

Lucha Underground – April 29, 2015: Ummmm.....Deep?

Lucha Underground

Date: April 29, 2015

Location: Lucha Underground Arena, Los Angeles, California

Commentators: Vampiro, Matt Striker

We now have four champions in this promotion after Angelico/Son of Havok/Ivelisse became the inaugural Trios Champions last week despite having to wrestle twice in one night. However, we're coming up on the season finale of this show and a lot of big things are about to happen. First up tonight we have Drago putting his career on the line against Lucha Underground Champion Prince Puma. Let's get to it.

The opening recap shows us the new champs winning their belts last week, including Angelico's incredible dive. Tonight's title match gets a little time as well.

Cueto yells at the Crew for botching the layup he handed them last week. He wants to give them some real motivation and takes them into a room where they meet Cueto's brother. We can't see him but he appears to be huge.

Fenix vs. Killshot

They actually shake hands to start before Killshot spins out of a wristlock, only to have Fenix counter right back into one of his own. The wrist stuff gets old so Killshot dropkicks him out to the floor and nails a nice dive to take him down one more time. Killshot runs right back in for a dive of his own to take over before avoiding a running kick to the face back inside. Fenix slaps him in the face but let's look at the announcers instead of where it goes.

Killshot counters a springboard tornado DDT into a slam, followed by rolling into a cutter for two. A quick belly to back into a Backstabber gets two on Fenix as Killshot is getting in a lot of offense here. Fenix

comes right back with some running kicks in the corner, only to charge into a spinning kick to the Face. Er the mask. Fenix pops back up and puts him in the reverse Tree of Woe for a knee to the back, followed by an over the shoulder sitout piledriver for the pin.

Rating: C. This wasn't great but Killshot got in some offense and looked good with the kicks to the face. So many people use the body kicks but Killshot was looking more like a martial artist instead of your standard striker, which worked a lot better than the same stuff you see so often around here. The other stuff isn't bad but this looked more precise.

Cueto comes in and asks Drago for a thank you for tonight's opportunity. He's SO good at this smarmy jerk.

Puma is getting ready when Cueto comes in to see him too. Doesn't he ever just sit in his office with conveniently places posters while having obviously scripted promos which only start when the cameras are in place? Anyway Hernandez comes in and rants about being put in a three way tonight. Cueto calms him down by making it a #1 contenders match.

Ricky Mandel vs. Argenis vs. Vin Massaro vs. Famous B.

These are all guys who have been injured by Pentagon Jr. It's kind of a jobber class reunion. Not that it matters as Texano comes in for the no contest after maybe ten seconds.

The beatings go on for about ten times the length of the "match" and Texano calls out Daivari to meet him in the ring.

A fan named Marty "the Moth" Martinez comes up to Cueto to ask for a shot in the temple but gets turned down for fear of being squashed like....a moth.

Hernandez vs. King Cuerno vs. Cage

I don't see this going well. Hernandez gets beaten down to start and again we cut away to the commentators for reasons I don't quite understand. A double suplex puts Hernandez down and Cuerno hits a top rope splash for two, setting off the early eruption between he and Cage. Hernandez takes a breather on the floor before getting knocked back down

in the corner.

Cage suplexes Cuerno in half but Hernandez does his always awesome pull up onto the top rope for a top rope shoulder. He spends a bit too much time posing over Cuerno and gets kicked in the face by Cage, who powerbombs Cuerno onto Hernandez for two. They argue again, which seems to surprise the announcers because it hasn't happened in the last three seconds. Hernandez hits a kind of reverse Samoan drop on Cuerno but the Moth comes in and gets beaten up with ease. Hernandez dropkicks Cage to the floor, setting up a sitout Dominator for the pin on Cuerno.

Rating: D. Yeah this didn't work too well. It was a messy fight with the Moth thing not really fitting, but at least they kept it quick. Puma vs. Hernandez (come on, Drago isn't winning that title) is going to be entertaining enough, but I don't see him as being the big boss fight for the championship.

Vampiro sits down with the Trios Champions and asks about last week. They're all thrilled, but Ivelisse doesn't think the cross body was all that special. The interview breaks down into another argument.

The announcers preview the title match, which is treated as the big deal that a title match should be.

Lucha Underground Title: Prince Puma vs. Drago

Title vs. career and Konnan is here with Puma. They shake hands to start before we get the "YOU CAN'T HIT ME" sequence. Drago jumps into an electric chair but headscissors the champ to the floor for a big flip dive. Back in and Drago goes after the legs to try and take away the 630 but Puma shrugs it off and hits a springboard missile dropkick, followed by a huge dive of his own.

A slingshot hilo and the Dragon's Tail get two on Drago (I'm still not a fan of move stealing but at least it's not done that often here). Puma charges into a boot in the corner and Drago hits a big corkscrew dive for two more. Off to an arm crank with a headscissors but Konnan's coaching helps Puma get to the ropes. Something like a fisherman's belly to back suplex (that's a new one) gets two for the champ but Drago comes back

with a hurricanrana for the same.

Drago seems scared to go for the big move here and the fans are calling him out on it. A big blue thunder bomb gets two for Puma and he starts pounding Drago in the face. There goes the referee though, just as Drago hits a Canadian Destroyer for no count. Cue Hernandez to spear Drago but it wasn't clear who he was aiming for. Puma doesn't like it but hits something like a sitout Emerald Flosion for the pin to retain.

Rating: B-. This had a good story going on with Drago being worried about going insane like he usually does but not being able to reach his normal level as a result. Puma looking worried about getting rid of someone he respected made sense and we even got some bonus stuff for the future thrown in. Good stuff.

Drago gets the big hero's sendoff. We see him leaving with Cueto waiting on him. They'll meet again apparently and an explosion goes off as Drago disappears. Ummm.....deep?

Overall Rating: C+. Good but not great show this week but they were clearly setting up some stuff for down the road. Puma is a good champion and it's going to be a big deal when someone knocks him off. I'm curious to see where this Cueto's brother thing goes, but hopefully it's not towards some power struggle. Then again, I've said things like that before and Lucha Underground has surprised me so maybe it can work.

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For The Sake Of Perspective

ESPN's Pardon the Interruption has mentioned wrestling twice in a week.

On Billy Corgan signing with TNA (paraphrased): "Corgan has signed with TNA Wrestling.....whatever that is."

On the passing of Verne Gagne: A 45 second fond farewell to someone both hosts clearly knew and respected with name drops of various opponents. Guest host Bob Ryan said that in a world of rasslers, Gagne was clearly the best wrestler.

Moral of the story: there's a difference between being on TV and being known and respected.

Smackdown – April 30, 2015: The Rivalry Of This Era

Smackdown

Date: April 28, 2015

Location: iWireless Center, Moline, Illinois

Commentators: Michael Cole, Tom Phillips, Jerry Lawler

We're four days removed from Extreme Rules, meaning we're two and a half weeks from Payback. Coming out of Raw, the big story is Rollins having to defend his title against Randy Orton and Roman Reigns in a three way at the next pay per view, which WWE had spoiled about a week in advance.

Let's get to it.

This episode is dedicated to Verne Gagne.

We open in the back with Kane coming into Rollins' office. Seth yells about Kane screwing up on Monday and making decisions not best for business because they're not best for him. Kane tells him to cool it but Seth accuses him of being jealous. Kane promises to make a man out of him, so tonight it's Rollins vs. Ambrose because it's best for business. Seth thinks the Kane from 20 years ago would be best for business because this one has nothing to offer.

Opening sequence.

Here's Roman Reigns for a chat. First up we have a shout out to his boy Dean Ambrose for his match tonight against their little brother Seth Rollins. That would be the guy that ripped down everything they had built and then cost him the World Title at Wrestlemania. Thanks to Seth, every fight he's had has been the biggest fight of his life, so wait until he gets his hands on him at Payback. This brings out Kane and it's time for a match.

Roman Reigns vs. Kane

Slug out to start with Kane kicking him down into the corner before planting him with a belly to back suplex. Roman low bridges him to the floor and sends Kane into the post but a side slam puts Reigns on the announcers' table. Back from a break with Kane holding Reigns in a bearhug before just stepping on his head. Roman gets back up and wins another slugout before suplexing Kane down. A middle rope clothesline puts him down again and Roman follows it up with more in the corner.

The Samoan drop looks to set up the Superman Punch but Kane catches him by the throat for a chokeslam for two. Reigns escapes the tombstone and hits a DDT (because it's just a transitional move), followed by the Superman Punch but the threat of a spear sends Kane running away for the countout at 9:59.

Rating: D+. I have no idea why I'm supposed to care about this potential

Kane face turn but it's not working. Kane is decent enough as a power enforcer but he's the focus of the main event scene instead of the champion or either of the challengers. That's really the best idea they have?

Renee asks Seth about what just happened. Rollins says the difference between himself and Kane is he finds a way to win the fight instead of running away all the time. He doesn't need the help of the WWE, the Authority, or even the Stooges.

Cesaro/Kidd vs. New Day for the titles tonight. So much for building a match up.

Damien Sandow vs. Curtis Axel

Sandow has new generic rock music and mimics the ring announcer's introduction. This has all of a few weeks before it gets old in a hurry. Sandow introduces Axel as the village idiot of Minneapolis and the Pigeon Toed Disappointment. Axel does the shirt rip and gets caught in a headlock for his efforts. This time it's Damien ripping his own shirt off and throwing Curtis to the floor before sitting down next to him. Back in and Curtis stomps Damien down and chokes him in the corner. A corner splash misses though and Sandow Hulks Up with three punches and a big boot into You're Welcome (full nelson slam) for the pin at 2:30.

Ryback thinks the eater of worlds has bitten off more than he can chew. Tonight, he's dedicating his match to Bray Wyatt when he devours Bray's former disciple Luke Harper.

Ryback vs. Luke Harper

They grapple around to start with both guys grabbing headlocks. That's not Harper's style though so he slugs Ryback down, only to get caught by the Thesz press and having his head rammed into the mat. Luke comes back with a snap suplex but Ryback one ups him with a delayed vertical suplex, complete with a few marching steps. Davey Boy pounds on Dynamite in the corner but gets powerbombed down as we take a break.

Back with Ryback getting Gator Rolled until he powers Harper off,

dropping him face first onto the mat. A powerslam sets up the Warrior splash for two. Ryback plants him with the spinebuster but the Meat Hook is countered by a superkick. The discus lariat is blocked with a Meat Hook though and it's the Shell Shock for the pin at 9:39.

Rating: C. I liked this about as much as I thought I would as you have two big power guys beating on each other for ten minutes. Ryback has been treated very well since his return to form and it's nice to see him getting a strong push. There's always going to be room for a guy like him with the smashmouth style and putting him in there against Harper or Wyatt could make for some good power brawls.

Speaking of Bray, he appears and beats Ryback down post match.

Tag Team Titles: New Day vs. Cesaro/Tyson Kidd

New Day took the title with some cheating on Sunday. Fans: "NEW DAY SUCKS!" Woods: "NO WE DON'T!" Kofi and Kidd get things going with Kidd grabbing a quick rollup for one, putting a big smile on his face. Off to a chinlock from Tyson before Cesaro snaps off an uppercut for two. The gutwrench suplex gets the same so Kofi tries a small package. That makes Cesaro chuckle as he powers Kingston up into a suplex, walks him over to the corner and tags in Kidd for a high cross body. That's just scary strength.

Big E. comes in off a blind tag but walks into a German suplex to keep the challengers in control. We get the NEW DAY SUCKS rhythmic stomping in the corner but a Kofi distraction lets Big E. knock Kidd off the apron to finally take over. Kidd gets caught in the wrong corner for some stomping from Kofi, followed by stomping from Big E. and a dropkick from Kofi. Kingston goes to the middle rope but dives into a dropkick. Big E. runs in to break up the hot tag attempt and we take a break. Back with Big E. holding Kidd in a bearhug before planting him with a belly to belly.

The New Day Boom Drop connects but Tyson ducks Trouble in Paradise, finally allowing for the hot tag to Cesaro. European uppercuts a go-go in the corner get two for Cesaro before a gorilla press drop gets the same with Big E. making the save. Big E. speeds things up and cleans house as everything breaks down. Kidd dives through the ropes to take out Kofi

before Cesaro's middle rope back elbow drops Big E., setting up the Swing into the dropkick but Woods runs in for the DQ at 13:35.

Rating: B. These four have awesome chemistry and this was no exception. Now if only they could have a match built up instead of just throwing it out there on a Smackdown five days after the title change. Earlier this week on Austin's podcast, Wade Keller suggested building it up as a big time Smackdown main event like a month out. Why not? The match would rock and WWE clearly doesn't care about Smackdown anyway.

Summer Rae and Cameron are catty about Brie and Naomi. Nikki comes out to run Summer off and stands up to Cameron for her sister's honor. A match is made for later.

Tough Enough videos.

Cameron vs. Nikki Bella

Non-title. This is Nikki's chance to carry a match. Naomi gets an inset interview talking about all the good the Bellas think they can do in the world. What good have those two ever done other than paying for a plastic surgeon to have a new boat? Nikki throws her down and does some jumping jacks before cranking on an armbar.

Cameron fights out of an armbar and ducks the spinning kick out of the corner. A running kick to Nikki's back gets two and the silence as Cameron shouts at the referee is disturbing. We hit the chinlock on Nikki for a bit before she fights up and hits the second attempt at the kick out of the corner for two. The big forearm sets up the Rack Attack for the pin on Cameron at 3:56.

Rating: D+. So here's the thing: Nikki isn't horrible in the ring. She can even have a totally passable match more often than not. However, whether it's "I WISH YOU DIED IN THE WOMB!" to "of course my sister forgave me for being horrible to her" to having to carry Cameron, she gets stuck with some of the worst booking I've ever seen. I don't think she's ever going to be anything special in the ring, but she's doing what she can with what she has.

The Prime Time Players ask about the New Day and hear crickets. They introduce the New Day Clap Away box, which disappears whenever you clap enough times. You should call to put the Prime Time Players on TV and get their shirts on WWEshop.com so they can make millions of dollars.

Rollins and the Stooges come in to see Ambrose and ask him to step down instead. HHH is going to be back soon and he'll take out his rage on anyone who was involved with this mess, including Ambrose. Dean says that sounds good but he means seeing Rollins get humiliated.

Long recap of Tuesday's King of the Ring special with Barrett coming out with the crown.

Dean Ambrose vs. Seth Rollins

Non-title. Dean starts on the armbar early on, sending Rollins outside for a breather. Back in and Seth takes him down with a hammerlock but Dean reverses and kicks him in the back of the head for two. A clothesline puts Seth on the floor but Dean follows him out for a right hand to the head. The Stooges get in some cheap shots so here's Kane to even things out, at least in theory.

Back from a break with Dean kicking him in the face but getting stomped right back down. Dean finally scores with a big clothesline followed by a barrage of chops and punches. A bulldog out of the corner sets up the standing elbow but Rollins kicks him out of the air, only to get dropkicked to the floor. Dean nails a suicide dive and takes Seth back inside for two off a faceplant. They head to the corner with Rollins pulling Dean down into the buckle bomb for two more.

Rollins and Kane are ready to get inside and celebrate but Kane stares at Seth on the kicking. A surprise rollup gets two for Dean and he backdrops Seth onto Kane. Back up and Dean dives on everyone not named Rollins, who sends Ambrose into the barricade. Kane grabs Dean and Seth by the throat, earning him a tongue lashing from the referee. Dean has to save the referee but gets sent into the steps for his efforts. That falling front DDT is enough to give Rollins the pin at 13:46.

Rating: B-. They went a different way than I was expecting here but it

still worked. Kane vs. Rollins isn't an interesting feud but they seem dead set on running with it no matter how many people fall asleep watching them. Above all else though: Rollins' new finisher is horrible. It looks like a transitional move but it's the finisher of the WWE World Champion. There must be something better than that.

Kane stares Seth down post match but joins the Stooges for the big beatdown. Cue Roman Reigns (coming down the ramp for a change) for the save. A double spear drops the Stooges to end the show.

Overall Rating: B. Solid show this week with good wrestling almost all around and two really solid matches. They set up more of the Reigns vs. Rollins part of the title match while leaving Orton's part for Monday. Kane is still annoying but at least they kept it short. Anytime I get to see Ryback trading shots with another brute and New Day vs. Cesaro/Kidd, it's a good night. Solid show this week.

Results

Roman Reigns b. Kane via countout

Damien Sandow b. Curtis Axel – You're Welcome

Ryback b. Luke Harper – Shell Shock

Cesaro/Tyson Kidd b. New Day via DQ when Xavier Woods interfered

Nikki Bella b. Cameron – Rack Attack

Seth Rollins b. Dean Ambrose – Falling front DDT

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WWE First Quarter Financials At A Glance

I'm not a financial guy so these are just highlights.

The Network now has 1.3 million paid subscribers worldwide. Naturally, they're airing May as the second straight free month because screw you fans that paid since day one.

Wrestlemania drew 259,000 buys on regular pay per view, which will help offset some of the Network costs.

Live event revenue was up big due to Wrestlemania taking place in the first quarter this time.

WWE Studios is down. I'm as shocked as you are.

Mick Foley's Cheap Pops Network Special

Now as you may know, Foley is my all time favorite wrestler so this might be a bit biased, which is completely different than all my usual writings. This was one of the most entertaining (notice that I didn't necessarily say funny) things that has aired on the Network so far. Foley is a guy that clearly loves wrestling and knows how to make a crowd care about him. That's exactly what he did here as he talked for about an hour with far too topics to list.

This is one of those things where you can't give it a preview so I'll

just say check it out because it's really entertaining stuff and a great look at someone who knows how to entertain wrestling fans.

NXT – April 29, 2015: That Old Feeling

NXT

Date: April 29, 2015

Location: Full Sail University, Winter Park, Florida

Commentators: Corey Graves, Rich Brennan, Byron Saxton

We're at the start of the new taping cycle this week, meaning it's time to get ready for the build to the next Takeover special. Sami Zayn made his big return last week to go after NXT Champion Kevin Owens, which almost has to be the next big main event. Other than that, most of the card is pretty clear at this point. Let's get to it.

We open with a recap of the end of last week's show with Kevin Owens beating Alex Riley again, only to have Sami Zayn return and start a pull apart brawl with Owens.

Here's Kevin Owens for a chat to get things going. He talks about having everything in hand last week and giving Alex Riley what he deserved, but then Sami Zayn had to play hero again. Owens wants Sami out here right now but gets Commissioner William Regal again. The fans start chanting for one more match but Regal says Owens won't be using this place for his own agendas.

That's not good enough for Owens who still wants Sami right now. Cue Zayn to fire the fans up even more but Regal stops him on the steps and says this isn't happening. Regal looks at both of them and says this is the easiest thing he's had to do in weeks. Obviously these two want to fight each other, so let's do it on May 20 at Takeover. Owens chuckles but says

it's a non-title match because Zayn hasn't earned a shot in the last month. Sami thinks Owens needs this match. It has nothing to do with last week, but over the last twelve years, Owens hasn't done a thing without having Sami's name right next to it.

Even now as NXT Champion, the fans are only talking about what Owens did to him. You could say that Kevin Owens has been living in Sami Zayn's shadow. That one gets to Owens and the fans tells him he got told. Sami fights for a prize, and Owens is no prize. That's enough for Kevin to put the title on the line and the fans strike up their OLEs. Notice how they got to this point in a totally logical way without using the phrase "contractually obligated rematch" and in less than ten minutes on screen. It can be done and all it takes is a single promo.

Enzo, Cass and Carmella are jabbering about the jewelry Blake and Murphy gave her but she says she can handle herself. The guys leave and Blake and Murphy come up and insult Enzo and Cass, which isn't cool with Carmella. They step back so Alexa Bliss comes up, only to get shoved away. Blake and Murphy come up to Bliss but she doesn't seem interested in hearing from them. This was kind of an odd segment and I'm not entirely sure what they were shooting for.

Sami signs his contract when Alex Riley comes up and asks for one more match with Owens. Regal snaps about giving Riley so many opportunities but Sami says don't let Owens get to you. Riley doesn't want to hear that from Sami so Zayn offers to fight Alex for a warmup.

Enzo Amore/Colin Cassady vs. Blake/Murphy

Non-title. Before the match, Enzo calls the champs Frosted Flake Wesley Blake and the Sugar Cube Dude. You know there's just one word to describe them. Blake and Enzo get things going but the champs quickly get Amore into the corner for some stomping. A clothesline gets two for Blake as the fans chant LET'S GO ZO.

Enzo breaks free with a jawbreaker and it's a double tag to bring in Murphy and Cass. The big man cleans house and hits a splash in the corner before Enzo misses a high cross body. That's so appropriate for him for some reason. Carmella distracts Blake and it's a big boot to the face,

followed by a Rocket Launcher for the pin on Blake at 3:18.

Rating: D+. I'm not wild on having champions lose as you could pretty much do the same match with any combination here. The interesting part here is Carmella, who I'm hoping joins the champs but gets dumped by them too, leaving her all alone since no one likes her in the first place.

Becky Lynch talks about traveling the world to become the best in the world. She's here to become the best in the NXT women's division and won't just be another face in the crowd.

Bayley can't find her gear and is freaking out. Emma is show with Bayley's headbands and shirt.

Video on Baron Corbin, talking about wanting to crush the dreams of everyone in NXT. Rules don't apply to him and that's not his problem. This is yet another example of character development and telling us more about a character in twenty seconds than we've known about him in four months.

Bayley vs. Dana Brooke

Bayley looks a bit off without her stuff but of course she has a huge smile on her face. Bayley grabs a headlock to start but Dana throws her down and flexes. The fans want Blue Pants but get Bayley taking Dana to the mat and rolling around on her back. Dana goes nuts and slams Bayley's head into the mat a few times before doing her headstand foot choke. Wasteland gets two for Dana and we hit a half crab with a knee in Bayley's back. Bayley gets up and gets all aggressive with elbows in the corner but cue Emma in a Bayley shirt to Bayley's music and full entrance, allowing Dana to hit a Whiplash for the pin at 4:16.

Rating: D+. So yeah, Dana isn't quite there yet but this was a match designed to advance Emma vs. Bayley instead of Dana's push. Right now Dana just needs ring time and she's got the core base figured out. Emma stealing Bayley's stuff, which is almost Bayley's identity, is an interesting idea and could work out well for a short feud. If nothing else it means I get to hear more of Bayley's infectious theme song.

Regal announces a triple threat for Takeover for the #1 contendership between Finn Balor, Tyler Breeze and Hideo Itami.

Hideo Itami vs. Adam Rose

Itami looks so insulted by the Rosebuds and Adam's entrance. This is billed as fallout from the Andre battle royal. Rose rolls around to start and eats a chop, followed by a running kick to the face for two. A quick trip lets Rose have a breather and he drops a fist for two. Rose's chinlock doesn't go anywhere so Hideo hits his array of kicks, capped off by the Shotgun Kick for the pin at 2:52. Just a step above a squash.

Becky Lynch vs. Sarah Dawson

Dawson is a pretty generic looking girl but she gets half of a dueling chant. A quick rollup gets two for Sarah but Becky takes her into the corner for a good stomping. Lynch drives her down into a Fujiwara armbar before sitting up to crank even harder, drawing the submission at 2:12.

Rhyno has heard what Baron Corbin is all about but Rhyno isn't the past. Methinks we have our power match for Takeover.

Alex Riley vs. Sami Zayn

Owens is in on commentary. Feeling out process to start as Owens asks if Riley being let out of a cage means he can't take a shower. Riley cranks on an armbar and gets two off a dropkick. We're in a chinlock less than three minutes in until Sami fights up, only to get caught in a TKO for two. Riley misses a charge and falls to the floor, setting up the big flip dive. That's enough for Owens as he gets up and decks Sami for the DQ at 4:40.

Rating: C-. This didn't have time to go anywhere but they were trying to set up a match instead of doing anything interesting here. Owens going nuts and attacking everyone in sight is a good idea as it's in his nature to be insane. Riley still looks decent in the ring but it might have gotten ugly had he tried to hang in there with Sami.

Kevin powerbombs Riley on the apron and smiles to end the show.

Overall Rating: C+. Yes, I'm aware that's higher than all of the matches and you should be aware by now that there's a lot more to a wrestling show than just the wrestling. Owens vs. Sami is going to blow the roof off the place and the triple threat and Women's Title matches should both be great. It's not a great show, but the energy is back after going missing for the last month or so. That's what NXT thrives on and it's still working here.

Results

Enzo Amore/Colin Cassady vs. Blake/Murphy – Rocket Launcher to Blake

Dana Brooke b. Bayley – Whiplash

Hideo Itami b. Adam Rose – Shotgun Kick

Becky Lynch b. Sarah Dawson – Armbar

Sami Zayn b. Alex Riley via DQ when Kevin Owens interfered

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TNA One Night Only – Hardcore Justice 4: That Stupid Crowd

Hardcore Justice 4

Date: April 10, 2015

Location: Impact Zone, Orlando, Florida

Attendance: 1,100

Commentators: Josh Matthews, Jeremy Borash

This is one of the shows that has been the definition of hit and miss. When you just let people do hardcore violence, it can make for some entertaining matches. However, when you stop caring and just let them be goofy, it turns into a huge mess that makes no sense and is more embarrassing than anything else. Let's get to it.

The opening video is just a quick package of clips of what's coming later. This is extreme you might say.

Wolves vs. Manik/Geat Sanada

Ladder match. It's a huge brawl to start of course with the Wolves being beaten out to the floor, sending the Revolution off to get the ladders early on. Davey gets back in to kick the ladder into the Revolution's faces but their double suicide dive is countered with a ladder smash. Back up and the Wolves do their toss into a kick to the chest spot followed by a German suplex to send Sanada into the ladder.

Manik throws Edwards into the air to have him crash down onto the boots before finally setting up a ladder. Everyone but Manik goes to the floor so Davey dives back in for the save. Davey can't go up quickly because of his back so Manik pulls out an orange ladder for a change of pace (Matthews: "TAZ IS BEHIND THE LADDERS!") but it winds up bridged in between the ropes and the standing ladder. Manik and Davey fight on the ladder until Eddie pulls Manik down.

That goes badly for Eddie as Manik springboards back up to the ladder before hitting a wicked sunset powerbomb to drive Davey into the ladder. Naturally the TNA fans barely react to a huge spot. A delayed THIS IS AWESOME chant starts up and stops in the span of ten seconds. Sanada hits a standing moonsault on Eddie before they both head up, only to have Sanada bust out the mist.

Davey shoves the ladder over though and actually does something smart by using his wrist tape to clean his partner's eyes. The Revolution gets

their heads caught in the ladder so Eddie can hit a top rope double stomp for another spot that deserves a better reaction. The Wolves go up and get the contract, which apparently is for a future Tag Team Title shot.

Rating: B-. It's a tag team ladder match with four guys who know how to work this style. Unfortunately they're in front of a bored crowd who doesn't seem interested in cheering and only had about ten minutes to work with here. Good match here and for some reason I have a feeling this show just hit its peak.

Drew Galloway is fired up for his pipe on a pole match against Kenny King. There's no mention of the Rising here because they didn't exist when this was filmed. I like that better though as Drew has more than enough charisma to carry a match.

Drew Galloway vs. Kenny King

Pipe on a Pole. The fans are fired up for Drew so both guys immediately go for the pipe. Why not let someone get it and nail them on the way down to grab it instead of making the save? Drew gets two off a suplex, making the pipe worthless/optional. King speeds things up and collides with Drew to knock both guys outside in a big crash. It's Galloway taking over with the fans holding King so Drew can throw chops. One of the fans hands Drew a rubber chicken to beat on King, because a STEEL PIPE is too lame.

King no sells the rubber chicken (just go with it and it'll end faster) and jumps to the apron and spins around for a cannonball to drop Drew. They finally remember the whole pipe thing and go after it with Drew hammering King down and nailing a middle rope Russian legsweep. A German suplex drops Kenny again and a middle rope elbow gets two. King gets back up and hits a spin kick to bring Drew down from the corner and a Michinoku Driver gets another near fall. Drew still can't get the pipe as King knocks him into the Tree of Woe. King FINALLY gets the pipe but walks into a running boot to the face for the pin.

Rating: F. For a match it was fine but the pipe could have been anything from a fight in the crowd to a good looking woman to A RUBBER CHICKEN BEING SOLD IN A WRESTLING MATCH. It was a distraction instead of anything important and that's one of the most annoying things in all of wrestling,

making gimmick matches a huge waste of time. The rubber chicken brings this down even further.

Rockstar Spud gives a great promo about the scar Ethan Carter put on his forehead. Tonight isn't about pinning Carter and that's the way Spud wants it, because tonight is about making Carter bleed.

Gunner vs. Eric Young

Tables match which is the result of Young issuing an open challenge. JB: "You can see the crazy in his eyes." No, you can't Borash. Gunner punches him to the floor to start and rams Eric into the apron. Young sends him into the barricade and apron like a CRAZY man but Gunner chops him down and hits a headbutt off the steps. Fans: "USE THE CHICKEN!"

Instead they get a table but Eric fights out of a suplex and actually takes it back inside for more brawling. Gunner suplexes him right back to the floor and IT'S CHICKEN TIME! JB: "He's choking him with the chicken!" We get another table set up at ringside but Eric blocks the German from the apron. Blast it why can't we see him knocked senseless? Gunner sets up table #3 but actually puts this one inside for a change.

Eric gets in a shot to put Gunner down though and loads up a whip into the corner. Fans: "YOU STILL SUCK!" I like these people! Gunner is sent throat first into the ropes but is still able to break up the top rope elbow. A superplex plants Eric and Gunner hits something like a middle rope palm strike. They head to the apron, right above a table, but Gunner can't hit a piledriver. Instead it's a low blow from Young and a piledriver puts Gunner through the table for the win.

Rating: D+. This was still nothing good but it was MILES better than the pipe match. Young still sucks (just listening to the fans you see) and Gunner continues to be a guy just floating around on the roster. This wasn't much of a tables match, but you get what you pay for on a show like this. Cool finisher though.

Package on Havok destroying Gail Kim over and over, eventually taking the title from her.

Gail Kim vs. Havok

Street fight. Gail rolls away from the monster to start and hits a running dropkick in the corner. Havok comes back with a shot of her own before having to block a kendo stick shot. It's Havok getting in the first shot to Gail's ribs before tying her in the Tree of Woe for even more ribs shots. Off to a standard choke instead before Havok lifts her up with a full nelson. Gail has to dropkick a trashcan back into Havok's face and dives off the apron to take her down again.

Back in and Havok throws her into a chair in the corner, followed by a running knee to the face. Gail is fast enough to send her face first into the chair as well before hammering away in the corner. A spinning high cross body gets two for Kim but since it's just a cross body, Havok kicks the chair into her face for two and loads up the chokeslam. Gail counters into a DDT on the chair for a big smash, but that's too good of a finish so here's Eat Defeat for the pin instead.

Rating: C. Better than I was expecting here with the right ending, even though Havok has just disappeared from the face of the earth since Kong returned. I still find Gail overrated, but she's still more than good enough to carry a match like this. Good stuff here and one of the better matches of the night.

The Wolves may be banged up and half blind, but they're going to Sizzler!

Abyss vs. Matt Hardy

Monster's Ball of course, but the interesting thing is Christy introducing Abyss as the Swamp Suplex Machine, which has to be a rib of some sort. Matt gets one of the loudest chants of the night but Abyss easily shoves him around to start. They head outside with the fans wanting the chicken but having to settle for right hands from Hardy. It's time for a barbed wire table with Abyss getting the better of it and bridging the table between the ring and the barricade.

A chokeslam is blocked so Matt throws in a trashcan full of weapons and whips out a cheese grater. After Abyss gets done wedging a chair in the corner, he turns around to feel a stepladder to the ribs. The fans

actually chant for Abyss as he takes Matt over with a suplex, only to have Matt crotch him with the ladder. Hardy follows it up by using the chair as a golf club to drive the ladder even further in.

Abyss pops up with something made of metal to knock Hardy off the top, driving her into the barbed wire table for the match's big spot. We get the required thumb tacks but Matt uses the cheese grater to the crotch for the save. You don't do that even to a monster so he throws Matt into the chair in the corner.

The tacks are spread out but Matt drives him face first with the Twist of Fate, only to have his own back covered in tacks as well. The busted barbed wire table is brought back in as Matt basically no sells the tacks, only to eat an elbow to the jaw. It's Janice time but of course it misses, allowing Matt to spear him through the barbed wire table. A Twist of Fate onto the chair gives Matt the pin.

Rating: C-. STOP HAVING THIS MATCH! They do the exact same spots with the exact same weapons, usually with the same ending and one of the same people in the match every single time. Just stop doing this match over and over again so many times, as it stopped being interesting a long time ago. Let it build up instead of just doing the same thing over and over and stop adding it in like a side salad. Let it be the main course for a change with a fresh recipe. Did I mention I haven't had dinner yet?

James Storm says he'll win the hardcore battle royal because he has the Revolution behind him.

Gauntlet Match

What would a One Nigh Only be without one of these? Two minute intervals and everyone has weapons. Robbie E. is in at #1 with a selfie stick and Crazy Steve brings a bag of something. Robbie bails to the floor to start and attacks a distracted Steve from behind. Steve comes back and empties the bag to reveal....Gummy Bears. Oh geez here we go. Robbie eats one and gets sick, setting up a chokeslam onto the Bears.

Jesse Godderz is in at #3 (OH THE SHOCK!) with a baseball bat (Matthews: "Perhaps left over from an icon?") to try and make this serious. Steve

avoids being eliminated as JB worries about the sugary goodness of the Gummy Bears. Chris Melendez is in at #4 with a nightstick, which is somehow a very welcome sight. That says a lot as Melendez is a very dull guy, but he's better than the Gummy Bears and selfie stick.

The BroMans take over and it's Samuel Shaw in at #5 with a wire. Nothing happens for now so it's Khoya with a Revolution flag in at #6 as we're still waiting on our first elimination. Khoya cleans house, including with a double clothesline to put the BroMans down. It's rubber chicken time again (ERG!) with Steve getting in a few shots on most of the people until Crimson of all people is in at #7 (to almost no reaction from the announcers) with a trashcan lid.

Crimson and Khoya stare each other down but Shaw chokes Crimson down with the wire. Steve hits Robbie low with the chicken as there are WAY too many people in the ring at the moment. Robbie throws the chicken out but Tyrus is in at #8 with a chain, hopefully to eliminate some people. Robbie and Melendez are quickly tossed and Tyrus hammers away on Jesse in the corner.

Knux is in at #9 with a cane but it's a cross body to put Tyrus down. Jesse is tossed and the freaking chicken is brought back in. Good grief let the stupid idea die already. James Storm and his noose with cowbell are in at #10 to hopefully make this a bit more serious. Storm is content to sit in a chair at ringside as Shaw chokes Crimson, only to have both guys fall out to the floor for a double elimination. DJZ is in at #11 with his bottle of hairspray because...yeah. Matthews loses his mind when he sees Storm's rope wrapped around the chicken.

Tyrus hammers away in the corner and Mr. Anderson is in at #12, giving us a final group of Steve, Khoya, Tyrus, Knux, Storm, DJZ and Anderson. Mr. actually takes the mic off the cord to bring in as his weapon. That's actually clever, unlike EVERYTHING ELSE IN THIS MATCH. Anderson pounds on Tyrus in the corner and hammers away on everyone with the mic but gets taken down by Steve of all people.

Steve sprays hairspray in DJZ's eyes for an elimination but gets tossed by Khoya. Knux follows him out and we're down to four. Khoya misses a

charge and is tossed out, leaving us with Tyrus, Anderson and Storm. The Last Call hits Tyrus by mistake and Anderson throws him over the top. Tyrus actually tries to skin the cat but it goes as well as you would expect. Storm throws a distracted Anderson out a few seconds later for the win.

Rating: F. I'd like to remind you that 95% of this match took place with the ring covered in Gummy Bears. Combine that with the chicken gag that WILL NOT JUST FREAKING STOP and I think you get why this was a nightmare to sit through. On top of that, it was a poorly run gauntlet with way too many people in the ring at the same time for the majority of the match.

Anderson Mic Checks Storm post match and eats some Gummy Bears. And puts some of them down Storm's tights. I hate this show. Like, a lot.

Ethan Carter III brags about everything he's put Spud through and says tonight is going to be the same all over again.

Long package on the history of Spud vs. Carter. That's still a great story.

Ethan Carter III vs. Rockstar Spud

First blood and now with 100% fewer Gummy Bears. Carter talks about how no one makes him bleed before the match, but gets cut off by a CHICKEN'S BETTER chant. Spud comes out and has to hear another recap of the feud. Carter offers him a chance to leave but Spud turns to face him and nails Carter in the head with the mic to get things going. They head outside with Spud going after the face but stopping for his chicken pilgrimage.

Thankfully he throws it away and sends Carter into the post instead. Back inside with Carter taking over by sending Spud into the buckle a few times and dropping an elbow to the face. The freaking chicken gets another chant so Carter gives them a big sarcastic thumbs up. With Carter taking a breather, Spud removes the covering from the bolt holding the ring together.

Carter's splash is sidestepped and his head hits the buckle, which Josh says is the actual turnbuckle. He knows this due to building a ring as a

kid and having to learn all the terms. I know that sounds like the setup for a joke, but that's actually kind of interesting. Now the fans are asking where's the chicken. Spud gets all fired up and REMOVES THE BOWTIE to start his comeback with a flurry of punches. The Underdog connects and Carter rolls to the floor for a breather.

That sets up a huge flip dive from Spud as Carter is reeling. Cue Tyrus so Spud grabs a chair but Ethan breaks up another Underdog attempt. The referee gets bumped and Carter takes off the brace (fans: "CHICKEN KILLER!"), only to have Spud take it away and nail Carter in the mouth, drawing blood. Tyrus is quickly there with a towel to clean it up and a chain to help cheat and the match ends exactly as you would expect it to.

Rating: C-. Someone find whoever brought in that stupid chicken and cover them in batter. That thing stopped being funny about ten seconds after it was brought in and these fans have chanted for it for over an hour and a half. I know you didn't pay to get in, but Heaven forbid you stop acting like idiots for five minutes so people can enjoy the show. And yes, I know how lame that sounds.

Tommy Dreamer says he's bled in cages before but you can ask Raven and the Eliminators how tough he is inside the steel. Or we could ask someone who has actually been in a cage with you in the last, oh, fifteen years or so. I'm fine with Dreamer on a hardcore show. I get annoyed when they wedge hardcore in for the sake of a cheap nostalgia pop. In other words: do it naturally instead of forcing everything.

Bram vs. Tommy Dreamer

In a cage of course. The brawl starts on the floor before the bell and Dreamer puts on a rainbow mohawk wig while drinking a Coke. Well at least it's not the chicken. Bram crotches Dreamer on the barricade but Tommy sends him into the cage door and then inside the cage to finally draw the opening bell. To further the stupidity of this show, the announcers don't know how the match is going to end, but they think the match could spill outside the cage.

Bram does just that so he can slam the door on Tommy's head, confusing the crowd even more. Back in and Dreamer is sent into the wall before we

hit the chinlock. It is a cage match after all so that's the level of violence you have to expect. Tommy finally comes back with a clothesline and we get a House of Hardcore chant. A bunch of punches set up a Bionic Elbow as the fans tell Dreamer he still has it.

We get a chair brought in because the cage isn't enough and because we need Tommy to take a drop toehold onto a chair for contractual obligations. There's the Tree of Woe/chair/dropkick/ECW chant spot. Matthews: "Tommy is always evolving and changing." In all his years on commentary, Taz never made me laugh as much as that one line did. Dreamer hits the White Russian legsweep as Dreamer is now stealing others' old spots. The Dreamer DDT (further proving my point) gets two so Tommy just kicks him low. Bram returns the low blow and hits the Brighter Side of Suffering onto the chair for the pin.

Rating: D+. See, this is the way you use Dreamer: occasionally and only when you have a hardcore show. I'm fine with him coming in for stuff like this (though not for the ECW chants) and putting someone over while getting the crowd going, but keep him off my TV every week.

Bobby Roode is ready for Lashley and can't wait to continue their feud.

Package on the history between Roode and Lashley, who is still heel here.

Bobby Lashley vs. Bobby Roode

Last man standing. Roode drives him into the corner to start but Lashley powers him to the mat. Back up and Lashley gets kicked in the face, setting up the Blockbuster for an early six. The Roode Bomb is countered into a very delayed vertical suplex and Lashley pounds away in the corner. We get one of the few (likely unintentional) clever bits from the crowd all night: "LET'S GO BOBBY/BOBBY SUCKS!" Roode gets caught in a dragon sleeper for a nine but the fans start chanting for the chicken again.

Back up and Roode grabs a sleeper for nine. Thankfully it's not a long lasting nine as Lashley gets up and plants Roode with a powerslam. More chicken chants take away from Lashley superplexing Roode for a double eight count. Roode grabs a spinebuster but Lashley hits one of his own

for seven. Back up and Roode nails a spear followed by the Roode Bomb. That works as well as you would expect before Lashley spears Roode out to the floor. Roode is up at nine and avoids another spear, sending Lashley into the steps. A Roode Bomb on the floor gives Roode the win.

Rating: C. This was fine but totally paint by numbers. Roode and Lashley are capable of having great matches, but there's only so much they can do in an environment like this one. At least Roode won, which would be nice to see today after all the weeks of putting Eric Young over for a story that isn't leading anywhere.

Overall Rating: D-. Oh yeah this was awful. It's very clear when they're not trying on these things and it was even clearer than ever here. Making things even worse we had the most annoying crowd I've heard in years as they didn't want to watch the show they were seeing and turned it into a big joke. That got old after about ten seconds so of course they kept going for over an hour. Terrible show that just kept going, though some of the guys were legitimately trying.

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New Column: The Evolution

Isn't A Mystery

This may sound familiar.

<http://www.wrestlingrumors.net/kbs-review-evolution-isnt-mystery/35309/>

Monday Nitro – December 6, 1999: This Is Them Trying

Monday Nitro #217

Date: December 6, 1999

Location: Milwaukee Arena, Milwaukee, Wisconsin

Attendance: 7,250

Commentators: Tony Schiavone, Bobby Heenan

The big question this week is can WCW somehow manage to make the shows even less coherent than they already have. Last week's show had its moments, but for the most part it was all over the place to the point where I can barely remember what happened just a week later. Starrcade is thirteen days away and we've barely touched on the card. We actually have a title match announced from Thunder as Bret will defend against Luger. Let's get to it.

We open with Gene bringing out Jeff Jarrett for an interview. Jeff doesn't need Slapnuts Okerlund and will do the interview himself. Jarrett also doesn't need the Powers That Be or the Outsiders but he does need the WCW World Title. The fans start swearing at him and the attempted beeping out is laughably awful. He wants to get rid of Dustin Rhodes for screwing up his destiny and he'll do it in a Bunkhouse Stampede match at

Starrcade.

This brings him to Mike Tenay, who won't come near him anymore. Jeff threatens Gene with a guitar shot but Tenay comes out and says he'll take matters into his own hands. Jeff doesn't care and puts Tenay in the Figure Four until Goldberg runs in for the save. Hopefully that ends the Tenay angle but I doubt it does.

The Mamalukes and Tony Marinara arrive with Tony yelling at them for letting Disco and Lash get the better of them. Tonight, they meet the boss.

Curt Hennig brings Curly Bill in to see Russo with a new gimmick in mind: Shane. Russo says it's as bad as Vincent but at least he's thinking. Shane is hired. Hey, I'm not sure if you knew this, but there are people named Vince and Shane in the WWF. It's not clear why mentioning them is supposed to be amusing or entertaining, but those people do in fact exist. Rhonda Singh comes in and asks for an opportunity.

Fit Finlay has Brian Knobbs in the woods, training him to be a REAL hardcore wrestler. This has potential, but Norman would be far more entertaining.

Hardcore Title: Norman Smiley vs. Rhonda Singh

What is the deal with Russo having men fight women? It happens almost every week. Before the match, Smiley says he would take Finlay apart if he was here tonight. The fat jokes begin as Singh throws weapons into the ring and nails Norman with a trashcan. She tells him to be a man and hits another trashcan shot, followed by a splash in the corner. Norman comes back with a fire extinguisher blast and sends Singh face first through a table in the corner to retain.

Rating: F. I feel sorry for women who sign up with WCW, thinking they might be able to do something serious on the show. Instead, they're there so Russo can either have them treated as sex objects or there to be fat and stupid. As usual, this show is Russo's playground and the idea of it being anything resembling a wrestling show is purely coincidental.

Maestro is complaining that his piano is out of tune. He looks inside so David Flair can come up, slam the lid on his head, and kidnap Symphony. This is the stupid stuff that is dragging this show down. We've spent about a month explaining that David Flair is a psycho who keeps kidnapping/stalking women, and NO ONE HAS DONE ANYTHING ABOUT IT. On top of that, this doesn't seem to be leading to a match or any kind of storyline resolution, but it keeps happening week after week like a bad TV show. If it sets up a match then fine, but stop wasting my time otherwise.

Psychosis and La Parka are in Russo's office. Apparently Juvy has hurt his arm and can't defend the IWGP Junior Heavyweight Title in his rematch against Liger tonight. One of the two of them will take Juvy's place, and it's going to be whoever gets out of the office first. Psychosis nails Parka and leaves first. This is what Vince Russo thinks of cruiserweights.

Luger comes up to Liz's door with champagne and says this is the night that defines their careers.

Disco and Lash invade Marinara's dressing room with promises of pizza.

IWGP Junior Heavyweight Title: Psychosis vs. Jushin Thunder Liger

This is the second time in a year that Psychosis is defending a title he didn't win. Feeling out process to start with Liger taking over with a headscissors. A backdrop sends Psychosis to the floor but let's stop to look at Buzzkill in the crowd. Liger nails a plancha but Psychosis snaps his throat across the top for a breather.

Psychosis hits a missile dropkick for two and yells at Charles Robinson for the near fall. Back to the floor with Liger being whipped into the barricade, setting up a top rope hurricanrana to give Psychosis two back inside. A quick Liger Kick stuns Psychosis and Liger throws him into the ropes for a crash. Out of nowhere, a majistral cradle gives Liger the title back.

Rating: C. The fans didn't care, but a lot of that is likely due to most of them not being familiar with Liger or the title. Both Liger and the

title have been thrown out there two weeks in a row with no real explanation of who they are or why they're here. I'm sure some fans remember Liger from his occasional appearances, but the majority seem to think of him as just another guy fighting for a title that isn't the Cruiserweight belt.

La Parka chairs Psychosis post match to make sure Liger gets zero focus.

The Nitro Girls play cards when the Mamalukes come in and make it a strip poker game.

Liz will have nothing to do with Luger's apologies.

Maestro looks for Symphony.

Gene keeps staring at Mona's chest, prompting Mona to say she's more than T&A, unlike Madusa.

Evan Karagias vs. Mona vs. Madusa

If either girl wins, they get a title shot at Evan at Starrcade. If Evan wins, he gets Starrcade off. The girls shove Evan away and go at it themselves with Madusa kicking her in the face for two. Evan sits in on commentary because EVERY MATCH NEEDS COMMENTARY. Mona comes back with a cross body and missile dropkick but Evan throws her down, only to get small packaged by Madusa for the pin in like 80 seconds.

Jeff Jarrett comes out and guitars Madusa because men beating up women is funny right? He challenges Goldberg for later.

Lash and Disco have tied Tony up and promise him a surprise.

Liz pours champagne on Luger's head.

Maestro is still looking for Symphony and doesn't notice when he walks past David.

Vampiro and Jerry Only are going to take out Dr. Death tonight.

Oklahoma/Steve Williams vs. Vampiro/Jerry Only

Oklahoma has a wireless mic on, no shirt, and is going to call the match as he starts with Vampiro. To the shock of no one, Oklahoma runs away from the threat of violence and tags in Dr. Death for some three point tackles. We hit the spinning toehold before it's back to Oklahoma, who can't do the same hold. Vampiro comes back with a kick to the head, which makes me smile far more than it should.

Off to Williams vs. Only with Jerry getting caught in the running press slam. Oklahoma gets in a chair shot to Jerry as Williams hits the Stampede but pulls Vampiro up. That goes well for Vampiro as he superkicks Williams down, only to have Oklahoma nail him with a boot. Williams clotheslines Vampiro down and it's off to Oklahoma for a bottom rope elbow and the pin.

Rating: F. The unfunny parody beats the wrestler the fans want to see in a match where the musician doesn't have to look bad. It's another case of WCW having no idea how their priorities should work and the show being about making the writers laugh instead of delivering what the fans might want to see.

The Nitro Girls cheat to beat the Mamalukes in the poker game.

Disco and Lash get ready to tar and feather Marinara. In the middle, Disco draws what looks to be a Hitler mustache on Tony.

The Outsiders are ready for their matches tonight.

WCW World Title: Bret Hart vs. Total Package

This is the opener of the second hour because the REAL main events are still to come. The champ jumps Luger during the removal of the pants and takes the fight outside. Hart goes after the back and then the knee as we continue this brief resurrection of the old Bret Hart style. Luger goes after the eyes for an escape and here are Sting and Liz. Sting yells at Liz and asks who she's going to represent. The distraction lets Bret hit a quick Russian legsweep followed by the Sharpshooter to retain.

Rating: D. I love seeing Bret work the body parts like he did in the old days, but can we get a World Title match to close the show instead of

giving it less time than the Oklahoma match? I'm sure I just don't get the appeal of the comedy stylings of Oklahoma and that I'm over thinking the importance of the WCW World Heavyweight Championship, which has been reduced to a plot point in the Sting vs. Luger feud.

Here's the Hennig/Shane/Singh segment from earlier. Not a repeat mind you, but the same segment which is presented like first run footage.

Russo offers La Parka the position of Chairman, meaning he's supposed to chair anyone that stands in front of Russo. Harlem Heat comes in and are given a title shot at Starrcade, but La Parka nails Booker with a chair and Creative Control comes in for the beatdown.

Roddy Piper is here. Tonight he's refereeing Creative Control vs. Roddy Piper. That's not a typo.

David Flair talks to the voices in his head as Symphony wonders why she took this job.

Jerry Flynn issues an open challenge for the Block.

Asya vs. Midnight

These two might be the exception to Russo's horrible treatment of women. The Revolution is now in full black attire with Shane ranting about how people tell him he can't desecrate the flag. The fans' chants have to be censored again and it's another failure. Shane displays the Revolution flag and Saturn says they're like the Black Panthers. The far bigger Midnight attacks to start and gets two off a dropkick. Asya gets two off a suplex but gets caught in Ricky Steamboat's double chicken wing. A delayed vertical suplex gets two for Midnight but the Revolution comes in for the quick no contest.

Jim Duggan comes out for the save but gets beaten down and covered with the Revolution flag.

Larry Zbyszko talks to Mike Graham about an upcoming meeting with Russo and company.

We get the return of the Nitro Party tapes, but this one includes a "fan"

(soon to be known as Daffney), saying that David Flair is really cool.

Creative Control vs. Roddy Piper

Piper is guest referee. Before the match, they have to do everything he says. Why don't they have to do everything he says during the match as well? Or am I looking too deeply into this. Piper pats them both down and grabs one's crotch (Piper: "I'm having a ball!"). This is an I Quit match, so the first rule is you win by making someone say they quit. The second rule is a kick between one of the twins' legs, followed by the bell ringing.

Piper's hand lock has no effect so the twins hit a pair of double gutbusters. Piper won't give up so they load up a spike piledriver, drawing out Goldberg for the save. He botches the Jackhammer as Piper chokes the other one with a tie to win. So Bryan stole it from Piper? Also, nice job of having the Tag Team Champions lose.

Tony Marinara is tarred and feathered. He offers threats of his father.

The Mamalukes offer a winner take all hand in the poker game.

Maestro finds Symphony's shoe.

Dustin Rhodes vs. Meng

Meng vs. Smiley for the Hardcore Title is announced for Starrcade. I'll skip Meng no selling the offense and get to the meat of the "match": Jarrett runs in, Meng is sent to the floor, Outsiders run in, Meng no sells a guitar shot, Nash kicks Meng to the floor and powerbombs Rhodes. This has been another non-match.

Larry is in Russo's office. Russo: "Why does Thunder suck now?" Well at least someone finally said it. Larry blames it on the lack of A-list stars on the show, so Russo says they'll be there from now on. He's firing the announcer though. This makes Larry insult Hennig because the script says he should, setting up a loser leaves town match for later with Zbyszko vs. Hennig. If Larry wins, Russo is gone but if Curt wins, Larry is gone.

Prince Iaukea is now dressed as the Artist Formerly Known As Prince.

Curt Hennig vs. Larry Zbyszko

Larry comes out to the Nitro theme but Hennig has Shane with him. This is quite the showdown. Larry starts (on time!) with his basic wrestling stuff and gets two off a swinging neckbreaker. The referee goes down and Hennig starts a comeback (a minute and a half into the match) with knee lifts and an abdominal stretch. Larry counters the PerfectPlex into his guillotine choke but Shane makes the save. Cue Arn Anderson to lay out both bad guys (I guess that's the closest thing we'll get to an Enforcers reunion), giving Larry the surprise pin.

Rating: 0. For oh of course it's not going to stand. The match was nothing to see of course but that's what you have to expect these days. The only other note here: people often forget Larry's age. He turned 46 the day before this match and was still in good shape so it wasn't the biggest stretch. It's weird to think of him in his mid 40s when he was the old veteran during the NWO's heyday.

Creative Control comes out and shows Robinson the replay so the finish is reversed, meaning Larry is gone.

Disco and Lash put an apple in Marinara's mouth. The Mamalukes see this, throw on their clothes, and go after them.

Chris Benoit vs. Kevin Nash

Hall, carrying a ladder, comes out with Nash and sits in on commentary. Nash takes Benoit into the corner to start and elbows him in the head. As Nash walks around, Hall sits on top of the ladder for a better view. Benoit stomps him down in the corner and cannonballs onto Nash's leg. They head to the floor with Nash no selling the leg work and sending Benoit into the steps. Back in and the side slam gets two for Nash (Hall: "SUCK ON THAT BENOIT!") but Chris dropkicks the knee out and cranks on the leg.

Benoit slugs away in the corner but charges into a boot to the face. There go the straps and Hall gets off the ladder, only to see Benoit slap

on the Crossface. Hall decks the referee and throws in the ladder but Benoit dropkicks it into Nash's face. A cross body off the ladder puts Hall down and Benoit hammers away until Nash gets up with the Jackknife. Hall loads up the Edge onto the ladder until Sid comes out to make the save. No contest.

Rating: C-. I liked this better than I was expecting to. Nash is underrated as a big power guy as he can make his offense look damaging while also having someone like Benoit break him down. This wasn't a great match and of course got bogged down by all the nonsense, but I had a better time with it than I was expecting to.

Sting tells the Outsiders to bring it.

Here are the Mamalukes to call out Disco and Lash but gets the girls from the club last week. Vito rants about how he didn't want to sleep with them, but Disco and Lash sneak up on them and attack. This brings out the tarred and feathered Tony Marinara to nail them with a pipe, allowing the Mamalukes to take them away.

The Mamalukes throw Disco and Lash into a car but the car drives off without them. What

is Russo's obsession with this story? It gets as much airtime as anything else on the show.

Maestro staggers into the boiler room to find Symphony but gets beaten up by Jerry Flynn. So Jerry is the modern day Mankind? Jerry goes to a door, finds David and Symphony, and eats a crowbar to the face.

Nick Patrick says everyone is banned from ringside unless they have business out there because it's time for the referees to take power back. Normally I would complain about a line like that but a lot more structure around here would be an incredibly welcome sight.

Liz has a contract in her hands.

Scott Hall vs. Sting

Non-title, which might have something to do with Hall not bringing the

belt with him. Liz comes out with Sting and Nash jumps in on commentary. Hall finds the toothpick throw hilarious but Sting would rather hit him in the face to take over. They quickly head outside with Nash choking Sting with a cord, allowing Hall to get in some cheap shots.

Back in and we hit the abdominal stretch on Sting, followed by a sleeper so neither guy has to do much other than stand there. A belly to back suplex finally gets Sting out and he slugs away, including ten punches in the corner. Sting gets all the way up to twenty but Scott pokes him in the eye for a breather. Liz gets on the apron to pepper spray Hall, setting up the Deathlock for the submission.

Rating: D. I guess it helps that Hall didn't lose clean, but maybe you could like, not have a champion lose on TV. It was nice to have something resembling a clean match until the ending, which felt tacked on, but somehow that's an upgrade in the Russo era. To be fair though, at least the title doesn't mean anything these days anyway so it can't be hurt too badly.

Here's David Flair to his dad's music and holding Symphony by the hair. Maestro has ten seconds to come out here and get her, but here's Page instead. A crowbar shot misses and Page lays him out with a Diamond Cutter before telling the Powers That Be to make this a pay per view match. Oh and contrary to rumors, he's NOT going to the WWF because he's loyal to what brought him here. Thanks for that totally unnecessary name drop, but to be fair they are closing the ratings gap. Last week they lost by 3.4 points and this week it would only be 3 even, meaning Raw doubled Nitro up. Page calls out Sid and their match is on.

Sid Vicious vs. Diamond Dallas Page

Sid shoves him out to the floor to start and drops Page throat first across the barricade. Back in and Page grabs a quick neckbreaker but Sid launches him off at two. A top rope clothesline puts Sid down again but he breaks up the Diamond Cutter by, say it with me, knocking Page into the referee. There's the powerbomb to Page but the Outsiders run in for the beatdown. This brings out Benoit to help fight back but Jeff Jarrett comes in for the save until Bret Hart runs in to make it even. Page walks

out and the match is a no contest because of course it is.

As everyone brawls, Nick Patrick grabs the mic and says the referees and security haven't been in charge all night so the main event can be a lumberjack match because they're out of here. So yeah, they're not even trying to call it wrestling anymore as there won't be any referees. It hasn't been a wrestling show in weeks so it's nice to see them finally confirm it.

Back from a break with the Outsiders, Jarrett and now Creative Control still destroying everyone until Goldberg comes out for the save. The four good guys stand tall and Jarrett says no way, so here's Roddy Piper to say he'll referee and everyone else can be lumberjacks. Jeff tries to leave again so the Green Bay Packers show up to stop him, allowing Dustin Rhodes to throw him back in.

Jeff Jarrett vs. Goldberg

A big shoulder gets two for Goldberg and he starts hammering Jeff in the face. Jeff tries to jump over him in the corner but gets caught in a powerslam as this is one sided so far. Jarrett rolls outside and gets beaten up by the lumberjacks. He rolls back inside and gets caught in an armbar, so it's right back to the lumberjacks. Everyone outside gets in a brawl so Jeff sneaks in a chair to take over behind Piper's back. A high cross body gets two for Jeff and it's time for the sleeper as the fight has finally calmed down.

Goldberg fights up and slams out of the sleeper because he's Goldberg and it was just a sleeper. Both guys collide and go down, which looks way off as you wouldn't expect Goldberg to go down off a Jeff Jarrett shoulder block. Piper counts to ten without anyone getting up and nothing changes as a result. Nash grabs Goldberg's foot to break up the spear and pulls him to the floor for a beatdown. In the melee, Bret brings the belt in and nails Jarrett (mostly off camera), setting up the Jackhammer for the pin.

Rating: D+. Well they tried. This match was the attempt to make Jeff Jarrett seem like a legitimate main event guy but it really didn't work. The insanity of the match held it down because we can't just have

Goldberg and Jarrett have a match where Jeff outsmarts him before falling to the Jackhammer, but that might be asking for too much.

Overall Rating: D. This show was all over the place, as has become WCW's custom. First and foremost, what is with the obsession over the mafia story? That angle got more time than anything else all night with David Flair and the Maestro in second place. The wrestling was what you would expect from WCW with the longest match not even breaking eight minutes. There's stuff going on for sure, but you have to take notes to remember why people are doing what they're doing with only thirteen days left until Starrcade. Oh and Thunder sucks and is apparently going to be a plot point going forward. How nice.

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King of the Ring Network Special: Blink And You'll Miss It

King of the Ring Network Special

Date: April 28, 2015

Location: iWireless Center, Moline, Illinois

Commentators: Michael Cole, John Bradshaw Layfield, Jerry Lawler

This is a one off special with the returning King of the Ring semi-finals

and finals taking place tonight. It's just an hour long so the matches should have some time to build up instead of having to run through everything in just a few minutes. There's potential for some good matches tonight so let's get to it.

We open with a recap of the history of the tournament and some of the stars who have won before.

Jerry Lawler is brought out to introduce a package on how the final four advanced. It's a bad sign that they seem to be stalling for time four minutes in.

Here are the final four:

Neville

Sheamus

Bad News Barrett

R-Truth

Sheamus says he'll become the two time King and get rid of that little English guy to do so.

Neville was in NXT just a few months ago but now he could be King of the Ring. No one expects him to win tonight, but he's defied expectations all his life. He was fine on the mic here so I wouldn't mind hearing more from him.

King of the Ring Semi-Finals: Sheamus vs. Neville

Cole mentions Sheamus potentially becoming a two time King, just like Bret Hart. That's a rare reference to the tournaments held when it was still just a house show feature. Sheamus makes fun of Neville's height to start and takes him into the corner with ease. Neville comes back with some right hands and does his front flips followed by a spin kick to the ribs. A quick Irish Curse stops Neville cold though and the big man takes over. It works so well that Sheamus hits a second Irish Curse as the fans are entirely behind Neville.

Sheamus gets a bit too cocky though, allowing Neville to come back with forearms tot he face. He fights out of the ten forearms as well but gets sent face first HARD into the announcers' table. Neville barely makes it back in time though, earning him another beating in the corner. Sheamus is starting to get cocky but here's Zigler to remind him what happened at Extreme Rules. The distraction lets Neville duck a Brogue Kick and kick Sheamus in the head. The Red Arrow gives Neville the pin and the BIG upset at 5:47.

Rating: C+. I believe in Neville. This is one of the first pushes in a LONG time where they're strapping a rocket to a newcomer's back and letting him ride it all the way, though there's a good chance Barrett winds up winning the crown tonight so they can have him lose his next ten matches. Still though, I'm digging the heck out of Neville right now as they're totally nailing his push.

Post match Zigler wants to get what he earned at Extreme Rules and the brawl is on. Security breaks it up, but not before Sheamus' eye is busted open badly.

Barrett says R-Truth shouldn't be worried about his arachnophobia because it's time for Bull Hammer-phobia. After he gets done with the has been Truth, he'll move on to the never was Neville.

Truth has a plan tonight: win the King of the Ring and then declare a ban on spiders. That includes all the spiders, even the kinfolks. They'll build a castle with a drawbridges and a moat. He isn't sure about water in the moat because that might bring water spiders. Saxton: "What about your opponent, Bad News Barrett?" Truth: "Does he has experience killing spiders?"

King of the Ring Semi-Finals: R-Truth vs. Bad News Barrett

Truth grabs a quick rollup to start but takes a right hand to the ribs. Barrett puts him in the ropes for the big boot to the face and it's off to the chinlock as the announcers discuss Nero. Back up and Truth hits some clotheslines and the front suplex for two. The ax kick misses but the side kick is good for another near fall. Truth's Lie Detector gets two but the Winds of Change gets the same. Back up and the Bull Hammer

sends Barrett to the finals at 4:40.

Rating: D+. What do you want me to say here? Truth had as much of a chance as I have of being Miss Nevada 1974 and everyone knew it. Barrett is a good option for the crown and there's a good dynamic considering what happened on Sunday. Dull match here but at least they kept it short.

Video on Verne Gagne who passed away yesterday.

Dolph Ziggler says he couldn't take Sheamus' bullying last night or tonight so he had to do something.

We look at Neville beating Barrett on Sunday.

Barrett says it's not fair that he has to fight so soon after beating Truth, but it's also unfair that Neville has to fight him period.

King of the Ring: Bad News Barrett vs. Neville

Barrett goes after the ribs to start but Neville flips forward and snaps off a headscissors, followed by a kick to the jaw. That's fine with Barrett as he clotheslines Neville to the floor to take the first real advantage. Barrett puts on something like an abdominal stretch on the mat but Neville fights up with more kicks to the ribs and legs.

A running kick to the side of the head and a German suplex get two on Barrett. Winds of Change gets the same and Wasteland is eventually good for another near fall. The Bull Hammer is countered into a rollup for two and Neville kicks him in the head. Neville has to bail out of the Red Arrow and charges into the Bull Hammer for the pin and the crown at 6:10.

Rating: B-. Eh yeah that's probably the right move but man alive they could have pulled the trigger on something big here with Neville. At least there's a story ready for a third match between the two of them, which might work better if they can manage to give them more than six minutes next time.

Barrett crowns himself and promises to rule with an iron Bull Hammer.

Overall Rating: C. Well they made good time. WWE does realize that they

have all the time they need on their own network and don't have to have this wrapped up with seven minutes to go in the hour right? They were flying through this match and the entire tournament when you think about it. It's like they needed to get this whole thing wrapped up as fast as they could to get to the end result. It wasn't bad but my goodness, slow down a bit.

Results

Neville b. Sheamus – Red Arrow

Bad News Barrett b. R-Truth – Bull Hammer

Bad News Barrett b. Neville – Bull Hammer

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