

Ring of Honor – July 1, 2015: A Lesson To Wrestling Companies

Ring of Honor

Date: July 1, 2015

Location: 2300 Arena, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Commentators: King Corino, Kevin Kelly

We're finally past the Global Wars stuff so it's time for something actually Ring of Honor instead of a co-promoted show. Therefore tonight...it's War of the Worlds, which is another Ring of Honor/New Japan co-promoted show from before Global Wars took place. They're entertaining, but I'm more interested in their storylines instead of shows from two months ago. Let's get to it.

Opening sequence.

Kelly promises fallout from Best in the World next week, meaning it's FINALLY a new, all ROH show.

Addiction vs. Gedo/Kazuchika Okada

Addiction's ROH World Tag Team Titles aren't on the line, but they do insist on being called the World Tag Team Champions of the World. Gedo and Okada are part of the Chaos stable. Kaz and Gedo get things going with Gedo firing off some Flip Flop and Fly (with the punches missing) before it's off to Okada vs. Daniels. The fans are split but Okada wins some points by teasing a big chop to the chest but stopping to gently pat him.

Gedo books his team into control with a poke to the eye but it's quickly back to Kaz. The Addiction screws up to give Gedo a rollup (with tights) for two. At least Gedo is showing some personality here. He's one of those guys where I just don't get it so this is a mild improvement. Back from a break with Kaz putting Gedo in a freaky arm/leg hold but Daniels

shoves the referee and almost gets in a fight with him, which might be an homage to Tommy Young boxing with Jim Cornette back in the day.

A top rope stomp to the chest gets two on Gedo but he grabs a quick Downward Spiral, finally allowing the hot tag to Okada. House is cleaned and the White Noise onto the knee gets two. Some double teaming slows Okada down until a double cross body gives us a breather. Back to Gedo for a jawbreaker and low superkick for two but Celebrity Addiction (belly to back into a gutbuster) is enough for the pin on Gedo at 14:41.

Rating: C+. This is where I get tired of Ring of Honor fans. The match was really nothing all that great, but Gedo and Okada are from Japan so the fans are going to act like this was one of the most amazing things they've ever seen. Yeah it was fine, but it was just a run of the mill tag match. Okada has his moments of awesome, but Gedo is just a guy for the most part.

Daniels takes the Rainmaker post match, and it's still just a clothesline.

Adam Page vs. Watanabe

This is joined in progress. Watanabe takes him down with a neckbreaker and backdrops Page to the floor. Page backflips out of a German on the floor to prevent a broken....well probably multiple broken, and a Colby Corino distraction lets Page mostly miss a shooting star off the apron. Back in and Page breaks up a half and half suplex but gets caught in a belly to back superplex. I'm still waiting on anything but a spot fest here. My suspicions are confirmed as Page hits his Right of Passage reverse piledriver for the pin at 4:54 shown.

Rating: D+. Well that happened. This is another good example of the problem with these shows: who are these people and why should I care? If you don't follow New Japan, there's very little reason to care about what these people are doing. I know both guys are young stars, but that's about all I know of either guy. You could have any guy fill that role, and that's not a good sign. The match certainly wasn't bad, but I have no connection or reason to care about either guy and that hurts a lot.

AJ Styles vs. Adam Cole

Styles' IWGP World Title isn't on the line. They shove each other around and run their mouths a bit to start before Cole cranks on a weak armbar. Styles shrugs it off and comes back with an AA into a backbreaker to take over. A seated version of the Superman forearm (minus the springboard) gets two and the drop down into the dropkick sends Cole to the floor and us to a break. Back with Cole hitting a nice wheelbarrow suplex onto the apron for the first really cool spot of the match.

A knee to the face gets two for Cole and we hit the chinlock. Cole spits on the commentators and flips off the fans (censored) but AJ will have none of that and comes back with a torture rack powerbomb for two of his own. Corino thinks AJ is sexy. Ok then. Cole's recently injured shoulder is sent into the corner but he superkicks AJ out of the air for two more. We hit the Figure Four and Corino is in full on fanboy mode. Fans: "THIS IS WRESTLING!" Oh shut up.

Styles makes the rope and kicks him to the floor as we take another break. Back with a VERY fast paced kick exchange, capped off by AJ missing the Pele and taking a low superkick for a near fall. A Canadian Destroyer doesn't work very well so Cole busts out a Styles Clash for an even nearer fall. How exactly do you nearly fall anyway? Is it like slipping and catching your balance at the last minute? Now the Pele connects and AJ is mad enough to hit a kneeling piledriver and the Clash for the pin at 22:45.

Rating: B-. I liked the match and they picked it way up later in the show, but again this was more for people who are long time watchers of the show than a good initiation for new fans. I've seen enough of Cole to know he's good (though not as good as he's made up to be) but they didn't do a great job of making me know that. Still though, good main event.

They shake hands to end the show.

Overall Rating: C+. The show was fun, but I'm REALLY not a fan of this style of show. Like I said, if you don't know how things are going in Ring of Honor or New Japan, this was mainly just a collection of wrestlers having matches with no stories or anything to make me care

about them. It was a fine show for an hour, but these guys really needed some video packages or promos to let us connect to them.

A lot of wrestling companies forget about how important it is to care about the wrestlers and think it's all about the in ring action. You're almost always going to be able to find better wrestling, but wrestlers you care about having good matches are far more interesting than wrestlers you don't care about having a slightly better match. I'm really glad we're finally moving forward next week, because this stuff is getting tiresome.

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NXT – July 1, 2015: Well He's Gonna Do Something

NXT

Date: July 1, 2015

Location: Full Sail University, Winter Park, Florida

Commentators: Byron Saxton, Rich Brennan, Corey Graves

It's the show before the big title match in Tokyo and we actually have a main event announced in advance. This week's big match is Samoa Joe/Finn

Balor vs. Rhyno/Kevin Owens, which isn't exactly what the champ should be doing but it makes sense given the story. I can't imagine Owens is champion next week but I've been surprised before. Let's get to it.

The opening video is just a quick preview of the tag match.

Vaudevillains vs. Scott Dawson/Dash Wilder

Gotch and Wilder start things off with Dash quickly shoving him into the corner for a tag off to Dawson. Well that was pointless. Simon gets a quick two out of the corner and it's off to English for a MANLY elbow. A back elbow and knee drop put Simon down and Dawson drives elbows into the face. The manliness starts running low though so it's off to English to squeeze the juice out of oranges and shave with broken glass. Or maybe for the Whirling Dervish from English for the pin at 3:07.

Rating: D+. This was basically a squash and a way for the Vaudevillains to say that they're here as faces. The fans are going to cheer for the MANLY stuff because it's goofy fun and the guys are good enough to make a pretty unique gimmick work. I like the team, but they need some better opponents than a pair of jobbers.

Becky Lynch has a hip flexor injury and will be out for a few weeks.

Baron Corbin vs. Tucker Knight

Knight looks a lot like Rusev. End of Days in 47 seconds.

The Vaudevillains and Enzo/Cass are in Regal's office. As you might expect, he snaps after about ten seconds of chattering. It's a #1 contenders match next week.

It's time for the last part of the Finn Balor documentary. Balor talks about loving how he spawns creativity from fans with their art. Some of the pictures are cool and I know I'm right because Sami Zayn agrees. We see the Finn Balor debut with Prince Devitt popping up on screen and how he knew the fans were accepting him.

The name is a combination of an Irish warrior named Finwick who went to war against the evil King Balor. The fact that his dad is named Finn

didn't hurt either. Matt Bloom (Jason Albert, NXT trainer) says there wasn't much in ring stuff to teach him but he had to learn cameras. Balor says every entrance is a movie, which is an interesting way to look at it.

Quick talk about the Demon giving him more confidence before it's off to saying he's ready to take the title in Japan. A music video of him with some kids doing the Balor pose and everyone talking about how amazing Balor is ends this. These three parts are collected in an NXT special and I really, REALLY recommend you take the thirty minutes to watch it. These are some of the best documentaries WWE has ever done and they make me think Balor is ready for the WWE main event scene right now.

Eva Marie trained earlier today as Regal watched. That could be anywhere between a pleasant surprise to my mind exploding in shock to exactly the disaster a lot of people are expecting.

Emma vs. Carmella

The lack of caring for Carmella when Enzo and Cass aren't there is astounding. Feeling out process to start with Carmella taking her down in a headlock, followed by a hurricanrana out of the corner. Emma grabs the ropes (that's kind of lame) and puts on a bodyscissors for a bit. Carmella fights back and hits a running boot to the side of the head, only to be pulled down into the Emma Lock for the tap out at 4:12.

Rating: D+. This is more proof that there are two kinds of NXT Divas. Some of them are capable of having a classic match if they're given enough time and look as polished as any male wrestler. Then you have the lower level, who look about the same as most of the main roster Divas and do little for me. Guess which group these two are in.

Bull Dempsey tries to break open a vending machine when Regal shows up to yell at him. The chocolate on Dempsey's lips don't make things any better.

Jason Jordan is annoyed at losing again last week so Chad Gable comes up to offer his services again.

Tyler Breeze vs. Tye Dillinger

Dillinger charges into a boot to start but slugs Breeze down to take over. Tye mocks the photos and the fans give him a ten, which hasn't been explained on NXT so far. A hurricanrana and right hands (straight out of Shawn Michaels' playbook) set up the Beauty Shot for the pin at 2:50.

Emma and Dana Brooke interrupt a Sasha Banks interview to admire the Women's Title. A challenge is thrown down and Sasha says she'll find a partner.

Rhyno/Kevin Owens vs. Samoa Joe/Finn Balor

Joe is billed at 302lbs which sounds bigger than you would think, but it's nice to just admit that he's a bigger guy. Rhyno and Joe slug it out to start with Joe taking over and nailing the jumping kick in the corner. Off to Balor vs. Owens with Finn dropkicking him down but being sent to the floor for daring to try a suplex. Back from a break with the champ holding Balor in a chinlock. That's really dull stuff so it's back to Rhyno for a delayed vertical suplex with some squats thrown in.

Points to Rhyno for picking things up a bit. Owens puts on another chinlock but makes sure to stick out his tongue to the crowd because he makes chinlocks something special. Some of the time at least. We get the Cena finishing sequence but Balor escapes the AA and makes the hot tag to Joe. Rhyno plants him with a spinebuster and Owens adds something resembling a Pop Up Powerbomb. It's back to Balor for a Pele though and the Gore nails the champ by mistake, setting up the Coup de Grace for the pin on Owens (first time in NXT) at 12:40.

Rating: C. This was fine, but what does Joe actually add to NXT? He's just Joe at this point and hasn't done anything other than his first big showdown. Maybe now that Owens is going to be shifting to the main roster he might have a story coming soon, but there's nothing significant for him right now. I'd love to see him do something and it's WAY too early to write him off, but so far there's nothing special. There's nothing to talk about with the match as it's booking 101 to set up a title match.

Overall Rating: C. Much like the main event, this was fine but there's

not much you need to see here. Balor continues to look like a million bucks and Breeze is actually an awesome face due to the amount of hard work he's put in over the last year or so. Overall though this feels like the doldrums that NXT hits when they're about to start getting ready for a big Takeover, which I believe is around Summerslam time. Totally watchable show that set up some future matches, but not much on its own.

Results

Vaudevillains b. Scott Dawson/Dash Wilder – Whirling Dervish to Dawson

Baron Corbin b. Tucker Knight – End of Days

Emma b. Carmella – Emma Lock

Tyler Breeze b. Tye Dillinger – Beauty Shot

Finn Balor/Samoa Joe b. Rhyno/Kevin Owens – Coup de Grace to Owens

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Thunder – February 9, 2000:

Some Twisted Fever Dream From The Nightmares Of An 80's Fan

Thunder

Date: February 9, 2000

Location: Myriad Convention Center, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

Attendance: 7,124

Commentators: Mike Tenay, Bobby Heenan

The NWO has never had problems like this before! I mean they're fighting amongst themselves and beating each other up! Other than that, the question here is which veteran is going to rip the company apart tonight and then get a big match instead of getting suspended or fired like they should. Let's get to it.

Jarrett, the Twins and Hall arrive separately.

Cruiserweight Title Tournament Semi-Finals: Lash Leroux vs. Shannon Moore

Lash cuts off the performance this week, making him twice as annoying. Granted that's not saying much as he isn't very annoying in the first place. 3 Count gets involved early and pulls Lash to the floor, allowing Shannon to hit a moonsault for two back inside. Lash blocks a spinwheel kick and sends Shannon into the corner, where he counters a bodyscissors and drops Moore chest first onto the buckle. A dropkick gets two on Shannon and he gets planted with something like an AA. Evan offers a distraction so the other bandmates can come in, only to be taken down by a double clothesline. Lash rolls Shannon up for a fast pin.

Norman Smiley breaks up the post match beatdown and promises to beat all of them up at SuperBrawl.

Time to run down the card.

Here's the NWO, meaning just Jarrett and the Twins, with something to say. Jeff wants quiet from the fans before he starts beating up their heroes. Fans have been asking why Jeff did what he did on Monday when he

attacked Hall. Who are these fans? I want them flogged. Hall was trying to take Jarrett's title shot, even though he would get the title match anyway at SuperBrawl. Jarrett makes Sid/Funk vs. the Twins tonight just to screw with the champ. Tenay: "What's wrong with that?"

Cue Hall, who reads HEY YO off a piece of paper. He doesn't remember choosing Jarrett as the boss because Jeff doesn't remember the time up north. Jeff has been invited into the clique down here and now he thinks he's running the show. He's just the acting commissioner until Nash comes back, so here's Nash....on the screen. Nash tells the women to stop with the massage for now because he has to yell at Jarrett.

Jeff can't be left alone for five minutes and as a result, he's no longer commissioner in any capacity. Back in Amazing Fantasy #15 in Spider-Man's first appearance, it was said that with great power comes great responsibility. Jarrett did something bad to someone Nash cares about, so Jeff has to be punished.

The first idea was to cover him in barbecue sauce and put him in a cell with Meng, but then he had a better idea: leave him on a deserted island with Zbyszko so Larry can tell him about the time when he was on top of the territory. Hall: "NO KEV NOT THAT!" Nash can be a funny guy when he feels like it. Instead, how about Hall vs. Jarrett tonight with the title shot on the line. The survey says the fans approve (or maybe they just want to go home) and that's that. So to be clear, this week the Outsiders are faces.

Jarrett is livid after a break.

Hardcore Title: Demon vs. Bam Bam Bigelow

Demon does his entrance from the coffin and gets hit with a crutch for the pin in three seconds. This is part of the "let's bury Demon because we agreed to a deal with Kiss and then realized it was stupid but we have to fulfill our obligations" period.

Funk and Sid are ready for the Twins tonight.

Crowbar listens to Kiss because he's crazy.

Booker vs. Stevie Ray

I would ask why not wait for SuperBrawl, but I guess you have to do this match while Booker is still out on bail for that attempted murder thing. Booker doesn't want to fight his brother, but a Biggs distraction lets Stevie get in some cheap shots. A few kicks put Stevie down and Booker beats up Biggs, followed by a chair to Stevie. Booker leaves and there was no match.

Nash, on the phone, isn't cool with Jarrett spending \$57,000 on guitars last week so he makes Luger vs. Finlay for tonight.

Flair wants Hogan but will settle for Funk at SuperBrawl. They really are just doing the greatest hits catalog aren't they?

Kidman vs. Crowbar

This could be good. Crowbar charges into the ring and Kidman pounds him down like a villain, or someone with a reason to be mad at Crowbar, would do. Back up and Crowbar intentionally throws dropkicks that miss for some taunting but Kidman just punches him in the face. They head outside with Kidman being whipped into the barricade, setting up a splash off the barricade. Well at least they're keeping it moving so far.

Back in and Crowbar gets dropkicked out of the air, setting up the Bodog for two. The BK Bomb gets the same but Crowbar counters a headscissors into a kind of reverse Batista Bomb. I've always thought a reverse powerbomb would be a good finisher for someone. Kidman is in trouble but Torrie easily distracts the referee, allowing Crowbar to grab the crowbar. Crowbar takes a crowbar though and Kidman hits a quick hurricanrana for the pin.

Rating: C. These two are rapidly becoming some of my favorite people on the show. Crowbar may not be the most technically sound guy in the world but he's playing his character so well that it's hard not to like him. Kidman is probably the most polished worker on the roster right now (or at least the most polished who is actually trying) and it's really showing.

Crowbar whips himself into the steps. That's quite the dedication.

The NWO sends their women away.

Sid Vicious/Terry Funk vs. Harris Brothers

Sid comes out first because the title has no value these days. Jarrett, of course wearing the US Title which he has shown no signs of defending yet, is on commentary. Ron and Sid start with Ron taunting Funk, drawing him in for a Twins' double team. Just like last week, Sid fights them off with ease because they're the Harris Twins, allowing Funk to come in and cover Don for two. A DDT gets the same and it's off to Ron for a chinlock.

Funk fights back with a shoulder as we hit slapnuts #5 from Jeff. The hot tag (more like mild and party cloudy) brings in Sid for a chokeslam and cobra clutch slam to Ron. Don takes a piledriver on the exposed concrete but Sid gets hit low to keep the match going. Funk puts Don on a table at ringside as Sid chases....I guess Ron to the back, allowing Jarrett to guitar Funk through the table to give Don the pin.

Rating: D. I guess this is the match that got the extra time after Knobbs vs. Demon. That being said, I'd love to hear the validation from the creative team as to how this is the best use for the World Heavyweight Champion who has spent weeks battling the forces of evil to finally win the belt. Lame tag match but at least Jarrett gets one up on the champ, by beating his tag partner who first retired seventeen years ago.

Flair wants to team up with Luger so Luger can break Funk's arm on Monday while Luger deals with Hogan. The youngest person in this story: Lex Luger at 41.

Total Package vs. Fit Finlay

Before the match, Luger (can we please go back to that being his official name?) talks about beating up Hogan and Funk with help from Flair, who is referred to as a protege. Thankfully Finlay comes out so I don't have to feel the explosion of the space time continuum from that statement. Finlay works on the arm to start, stomps away in the corner and then gets

hit in the leg by a ball bat shot from Liz for the fast DQ.

Luger Pillmanizes Finlay's arm and Brian Knobbs comes out to get in a shot of his own. On Finlay of course, because he doesn't seem to remember Luger breaking his arm so recently.

This Week in WCW Motorsports.

2XS (Lenny and Lodi, now known as Idol) isn't worried about Miss Hancock leaving them because they don't need a stupid gimmick. They'll take the titles tonight.

Tag Team Titles: 2XS vs. Mamalukes

The Italians are defending but get jumped in the aisle, which is becoming a very common trend in WCW. Tenay ignores talking about the match to plug DDP's new book as Vito gets stomped down before he can even take the belt off. Cue Hancock for some gratuitous leg shots and a rare removal of the hair bun. My goodness that woman is beautiful. She hands some papers to the announcers and leaves which they can't seem to understand. Idol DDTs Johnny but Disco breaks up the pin. Disco and Idol ram heads and Vito's implant DDT is enough to retain. The match was a backdrop for Hancock's paper delivery.

Crowbar hits Disco with a lead pipe and steals the belts.

Ernest Miller won't say where James Brown is.

Gene calls out Ric Flair for a chat. Ric says it's just like old times because he's still the greatest wrestler, athlete and lover in the world. He isn't pleased with ESPN for not naming him one of the greatest athletes of the century but would rather talk about what's in the WCW Magazine he's holding. It's a list of the all time great WCW stars and Flair is #2, after Hulk Hogan. Flair beats up the magazine (makes sense for him) but here's Dustin Rhodes. Dustin didn't think much of Ric letting his son get beaten up on Monday when all David wanted to do was impress his dad. David is more grown up than Ric and those are fighting words.

Dustin Rhodes vs. Ric Flair

Flash back six years and this could be interesting. Rhodes takes over to start by stomping Flair into the corner and suplexing him down but a clothesline takes out the referee about twenty seconds in. A low blow puts Dustin down but he avoids a knee drop and puts Flair in the Figure Four. That earns him a Rolex to the face, giving Ric the pin.

Terry Funk makes the save but Lex Luger hits the ring to take out Dustin and rack Funk.

Scott Hall vs. Jeff Jarrett

Winner gets the World Title shot at SuperBrawl. Scott gets in some shots to start but Jeff sends him outside for a beating from the Harris Twins. Ron's clothesline gives Jeff two and we hit the sleeper/sleeper reversal sequence. Hall comes back with right hands and the fall away slam as the fans are WAY into Scott. Just like Monday, the referee makes sure to get right in the way of a flailing body, this time with Jeff's legs as he's taken up for the Outsider's Edge. No count of course, allowing Jeff to pop up and hit the Stroke for three off second referee Mark Johnson.

Not so fast though as the first referee gets up and says restart it so Hall punches various people until a mic shot puts him down for two. Jarrett misses a belt shot and takes one to the face, but this time Johnson pulls Mickie Jay to the floor. Cue Sid and GOOD GRIEF JUST LET THERE BE A PIN. Hall Edges Johnson and Sid powerbombs Jarrett as the match is finally thrown out.

Rating: F+. It's Jeff Jarrett and Scott Hall. These two fought each other so many times over the years that they probably know how to have at least an average match through muscle memory, but we had run ins, ref bumps, refs fighting and weapons in a six and a half minute match. This is another case of "just let them wrestle". It would make everyone's lives so much easier, which is why it's never going to happen.

Overall Rating: D-. This may not be the worst show ever, but it's one of the laziest. However, they do seem to be making some headway with some of the stories. Luger and Flair as the new big bad is fine, even though I can't imagine Hogan and Funk as partners taking them down. The NWO stuff is just killing this show though with the Twins as some of the least

interesting lackeys I've ever seen. There's some watchable stuff in there and if they would just find a better option for the main event and upper midcard, this would be a far more watchable company.

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Lucha Underground – July 1, 2015: Who Is Mexico?

Lucha Underground

Date: July 1, 2015

Location: Lucha Underground Arena, Los Angeles, California

Commentators: Vampiro, Matt Striker

The big story coming out of last week was Mil Muertes becoming #1 contender, meaning I'd advise you to send Prince Puma our final goodbyes before his inevitable destruction. Other than that we have the Disciples of Death coming after the Trios Titles, which should be another academic ending. Let's get to it.

We open with a recap of Chavo attacking Black Lotus and trying to feed her to Cueto's brother. Next up is Daivari vs. Texano which really isn't doing anything for me. Finally we have Drago losing the #1 contendership

to Mil Muertes, because Muertes is evil and therefore unstoppable.

Chavo comes in to Cueto's office and gets a No DQ title shot in exchange for delivering Black Lotus. As a bonus, Cueto says if Konnan gets involved then the title changes hands.

Delavar Daivari vs. Texano

Daivari has Big Ryck. Texano slugs him away to start and a backdrop sends Daivari bailing to the floor. A slingshot hilo gets two but a Ryck distraction lets Daivari go after the knee. This feud hasn't been great so far (I still don't really know why they're fighting) and this match isn't likely to help things out. Daivari stays on the knee and Vampiro calls Texano a hero. Wait when did Texano turn face?

Daivari puts on a figure four but Texano quickly makes the ropes and chops away. A leg lariat gets two as this match isn't exactly thrilling so far. Texano makes things serious by shouting in Spanish but Daivari is all like NO COMPRENDE and gets two off an X Factor. Ryck gets superkicked off the apron and a Batista Bomb ends Daivari.

Rating: D+. Texano is a good choice for a face (assuming he gets rid of the bullrope) but Daivari as a generic rich dude wasn't doing anything for anyone. The match wasn't any good and it showed how weak Daivari really is out there. Thankfully the fans are into Texano and a feud with someone else could do good things for him.

Konnan and Puma are getting ready when Catrina and Muertes come in to say the title is his. Then they disappear, which Konnan calls mind games.

After a break, Konnan tells someone we can't see that it's time to settle a debt by dealing with Chavo tonight.

Hernandez vs. Drago

Striker: "Hernandez is arguably one of the biggest luchadors on the roster." Actually it's not arguable Striker. Hernandez shoves him down to start but Drago flips back up to his feet. For some reason this stuns Hernandez because someone actually got back to their feet. We hit the chinlock as we hear about Drago being a karate champion. Back up and

Drago's cross body completely fails as Hernandez casually counters it into something like a Big Ending.

A kick to the head staggers Hernandez on the top and sets up a hurricanrana for two. Not a bad power vs. speed match so far. Another kick to the face (well the heel but you get the idea) sets up an Asai corkscrew dive, only to have Hernandez Border Toss Drago onto the apron. A "fan" loses his belt and Drago gets whipped and choked for the DQ.

Rating: C-. This wasn't bad but Hernandez is little more than power moves at this point. He never has been the most polished guy in the world but it's getting even worse in recent years. Drago is still good but he didn't get to do much here, making him feel far more average than anything else.

Hernandez tells the stupid fans that dragons aren't real and Drago is just a man.

Catrina tells Chavo that he'll die if he wins tonight. Chavo says he'll see Katrina and Muertes at Ultima Lucha.

Marty Martinez vs. Alberto El Patron

Alberto punches him down in the corner and kicks at the ribs, setting up a Codebreaker on the arm and the cross armbreaker for the win in less than a minute.

Post match Alberto tells Johnny Mundo that he has opened a new side of Alberto. He'll rip Johnny's face off at Ultima Lucha.

Lucha Underground Title: Chavo Guerrero vs. Prince Puma

Puma is defending, No DQ and if Konnan interferes then Puma loses the title. Chavo has the remaining Crew in his corner to protect him from Mexico, whatever or whoever that may be. Owen's Hart's spinout counters Puma's wristlock but he crucifixes Chavo for two. The champ flips over Chavo and Guerrero's knee gives out, drawing in the Crew to beat Puma down. Puma tries to fight both guys off as Chavo has barely moved. A DDT/top rope double stomp plants Puma again but Texano comes in to fight off the Crew. Puma goes up and hits a 630 on Chavo to retain the title.

Rating: C-. I have to believe that was a real injury (or at least a storyline “real” injury) because there’s no reason to have the match go that way if Chavo was healthy. Even from Chavo’s perspective it doesn’t make sense because why wouldn’t he help in a beatdown in a No DQ match? I’ll give them a big break here because it seems like a real injury and it’s not fair to criticize them in that case.

Texano says Mexico isn’t coming for Chavo because it’s right here.

Chavo is in the back when Blue Demon Jr. comes in. Demon chuckles at what he saw but Chavo says that Texano must be Mexico now while Demon is just some has been who lives in Miami. Demon slams him into a locker and leaves as Chavo smiles. I’ve asked this before and I’ll ask it again: why am I supposed to care about Blue Demon Jr.? He’s been around since the first episode, wrestled two or three times, and is apparently really important (yes I know his lineage), but I have no reason to care about him.

Overall Rating: D+. I didn’t care about this one very much, but Ultima Lucha is really starting to take shape. They’ve got about a month to go before the major show and it should be interesting to see how good of a show they can put on when they have the time and the stories built up. Not a great show here, but it accomplished a few of its goals.

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Beast in the East: The Land of the Wrong Main Event

Beast in the East

Date: July 4, 2015

Location: Ryugoku Sumo Hall, Tokyo, Japan

Commentators: Michael Cole, Byron Saxton

This is one of those times where the WWE Network shows how amazing it really is. Instead of a pay per view or TV show, they've basically sent cameras to film a major house show and we get to watch it because we're lucky that we have the Network in our lives. The main draw is of course Brock Lesnar in a rare match as he faces Kofi Kingston in what could be a lot of fun. Let's get to it.

The opening video talks about the only two things that matter: Finn Balor vs. Kevin Owens and Brock Lesnar. Does anything else matter?

It's a really basic set with a short aisle and a square Titantron. I like that.

Neville vs. Chris Jericho

That's quite the opener. The fans are mainly behind Jericho but the LET'S GO NEVILLE chants sneak in there. Feeling out process to start with Jericho working on a wristlock but getting sent out to the floor for his efforts. Back in and we hit a bow and arrow hold on Neville, only to have him flip over into a cover for two.

They're working a nice technical style to start here. Cole talks about their histories and my mind is blown as we hear about Dragon Gate and FMW on WWE programming. Back up and Neville tries some flips, only to be sent out to the floor. The springboard dropkick puts him down again and the fans are eating up some Canadian hero.

We hit the chinlock back inside as Jericho is working a very simple heel style while still being a face for the crowd. An enziguri gets two on Neville. Cole: "And now Neville may be the one heading back to the locker room." So is Jericho just going to stand out there if he wins? It's not the worst idea in the world but as usual, Cole doesn't think before he speaks. Neville fights back up and goes to the top but Jericho is right there waiting to knock him down. Very nicely done there as you can see the story they're telling here.

Jericho's superplex is countered but he has to roll through a Red Arrow attempt. A try at a hurricanrana goes even worse as Jericho counters into the Walls for a very solid reaction from the crowd. The ropes are quickly grabbed though and Neville hits a quick dropkick and standing shooting star for two. Jericho forearm him down and hits the Lionsault for the same. The Codebreaker connects but Jericho takes his time covering so we keep going. Neville pops back up with the delayed German and a superkick but the Red Arrow hits knees, setting up the Lontamer (yes Lontamer) for the submission at 16:13.

Rating: B. Huh? They spent the entire match setting up Neville's big comeback to beat Jericho and then they have him win? I'm not sure on that one but at least Neville looked great in there. I was really digging the story they were going with here Jericho being one step ahead of Neville and cutting him off at every turn while treating him as someone beneath him with all of his cockiness. Good match with a questionable result but the fans dug the heck out of the Lontamer so points for giving them something to cheer for. Jericho was the heel here, but it was very basic at best.

Brock is here.

Divas Title: Nikki Bella vs. Tamina vs. Paige

Nikki is defending and it could be interesting to hear how the fans treat this one. Cole, ever the genius, calls the former Women's Champion Bull Nakana (it's Nakano, as Byron Saxton corrects him. Yes, Byron Saxton is the smart one on this team). Paige takes over to start but actually works with Nikki to suplex Tamina. You know, because Tamina is so big that you

can't suplex her.

Nikki takes over as you can hear some very loud spots being called. The champ loads up a superplex but the referee is nice enough to tell Tamina to get back in so she can do the Tower of Doom. Tamina gets sent outside again though because she really has no reason to be here other than likely taking the fall later. The Rampaige gets two on Nikki because she killed that move during one of their title matches. It's Tamina in again though with a superkick to Paige but Nikki rolls away from the Superfly Splash, setting up the forearm to retain at 7:13.

Rating: C-. This was fine and basically a Raw Divas match. Nikki is pretty clearly getting the Divas Title record because it's going to make us forget about AJ Lee or something like that, because only WWE really cares about these things. You can see the other Divas having to take it back a notch to let her keep up, but Nikki is a lot better than she used to be.

Brock Lesnar video, which might as well be Kofi's last rites.

Kofi Kingston vs. Brock Lesnar

Just Kofi here and surprisingly no Heyman. For some reason I don't see him as being a big deal in Japan. Kofi is smart enough to bail to the floor to start and we're told that New Day's tag match took place before the show went on the air. I was wondering how they were going to be able to fit the whole seven match card in two hours, but did anyone really need to see New Day vs. Lucha Dragons? Cole mentions Brock being the IWGP Heavyweight Champion, which is always interesting to hear in WWE.

The chase is on for a few seconds but the inevitable beating quickly begins. Kofi's cross body works as well as you would expect it to work and a dropkick to the back just annoys Brock even more. Kofi flips out of a German and goes after the knee for as much effect as it's going to have. There's the first German though and the Japanese fans chant SUPLEX CITY. German #2 makes Kofi's hair bounce in a good bit. The fans try to cheer for Kingston so Brock just destroys him with the F5 for the pin at 2:58. This was exactly what it should have been.

Brock throws in a few more Germans because he can, followed by some F5's to an invading New Day. Again, this is exactly what it should have been.

In case you're wondering about the other two advertised matches, Cesaro beat Diego by submission and the Lucha Dragons pinned the New Day in dark matches.

Quick recap of the NXT Title match, which should be main eventing but instead we're getting a lame tag match because that's how WWE works. Anyway, Finn Balor made his name in Japan and is coming back home as the Demon to take the title from NXT Champion Kevin Owens. Kevin simply said it's not going to happen.

NXT Title: Finn Balor vs. Kevin Owens

We get the Demon entrance and oh yes it's still glorious. For a bonus, the camera changes to an arena shot at the crescendos of the music. To make it feel even more special, we get the full on flower presentation from geisha girls (Owens throws his into the crowd of course) and streamers for both guys. Get this through your head ROH: doing the same thing for every match doesn't make it feel more special. Hideo Itami is shown in the front row and we're ready to start. Balor has more paint than ever with his face, torso and left leg covered.

Balor charges at the bell and loads up the Coup de Grace in the first ten seconds. Owens rolls outside so Balor nails a big dive as the NXT chants start up. He tries to bail again and eats a baseball slide as Balor is all over him. Back in and Owens hammers away to take over for the first time. Owens: "AND THAT'S WHY I'M THE CHAMP!" We hear more of Balor's accomplishments in New Japan as Owens takes some bows.

It's off to Chinlock City before a forearm breaks up Balor's springboard. The slow pace is working for Kevin here and it fits him very well. Finn beats the count back in but takes the backsplash for two. Back in and Owens snapmares him down and runs the ropes...before stopping for a chinlock. Owens: "Are you not impressed? I don't care. I hate this country and all its stupid people!" Balor fights back again with a middle rope forearm for two so Owens does Cena's finishing sequence, complete with an attempted AA.

Balor is afraid of a lawsuit over gimmick infringement (only Kurt Angle can steal that many finishers) and slips out twice in a row. Bloody Sunday is teased (and the fans gasp) but it's a Pele Kick to put Owens down instead. Owens takes a big flip dive and a top rope double stomp to the back, followed by a reverse Bloody Sunday (not called that of course) for a VERY close two. The Coup de Grace misses though and Owens' Cannonball gets two. The package piledriver slam gets the same but Balor hits a quick Sling Blade.

Another Coup de Grace is countered so Balor kicks him in the head and FINALLY connects with the stomp...for two. Dang I thought that was it. Owens can't hit the swinging fisherman's superplex so he settles for a middle rope Regal Roll for two. That looked great. Kevin's Swanton hits knees and the real Bloody Sunday gets an even closer two. They're trading bombs here and it's getting awesome. Owens makes the eternal mistake of slapping a hero in the face and saying the hero can't beat him. Balor dropkicks him into the corner, hits a running corner dropkick and a second Coup de Grace for the title at 19:30.

Rating: B+. Was there ever any doubt that this was going to be awesome? Owens is one of the best heels that I've seen in years and he does everything he can do to make you hate him. The fact that he can go as well as he does in the ring makes him even better, which is saying quite a bit as he's that good as a character.

Tatsumi Fujinami comes in to congratulate the new champion. Owens of course refuses a handshake because he's a true heel.

Kane/King Barrett vs. John Cena/Dolph Ziggler

Here's a match that no one wants to see because it's lame even by house show standards and WWE didn't think this stuff through. And Lana isn't even here, though to be fair she wouldn't make sense out there with Cena. Ziggler shoulders Barrett down to start so it's off to the power guys, meaning Kane gets to bore main event crowds in a new country. Cole: "Cena has restored credibility to what many would admit was a rather stagnant United States Title." Oh yeah Vince isn't listening.

Cena slugs away at Kane for no effect, just as he's done about 194 times

over the years. Maybe if we're lucky Kane will break a hole in the ring and be a demon/monster again. Barrett chinlocks Cena before it's back to Kane, who bores the announcers so much that they start name dropping Japanese wrestlers and co-promoted shows. Cole: "It's amazing to know that COO HHH is watching this show live." No Cole, it isn't.

Barrett comes back in for some big right hands as the announcers keep trying to find ANYTHING to talk about here. Another Barrett chinlock slows things down even more but Cena comes back with an AA to a very limited reaction. Kane breaks up the tag but can't hit a chokeslam, so Cena, ever the genius, tries an AA. Since it's against Kane though, the powers of history and Cena's strength don't work because Cena can usually do that on Henry and Big Show but can't handle the 100lb lighter man.

ANOTHER chinlock makes the match drag on even further but Barrett misses an elbow to finally allow Ziggler to get the hot tag. Dolph cleans house...and gets taken down again so this match can keep going for reasons I do not understand. Just let Cena AA Barrett for the pin already. We hit the double arm stretch on Dolph before Winds of Changes is countered into a crucifix for two. The FIFTH chinlock of this match is followed by Barrett's apron knees and yet another chinlock.

Winds of Change stops Ziggler again and Kane does the old Arn Anderson drop down onto the back until he crotches himself. Now usually that would mean a hot tag, but why do that when you can have Kane hit a big boot and a double back elbow from the heels to keep this going? The chokeslam is countered and Ziggler finally hits the jumping DDT for the hot tag. Cena AA's Kane with ease (because this match has erased the last ten minutes from history) and hits another on Barrett for the pin at a mind numbing 23:52.

Rating: D. The match wasn't even horrible but you could have cut out at least ten minutes of this and done the exact same match. Rusev would have made a lot more sense than Barrett but for some reason they didn't change this match to ANYTHING else. The time was the real problem here as it went on forever and the chinlocks killed any interest there might have been here.

A big celebration ends the show. Cole: "You and I actually trended on Twitter tonight!" Is there really any other way to end this? Thankfully the last shot of the show is Balor holding up the title.

Overall Rating: B. Here's the thing: this show had two goals to take care of: Brock Lesnar being all destructive and a good NXT Title match with Balor getting the belt. They nailed those two things to near perfection, so anything else was a bonus. Luckily there was a good opener and a fine Divas match, but that main event killed a lot of the energy the show had. They really should have aired one of the other matches in its place, because that was the completely wrong choice to end the show. This should have ended with Balor pinning Owens, not a lame tag match. Still though, really fun stuff for a glorified house show.

Results

Chris Jericho b. Neville – Red Arrow

Nikki Bella b. Paige and Tamina – Forearm to Tamina

Brock Lesnar b. Kofi Kingston – F5

Finn Balor b. Kevin Owens – Coup de Grace

John Cena/Dolph Ziggler b. Kane/King Barrett – AA to Barrett

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Impact Wrestling – July 1, 2015: They're In Trouble. Trouble. Trouble.

Impact Wrestling

Date: July 1, 2015

Location: Impact Zone, Orlando, Florida

Commentators: Josh Matthews, D'Angelo Dinero

This is a big special show called Bell to Bell, headlined by Ethan Carter III challenging Kurt Angle for the World Title. We're also coming off a pretty lackluster Slammiversary with the main story being Jeff Jarrett winning King of the Mountain and taking the newly created title to Global Force Wrestling. We also have a thirty minute Iron Man match for the Tag Team Titles so this is a packed show. Let's get to it.

The opening video looks at Angle's TNA career but tonight he's up against someone who has never lost. It's a simple video but it hits every point it needed to touch.

The Rising vs. Beat Down Clan

The losing team must disband, thank goodness. It's also a 4-3 elimination match with Hernandez/MVP/Kenny King/Low Ki vs. Drew Galloway/Mica/Eli Drake. MVP and Drew get things going with Galloway kicking him in the face and hammering away in the corner. Low Ki comes in and loses some skin off Galloway's chops. It's off to King vs. Mica with the former taking Mica down with ease for a bunch of right hands to the head. That's more aggression than you usually see from him.

The BDC starts taking over but Hernandez isn't pleased that he didn't get a tag. Ki gets a nice running start into the corner and kicks Mica in the head for the elimination. Back with Ki suplexing Galloway for two as this

is very one sided so far. Drew quickly rolls over to the corner for the hot tag to Drake for some house cleaning, including a dive to take MVP down on the floor. Drake comes up favoring his knee though and it's time for the trainers. That's officially an elimination so it's Galloway vs. the entire BDC.

Hernandez gets things going for his team as the Pope talks about pork chops. They chop it out in the corner (dang maybe Pope is on to something) but it's quickly off to Ki, who accidentally kicks King in the head, allowing Drew to roll up Low Ki for the elimination, followed by a quick cover on King to get it down to 2-1. See, now that's logical thinking and doesn't make the whole match seem fake.

Drew gives Ki a shoulder breaker onto the steps, likely to write Ki off the show, only to walk into a Border Toss. MVP's Playmaker (or whatever he's calling that stupid move these days) drops Galloway again but he tells MVP to bring it, earning him a Drive By to the head for the pin at 16:45.

Rating: C. Well, at least it's finally done. The Rising was one of the most worthless stables I've ever seen as they just had no reason to exist. The BDC is nothing special either but at least they seem to have a purpose. Galloway was clearly several steps ahead of his partners so getting rid of Drake and Mica is a good thing for him.

Post break, MVP is told that Low Ki is heading to the hospital for his shoulder. Oh yeah that's his way off TV.

Here's Magnus with something to say. He doesn't think much of James Storm and doesn't care that Storm's parents didn't give him enough hugs and kisses. That's an image I didn't expect to think of today. Storm played some mind games but what he forgot was the power of a man when his family is threatened. Magnus brings out Mickie James, who is totally fine after that near death thing. Mickie thanks Magnus for always being there for him because he's the man for her.

Cue Storm and Khoya, with the Cowboy saying he's here to talk to Mickie. He thinks Mickie should be thanking him for not pushing her a little bit harder. Storm didn't want her in the Revolution, but rather to prove

how easy it is to manipulate a woman. He could have any woman he wanted but Mickie doesn't seem to take too kindly to this line of thinking.

Mickie would love to take the bet that Storm can't find one woman to be on his side, because she and Magnus will fight the two of them anytime. This was a pretty awkward exchange but at least it gets Mickie back in the ring and maybe some fresh blood in the Knockouts division. One other thing: it's always amusing to hear the commentary reference a match happening but not being able to say who actually won.

Tag Team Titles: Wolves vs. Dirty Heels

The belts are vacant coming in and this is a thirty minute Iron Man match for the fifth match in a best of five series. I'm so glad this is it for these teams as I'm long past over caring about watching them fight. Oddly enough they say that Aries won but couldn't say who won between Storm and Magnus.

Davey and Aries fight into the corner to start before it's off to the partners with the Wolves taking over on Roode's arm. Back to Aries who takes Eddie down as they're clearly taking their time to start. An elbow to the back gets two on Eddie but he easily drives Aries into the corner for the tag. Things speed up a bit with some Wolves double teaming before Eddie suplexes Austin for no cover. Instead it's off to Davey vs. Roode with Richards putting on a kind of reverse Figure Four.

Ever the smart heel, Aries pushes the bottom rope towards his partner for the save. The Heels (stupid meta name) take over in the corner and start working on Eddie's leg to really slow things down. We hit the ten minute mark as the leg work continues. The Heels make a wish on Eddie's legs but he finally snaps off a hurricanrana to make the tag off to Richards. Davey takes over and everything breaks down with Bobby getting tied up in the Tree of Woe, setting up a swan dive into the corner (cool spot) for two.

We take a break and come back with just under twelve minutes to go and no score. Richards is in trouble and Aries' top rope ax handle to the floor makes it even worse. Edwards breaks up a cover with ten minutes to go. Davey breaks up a catapult into a forearm and stomps Roode down, finally

allowing the tag off to Eddie. Edwards kicks Roode off the top and hits a backpack Stunner for a very close two. A jackknife cover gets another near fall on Roode and Eddie is stunned.

Now the catapult works with Aries adding a slingshot elbow drop for two of his own. The Last Chancery nearly gets a submission but Davey makes the save. It's not like that move EVER WORKS ANYWAY so I didn't get the drama. The double top rope double stomp gets a VERY close two on Aries and we hit five minutes to go. Roode plants Edwards with a spinebuster and Aries nails the 450 for the first fall with four minutes left.

The Heels get smart by throwing the Wolves to the floor to kill some time and Aries keeps up the intelligence with a suicide dive to take them both out. Eddie starts fighting back at the two minute mark and the powerbomb/Backstabber combo ties things up with about seventy five seconds left. Roode sneaks in with a belt shot to the head for two but Eddie counters the Roode Bomb into a rollup for the pin. The last ten seconds quickly run out and the Wolves get the titles back at 30:00.

Rating: B+. I'm really not wild on the feud as a whole but the last two matches were far more entertaining than the first three. This match was a really good example of a match taking its time and the wrestlers thinking instead of just throwing everything in at the same time. Really well done match here and I never once questioned the Wolves' ability to get two straight falls near the end. That's a very good sign and the match worked really well.

Knockouts Title: Awesome Kong vs. Brooke vs. Taryn Terrell

Taryn is defending and this is one fall to a finish. Brooke and Taryn get in a brawl to start as Kong stomps around the ring. The champ gets double teamed with Kong hitting a corner splash, sending Taryn running to the floor for a breather. Simple heel strategy at least. It's fine with Kong who chinlocks Brooke down and then swings her around by the throat. Taryn comes back in with a dropkick to Kong but she turns around and eats a dropkick from Brooke.

There's a chokeslam from Kong on the champ but the Dollhouse pulls her to the floor for a quick beating. Brooke hits a pretty lame spear on Taryn

as Josh wants the Dollhouse gone forever. Yes because the last thing we need are three good looking women on the show. Jade hits a quick Stunner over the top rope to daze Kong, setting up the Taryn Cutter for the pin at 4:44.

Rating: D. This felt like something out of the Divas division, as the match was more about the heel champion escaping than anything about the match itself. It's not the worst I've ever seen, but the Knockouts work better when there's a bit more time for them to work with. Taryn retaining is good though because whoever takes it from her is going to look like a giant killer.

Post match the PLAYTIME IS OVER video comes on again....and it's Gail Kim. Well of course it is, as it's been at least six weeks since she's been out there reminding us how SERIOUS this is and how she's a real wrestler. I know Kim is one of the best Knockouts ever (and probably the best ever) but she's basically the female Dean Malenko: incredibly talented, but the charisma of a frozen turkey dinner.

It's time for the big sitdown interview with the Jarretts. Here's the whole thing: the last eight days were shocking, there's a future between TNA and Global Force, and Jeff is excited about it. This wasn't even two minutes long.

TNA World Title: Ethan Carter III vs. Kurt Angle

Angle is defending and Carter is undefeated. After some Big Match Intros we're ready to go with the fans sounding pretty much behind the champ. Thankfully the bell rings after a break so we don't have to miss a bunch of time after a few opening seconds. I wish WWE would figure out that mentality. The fans start the dueling chants as we have a very basic standoff to get things going.

Angle takes him down into a wristlock but is all like SCREW YOU NECK TUMOR and starts busting out the suplexes. Carter is sent to the floor and gets suplexed out there as well with Kurt in all fired up mode. Back in and Carter scores with a clothesline for one and it's off to a chinlock. There's the Stinger Splash, followed by a TKO of all things (always loved that move) for two. Angle misses a charge into the post and

gets DDT'd (DDP'd according to Josh) on the apron.

Back from a break with Carter holding a full nelson but Kurt easily powers out because neck surgeries mean nothing to him. Both guys are down off a clothesline but it's Kurt quickly up and busting out the suplexes. The Angle Slam is countered so it's time to roll some more Germans. Now the Slam gets two but Carter breaks up the ankle lock and sends Kurt to the floor. Tyrus finally gets involved with a clothesline but the 1%er is countered into another ankle lock.

That goes nowhere so it's back to the Germans because Kurt is really, really repetitive at times. Another Slam gets another two (remember that repetitive thing?) and it's back to the ankle lock, only to have the referee get bumped on the counter. Tyrus takes Angle out and the 1%er gets two more. Well at least they didn't go with the obvious ending. The monster tries to bring in a chair (because monsters need chairs) and gets ejected as Josh becomes a face announcer again by saying it's the right call.

Another 1%er is countered into the ankle lock with the grapevine but Carter actually makes the rope. I can't imagine there are more than five people that have gotten out of the grapevine version so well done there. Another Angle Slam is countered into a rollup to give Carter the title at 20:16.

Rating: B-. Well it was good, but I'm not really sure how I like Carter winning with a rollup. On one hand, I like the idea of having Carter win on a fluke, but this is going to set up another period of Angle chasing the title, which really isn't something TNA needs to do at this point. Angle is still good, but I really do not want to see him near the World Title ever again in all of history. Still though, good match and Carter winning was the only right answer, but this really didn't make Carter feel like anything bigger than he was before.

Overall Rating: B. Good show for the most part here but there were some major issues. The Knockouts Title match and the elimination tag were bad and boring respectfully and the Jarrett interview was more insulting than anything else. The rest was good though and it felt like a major night,

but it certainly didn't light anything new on fire.

Results

Beat Down Clan b. The Rising – Drive By to Galloway

Wolves b. Dirty Heels – Rollup to Roode

Taryn Terrell b. Awesome Kong and Brooke – Taryn Cutter to Kong

Ethan Carter III b. Kurt Angle – Rollup

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Smackdown – July 2, 2015: The Early Bird Catches The Same Old Smackdown

This is the full review as I watched the show already and did this in advance. There might be a few little bits here and there that I missed, but it would probably be Tough Enough stuff etc. If there's anything major, let me know.

Smackdown

Date: July 2, 2015

Location: Giant Center, Hershey, Pennsylvania

Commentators: Tom Phillips, Jerry Lawler, Jimmy Uso

There isn't a lot to say at the moment as we're getting closer and closer to Battleground and the showdown between Lesnar and Rollins. Raw mainly focused on Wyatt vs. Reigns, which is coming off as a strong feud with Wyatt getting inside Reigns' head, but I can't imagine there being much of a challenge for Roman when they finally face off. Let's get to it.

We open with a recap of Rollins giving the Authority all their presents on Monday, leading to the Authority and Wyatt beating down Reigns to end the show.

Here are Rollins and the Stooges to open things up. Rollins keeps plugging the product placement but says it's time to talk about the present. One day, everyone is going to ask about what it was like when Seth Rollins destroyed the Roman Empire and burned Suplex City to the ground. After some clips of the beatdowns, Rollins brags about conquering the conqueror last week.

Then Roman couldn't hang with the power of the Stooges and Kane got on his flight to Tokyo, but before he left he made a few matches for tonight: Dean Ambrose vs. Bray Wyatt and Roman Reigns vs. Seth Rollins, assuming Roman shows up. Cue Ambrose to come towards the ring but he walks back and comes out again with a kendo stick. Dean fights them off but is told his match with Wyatt starts RIGHT NOW.

Dean Ambrose vs. Bray Wyatt

Dean chops and strikes away against the ropes to start but walks into the running body block to change control early on. We hit the chinlock way faster than we should before they head outside for Ambrose's 619 under the bottom rope and a big clothesline before it's off to a break. Maybe they can get out of this lame formula stuff during the commercial. Back with Dean fighting out of Sister Abigail and nailing a big suicide dive to the floor.

A tornado DDT gets two for Ambrose but Wyatt takes his head off with a

clothesline and gets two of his own off the backslash. Back up and Dean's rebound lariat and top rope elbow get two as well, meaning the wait for anything but signature moves continues. Dean dives off the apron and gets thrown into the barricade for his efforts. Well that was different. Sister Abigail is good for the pretty sudden pin at 9:00.

Rating: D+. It was watchable as these two have fought so many times before, but this felt a lot more like a house show match than anything else. Dean did his signature stuff, Bray did his signature stuff, and then Wyatt won. I've seen far worse matches, but I never got the slightest bit interested in this one, partially because I'm sick of seeing these guys fight.

Adam Rose and Rosa Mendes are in the ring to call the entire audience jealous of him, only to be interrupted by R-Truth.

R-Truth vs. Adam Rose

Rose gets thrown around to start and Truth thrusts some pelvis at him. Phillips: "Truth is aware we don't have kings in this country right?" Lawler: "Are you kidding me?" Truth blocks some right hands and hits the Lie Detector for the pin at 1:58.

Video of Rock appearing at a house show over the weekend. Since this is WWE, they show it on the WWE Youtube channel.

Recap of Cena vs. Cesaro on Monday with Owens coming in for the DQ.

On WWE.com, Ryback promised to run through Mark Henry tonight on his way to Battleground, where he'll run over Big Show and Miz.

Mark Henry disagrees and says Ryback is disrespectful.

Mark Henry vs. Ryback

Non-title again and Henry's signature entrance with the camera behind his back makes its return. Mark shoves him to the floor to start but Ryback just punches him in the face and tries Shell Shock, only to be thwarted by the powers of fat. The announcers say that if he can't get Henry up, he can't get Big Show up. Please forget that HE ALREADY DID THAT. Ryback

gets one off a splash but can't get Henry up for a suplex. Henry: "FEED ME MORE!" How many times do you think that's been said in Mark's life?

The bearhug doesn't last long but Henry falls on Ryback's slam attempt for two. There's a double clothesline to put both guys down but Ryback is up first with the suplex. The World's Strongest Slam is countered into the spinebuster, followed by the Shell Shock for the pin at 7:00. Jimmy Uso is VERY excited over this.

Rating: C-. I liked this more than I was expecting to with Ryback building up to the suplex and then finally paying it off. No it's nothing mind blowing, but they built something up and then got to the point. That's basic storytelling and it's WAY more than you would expect to get out of something like this.

The Stooges show off some Apple Watch features.

Brie Bella vs. Naomi

This is described as a match between the stars of Total Divas. Brie slaps her in the face to start and a chase on the floor lets Brie get in a clothesline to take over. Back in and the BRIE MODE minus obnoxiously shouting BRIE MODE knee to the face gets two but Naomi slaps her in the face. Turnabout being fair play and all that jazz. Fox trips Naomi up though and the Bella Buster is good for the pin at 3:59.

Rating: D. Yeah this happened. It's a shame that Naomi's big push has been stopped for the sake of another Total Divas storyline because it's that time of the year again. There are some good elements in the division but the complete lack of any real motivation or logic to most of the characters cripples anything they could do.

Wyatt says he's the reason Reigns wasn't there to save Ambrose earlier tonight. Reigns must be hiding in some cave feeling sorry for himself. That isn't the Reigns that Bray knows though, because Reigns is all about fighting the world. Bray hasn't known anyone since he's been on this planet and that makes him stronger. Everything Roman loves in this world is going to be burned to the ground, leaving Wyatt and Reigns all alone. Then and only then will Wyatt finish Reigns, because it's anyone but you

Reigns. Run.

Prime Time Players vs. Ascension

Non-title. Titus chops Viktor to start and the announcers cringe in stereo. Jimmy: "Geez Louise." Darren gets suplexed onto Viktor and gets two off the Earthquake splash. It's off to Konnor to run Darren over, followed by shrugging off a forearm and punching Young down. They head outside with Darren getting posted as we head to a break.

Back with Lawler updating us on Roman Reigns' status for tonight: he's still not here. And I'm sure he will NOT be here for the match they've basically spent the whole night advertising. Young finally sends the losers into each other for a hot tag off to Titus as house is cleaned. Jimmy: "BOO YEAH!" Everything breaks down and the Clash of the Titus ends Konnor at 9:41.

Rating: D+. The match was acceptable and the action was fine, even though there was never any doubt as to who was winning. The part I'm interested in though is who the Players are going to be facing. They keep hyping the idea that it isn't clear which members of the New Day are getting the shot, which makes me think Dallas might be brought in as a surprise. Why that would be imposing is anyone's guess.

Here are Rusev and Summer Rae (looking as good as she ever has in a white dress) for a chat. Summer wants to apologize for her actions at Raw as she stooped down to the gold digger's level when Lana isn't even a real woman. Rusev says Summer knows her place but almost calls her Lana by mistake. He's coming for Ziggler and that's about it.

Rollins and the Stooges come out for the match with Reigns and it's time for the dreaded ten count. In case you've never watched wrestling before, Reigns shows up at nine and it's time to fight.

Seth Rollins vs. Roman Reigns

Non-title of course. Roman starts fast and whips Rollins into the corner before taking FOREVER to powerbomb Mercury, allowing Seth to kick him in the ribs and take over. A top rope double stomp on the back makes Reigns'

injuries (from Raw) even worse and a spinning kick to the ribs stops his comeback. Reigns shrugs it off again and plants Seth with a powerbomb, drawing in the Stooges for the DQ at 5:58.

Rating: D. I get that it was short, but there's no reason to have this match. Why burn through another edition of this match instead of having, say, Reigns vs. the Stooges? If you're only going to give it a few minutes then let Roman beat the two of them up and then have Rollins interfere. It's that simple and a way to save one of these matches from being done to death. Again, thinking can make the booking that much better but for some reason it almost never happens.

The beating is on but Ambrose comes out for the save, allowing for a big double beatdown on Mercury as the other two bail to end the show.

Overall Rating: D+. This one didn't work for me as it was mainly midcard stuff and then a really lame main event story that went nowhere. You can only have the Shield guys fight each other so many times before it stops being interesting and unfortunately we passed that back in like December. These matches should be major showdowns, not getting six minutes and a lame DQ finish on a random Smackdown. The show didn't do anything for me and there's no reason to see this.

Results

Bray Wyatt b. Dean Ambrose – Sister Abigail

R-Truth b. Adam Rose – Lie Detector

Ryback b. Mark Henry – Shell Shock

Brie Bella b. Naomi – Bella Buster

Prime Time Players b. Ascension – Clash of the Titus to Konnor

Roman Reigns b. Seth Rollins via DQ when Joey Mercury and Jamie Noble interfered

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Monday Night Raw – June 29, 2015: What A Shock

Monday Night Raw

Date: June 29, 2015

Location: Verizon Center, Washington, D.C.

Commentators: Michael Cole, John Bradshaw Layfield, Byron Saxton

Battleground is on the horizon and the Authority seems to be reunited to help Seth Rollins defend his World Title against Brock Lesnar. This means Kane and Joey Mercury at the moment, as Lesnar injured Jamie Noble last week, meaning there aren't many obstacles for Lesnar to overcome to get to Rollins. Let's get to it.

The opening recap shows the ending of last week's show with Lesnar being laid out by the devastating forces of Kane, Mercury and Rollins. I'm so glad they had Lesnar get beaten up as he was getting way too close to feeling like something special and they needed to cut his legs out from underneath him. Well, maybe just the toes or so as Lesnar is going to be fine.

Here's the Authority, complete with the secret weapon of Noble, to open things up. This is officially Monday Night Rollins, because Rollins has been watching some old Nitro matches. Perhaps on the WWE Network for

\$9.99? He talks about the power in this city, which you attain by doing things no one else could do. Rollins did something that Cena and even the Undertaker couldn't do, as he conquered the conqueror last week. Suplex City was burned to the ground and Lesnar is now on his way to Japan.

That's what he deserves after what Lesnar did to Noble last week. We even get a quick Jamie Noble chant because these fans are that intelligent. They're quickly tossed aside though as Rollins demands that the fans show Noble the respect that he deserves. However, it's time for presents! Rollins has Apple Watches for everyone, likely fulfilling a product placement agreement. Kane is getting a bonus though. He debuted back in 1997 (that really shouldn't be brought up) and a lot of things have changed since then.

Bill Clinton was in charge, the internet was dial-up and Paul Heyman was fat and disgusting....so not everything has changed. In all that time, Kane hasn't asked for a thing, so Rollins is sending him to.....Hawaii, complete with a picture saying Hawaii, thereby making this a complete copy of the segment where Rocky Maivia took over the Nation, giving the members watches and Faarooq a picture of Rocky himself.

As a hula dancer and ukelele player come out to complete the mood, Kane is looking forward to deciding which animal to throw into a volcano, but Rollins thinks they should team up to destroy Ambrose and Reigns in a No DQ tag match tonight. Rollins still isn't done though as he has a 2015 Cadillac for the Stooges to travel in. The guys celebrate as Rollins lists off the price and features. I was right about that product placement it seems. This goes on until Big Show comes out for his match.

The tag match later is presented by the new Terminator movie. I'm sure some people will get annoyed by this but it's money for the company in like 30 seconds. It's not the worst thing in the world.

Big Show vs. Mark Henry

Oh....yay. Miz is on commentary to cheer for Henry but Show pounds Mark into the corner with right hands (which are the size of typewriters according to JR), only to have Henry knock him down and hit a splash for two. Not that it matters as two big right hands knock Henry silly for the

pin at 1:24.

Ryback (sans belt) hits the ring to take Show down with a shoulder to the leg. Miz runs in to kick Ryback in the jaw, so Ryback wants their match to happen right now.

Miz vs. Ryback

Non-title., but now Ryback has the belt. I know it doesn't mean as much today but it disappears? Miz tries to stomp him down but gets his head slammed into the mat for his efforts. Ryback whips him across the ring with authority (not THE Authority of course. Like they'd be involved with the Intercontinental Title), followed by a totally ridiculous FORTY SECOND delayed vertical suplex.

Miz bails to the floor but comes back with a short DDT for two, setting up a nice face pull. A chinlock goes nowhere but the Reality Check gets two more. That's it for Ryback as he comes back with a spinebuster but the threat of a Meat Hook sends Miz running for the countout (the rare three count countout before the referee just says screw it and ends the match) at 5:11.

Rating: D. I would say this is what you would expect, but what you would actually expect is for Miz to beat him off a rollup when Big Show distracted Ryback. The triple threat match really isn't doing anything for me, but at least there's an actual feud over the title instead of just a one off match for a change.

Alicia Fox vs. Paige

Alicia comes out to the Bellas' music and has them at ringside. Paige takes her down into an armbar to start and drives a knee into the face for two. Some kicks in the corner don't bother Paige much as she hits a Thesz press, only to have the Bellas offer a distraction so Alicia can take over again as we go to a break. Back with Fox standing on the hair before we hit the chinlock.

As the fans start falling asleep due to the rest hold, the Bellas are right there with the COME ON (insert name here) shouting. A tilt-a-whirl

backbreaker gets two on Paige and it's back to the chinlock. Two chinlocks in a match this show tells me that Fox has no idea where to go on offense. Paige comes back with her three clotheslines and a kick to the face for two. Nikki tries a distraction so Fox can roll her up, only to have Paige roll through (with nothing on Fox's arms, meaning there's no reason she didn't kick out) for the pin at 9:43.

Rating: D. The idea was fine here but it's very clear that Fox had no business controlling most of a match this long. Paige vs. Nikki could be good, but I don't buy for a second that Paige is going to win as Nikki just MUST get the Divas Title record so we never think of AJ Lee again. I mean, that would just change so many things right?

Here's John Cena for the US Title Open Challenge (with the promo during the entrance instead of in the ring)....and here's Kevin Owens! I'll ignore Cole calling this a budding rivalry because Cole is that big of a schnook when he stops thinking.

US Title: Kevin Owens vs. John Cena

Owens drops to the floor after the Big Match Intros and says he'll just wait for Battleground. He'll take the US Title there, but maybe this man can do it instead.

US Title: Cesaro vs. John Cena

Owens joins commentary, which should be entertaining stuff. Thankfully they're immediately talking about the Balor vs. Owens NXT Title match this coming Saturday. Cena starts with a headlock and monkey flip to send Cesaro into the corner, meaning it's time for a standoff. This time it's Cesaro putting on a headlock before planting Cena with a powerslam, followed by a crucifix of all things for two.

The AA is countered and Cesaro drops Cena with a right hand for another near fall. As usual, why make things more complicated than they need to be? Off to an abdominal stretch on the mat as Owens talks about having what it takes to be a real champion. A dropkick staggers Cesaro but he casually slugs Cena down and gets two off a crossface punch to the head.

Back from a break with Cesaro trying a Sharpshooter of all things but Cena kicks him away, only to take a big clothesline for two. Cesaro loads up the Swing but opts for a catapult instead, only to have Cena bounce back into something similar to a springboard Stunner (it barely connected) for two of his own. Cesaro flips out of the AA and hits a massive Swiss Death for two more.

There's the STF but Cesaro rolls out, adjusts his legs and turns the hold over into the Sharpshooter. That was Hart vs. Perfect-esque. Cena makes a rope though and Cesaro's frustration is setting in. Owens: "Cena is in trouble. Not as much trouble as he'll be in at Battleground but close enough."

The apron superplex puts Cena down again as Cole thinks this is going to be a match of the year candidate. It kind of loses its appeal if you keep saying it over and over again, which is why a lot of Cole's commentary gets old. And yes, I'm aware it's mainly him being fed lines. Cena gets two more off a tornado DDT and they slug it out until Cesaro tries a high cross body, only to have Cena roll through into....actually not the AA as he spins Cesaro forward into a faceplant for another near fall.

Owens gets up and swings at Cole for praising Cena, who is dropkicked off the top rope and out to the floor. Back in and Cena tries a sunset flip but has to settle for a sunset bomb for yet another two. There's a Neutralizer out of nowhere but Cena kicks out again. A spinebuster sets up the Swing (good idea to have a power move set it up. It's weird when he just grabs the legs) which sets up the Sharpshooter but Owens comes in for the DQ at 20:20.

Rating: B+. Can Cena have a bad match at the moment? The guy is on one heck of a roll, which says a lot given how good he normally is. Cesaro using the Sharpshooter is fine but debuting it against Cena isn't the best idea as Cena hasn't tapped out in about thirteen years. Very good match here, but did you really expect anything else?

Kevin powerbombs both guys and says if anyone is taking the title off Cena, it's going to be him. Owens comes off as such a jerk on commentary and I love it very much.

Tonight, Dolph Ziggler and Lana are going public. Oh man this is going to be bad isn't it?

We get what I think is the same recap that opened the show. That's quite the use of another three minutes.

Bray Wyatt pops up on screen with the ANYONE BUT YOU picture of Reigns. He wants Reigns to open his eyes to see the truth and close his mouth so no more lies can be spread. Wyatt wasn't his father's favorite because his father threw him away like a piece of trash. I wonder if IRS wrote that off his taxes. Wyatt has his wings back now though and Reigns knows everything Bray stands for. There will be no distractions at Battlegrounds because the insects that watch them every week are inconsequential. They're the yin to each others yang and Bray will be Roman's crown of suffering. Anyone but you Roman. Run.

Lucha Dragons/Prime Time Players vs. New Day/Bo Dallas

JBL: "We lucha on Monday nights!" We get a clip of Rock's big surprise appearance at a house show over the weekend where he laid out Dallas, which is a GREAT advertisement for the house show circuit. It's the same thing as when they would occasionally have a title change and then turn it right back soon after. No it's not going to happen all the time, but make the people think it could and you can sell some more tickets.

Woods and Kalisto get things going with the masked one flipping off the top rope into a wristdrag as JBL says the Dragons remind him of the APA days. Off to Cara vs. Dallas with Sin cranking on the arm, only to have Darren come in for his standing Earthquake splash for two. Titus comes in to throw Dallas around with ease, which is a really simple yet effective power move. Kalisto doesn't have the same luck as Bo knees him in the head to finally take over.

Back to Young for a chinlock as the match slows down. The belly to back suplex onto the apron plants Dallas again and the threat of a huge brawl sends us to a break. We come back with Woods holding Kalisto in a cobra clutch (that's a move that has gotten a lot more popular recently) but it's quickly off to Cara to flip around and kick Big E. in the head.

E. isn't in enough trouble to get caught in the Gut Check though as he shoves Young to the floor to take over. We get the rotating stomps before it's back to Bo for the chinlock. That goes nowhere and the hot tag brings in Titus and everything breaks down. The Dragons hit big stereo dives, allowing Titus to hit a sitout spinebuster for the pin on Kofi at 14:35.

Rating: D+ Longer match than they needed to have here and I'm not wild on New Day losing again before their big rematch. That's why you bring in someone like Dallas: to take the fall and keep the New Day looking as strong as possible, but since WWE never actually thinks these things through, this is what we get. At least the champions didn't lose though.

Here are Dolph and Lana for their big moment. Originally they weren't on the best of terms because Lana was just trying to get back at Rusev. Then things changed, Ziggler is a real man, and Lana cares for him. Rusev finally hobbles out with Summer Rae by his side. He never cared about Lana because kissing her was like kissing the ring post.

Ziggler cuts him off and calls Lana his girlfriend and violence is teased, but Summer grabs the mic and calls Lana a gold digger. She was with Rusev when he won the US Title, but as soon as that was gone, so was Lana. That's enough for Lana and the fight is on, with the fans seemingly very pleased when Lana's skirt comes up. The match could be a disaster but the moment wasn't bad.

Ambrose talks to some Terminators when Reigns comes in and assures Dean that he's ready. Dean is the only family Reigns has around here and they're ready to rage.

Neville vs. Sheamus

Before the match we get a cool video of Neville being turned into a comic book superhero. I actually said he wrestled like a superhero when I saw him at a house show a few months back so they really nailed the idea here. Sheamus takes him down to the mat with a headlock as the announcers debate Neville beating him in the King of the Ring. JBL: "Nobody remembers who came second to Usain Bolt." Cole: "We did." JBL: "Well you're nobody."

Neville kicks him to the floor and Sheamus grabs the briefcase for comfort as we take a break. Back with Sheamus hitting the Regal Roll and a release suplex for no cover. Instead Sheamus just smiles like a bully is supposed to do. The fans think this is boring, so Sheamus puts his hand to his ear and slaps on a chinlock. Now THAT is a great heel move. No sarcasm there if it's not clear.

Neville kicks him in the face for a breather but Sheamus calmly hits three straight Irish Curses to regain control. Sheamus gets low bridged to the floor though, setting up a great looking Asai moonsault. Back in and Sheamus gets kicked in the head again but is still able to kick the ropes for a huge crash to break up the Red Arrow. The Brogue Kick ends Neville at 12:41.

Rating: C. This was fine and again I like that they're pushing Sheamus instead of having him go on the stupid, stupid losing streak that has become the trend for Money in the Bank winners. I'm hoping Neville can bounce back from this as it felt like a downgrade for him, but there's a very good chance that it's a one off loss and nothing else. The superhero video was a very nice touch and gives me hope.

Jack Swagger vs. King Barrett

Before the match, Barrett demands that all of his opponents must bow down to him. Swagger will have none of that so Barrett bails to the floor to start. Back in and Swagger throws him down with ease and gets the Patriot Lock with Barrett already in the ropes. Well he's a hoss you see so you can't expect that much intelligence. Jack runs into a knee in the corner and the Bull Hammer ends this at 1:47.

Roman Reigns/Dean Ambrose vs. Kane/Seth Rollins

No DQ. The Stooges come out in the Cadillac. It's a brawl to start as it should be with Rollins quickly being knocked out to the floor. Kane gets double teamed but Rollins gets back in to shove Ambrose off the top rope. Back from an early break with Rollins holding Reigns in a chinlock and the partners on the apron, because WWE doesn't get what NO DISQUALIFICATION means. Reigns fights away from Kane and it's a double tag to bring in Ambrose and Rollins.

Dean quickly cleans house and knocks Rollins to the floor. It's weapons time with a table getting things started. As if the fans didn't love Dean enough already. The Stooges pull it away so Reigns comes back with a bunch of kendo stick shots to Mercury, followed by three straight Superman Punches to various evildoers. Speaking of evil, cue Bray Wyatt to take out Reigns, including a Rock Bottom onto the announcers' table. Dean can't fight them off alone though and it's a chokeslam and Pedigree for the pin at 11:45.

Rating: C. Again, this was totally fine and they covered all the bases they needed to cover here. Wyatt costing Reigns the match makes perfect sense and at least the pin on Ambrose took two people. It's a pretty standard main event tag, but I'm glad they made it no DQ to avoid the same tired ending we always get.

Post match Reigns saves Dean from a TripleBomb through the table but Kane chokeslams him down too. Reigns fights back again but is finally thrown through the table in the corner. Another Pedigree puts Reigns down, leaving Wyatt to come back in (where was he for the last eight minutes?) and hit Sister Abigail to end the show.

Overall Rating: C+. Well it took me three days and....eh. I'm not at all surprised as it wasn't the best looking show in the world but at least it had the awesome Cena vs. Cesaro match (I'm as shocked as you are) and a few other good things in there as well. The Ziggler/Lana segment started off looking bad but Lana getting physical was long overdue. The show wasn't too bad and had more than enough moments to make it work. Good enough stuff here, but the car actually survived. That's quite the shock.

Results

Big Show b. Mark Henry – KO Punch

Ryback b. Miz via countout

Paige b. Alicia Fox – Rollup

Cesaro b. John Cena via DQ when Kevin Owens interfered

Prime Time Players/Lucha Dragons b. New Day/Bo Dallas – Sitout spinebuster to Kingston

Sheamus b. Neville – Brogue Kick

King Barrett b. Jack Swagger – Bull Hammer

Kane/Seth Rollins b. Dean Ambrose/Roman Reigns – Pedigree to Ambrose

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Suplex City Mach 1

Thanks to NSL for pointing this out, which he did due to the recommendation from Wrestling Wars, which you should all be listening to. Back at King of the Ring 2001, Kurt Angle suplexed Shane McMahon over and over and over. JR's description: "Angle is taking Shane McMahon to Suplex City."

New Column: TNA's Best

I know these are dark times for TNA, but it was worth looking at some of the good times too.

<http://www.wrestlingrumors.net/kbs-review-tnas-best/36628/>