sent to the floor for a chair shot from Hulk. We settle down to Luger vs. Hennig as I'm sure someone is bringing up Wrestlemania IX.

Luger finally kicks Hogan in the face to take over and it's time for Flair to come in and chop Hogan because he never learns. To be fair though, that's Flair in a nutshell: the chops to Hogan/Sting never work, the top rope chop barely ever works and he almost never wins a big match with the Figure Four, so he tries them every night because THIS TIME FOR SURE!

Luger cheats to keep control but Hogan hits his half of a double clothesline to put both guys down. Hennig gets the hot tag and everything breaks down with the good guys (well as good as Hogan can be) taking over. Hogan gets a bit too overzealous though and shoves the referee down for the DQ.

Rating: D+. Not the worst main event tag in the world but the ending left a bit to be desired. Hennig isn't even on the card on Sunday, which would seem to make him the perfect (see what I did there?) choice to take the fall here. I don't hate the idea of having a DQ ending, but it wouldn't have hurt to have a clean(ish) ending here.

Liz hits Hogan in the knee with the ball bat (Madden: "She swings pretty good for a girl.") and Team Package hammers away, only to have the lights go out and....it's Vampiro? Oh and Sting too, as he brawls with Luger in the aisle and ring to end the show.

Overall Rating: D+. Well, they're getting better. It's still not a good show most of the time but the cruiserweight match was fun and gave the show a lot more energy than usual. Getting past Uncensored should do them a lot of good but there are still a ton of issues with this promotion, especially all the really bad hardcore brawls that last all of a minute and come off as a big waste of time instead of anything interesting. Sunday is going to be rough but I don't think it can actually be less interesting than what we've been sitting through recently.

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