

Finally Checked Out ESPN's E:60 Behind The Curtain

I finally sat down and watched the E:60 documentary on WWE and I'm not entirely sure what I think of it. Therefore, it's time to ramble until I find a conclusion.

First of all, I certainly liked it. They had an interesting take by going with people who weren't the best known, but the more I thought about it, the more that makes sense. How would a Sami Zayn section have gone here? "My name is Sami Zayn and I was one of the top independent wrestlers in the world. Now I'm headlining NXT while I wait for the inevitable call up where I'll blow the doors off the main roster." That's not exactly a thrilling piece.

This show was much more for people who haven't seen NXT and aren't familiar with it, as they don't mention the fact that of the three guys, Woods is by far the biggest star and he's really nothing special. That's the right call though as you can only get so invested in people who are lower level talent.

That being said, it's a very entertaining look at some of what happens when the cameras aren't on. I know we can recite what happens in every match, but a lot of the time we forget what happens when the cameras aren't on. It's a good look at what happens behind the curtain (I see what they did there), which isn't something we get very often. I would have loved for this to be longer, but what we got was really fun. Check out the deleted scenes about Colin Cassady and Tyler Breeze too as they're both entertaining.

Impact Wrestling – May 8, 2015: Coming Attractions

Impact Wrestling

Date: May 8, 2015

Location: Impact Zone, Orlando, Florida

Commentator: Josh Matthews

For the first time in weeks, we actually have a special episode. This is airing live from Orlando with the promise of a former World Champion returning in the first five minutes. Other than that we have Kurt Angle defending the World Title against Eric Young to probably blow off their feud. Let's get to it.

Eric Young is in the ring to start and promises to win the title back tonight. This brings out the returning World Champion and it's Bully Ray, who will referee Angle vs. Young. Eh cool but it's nothing earth shattering. It doesn't help that it's for Angle vs. Young which is just a placeholder until Cater challenges Kurt.

We get the opening recap video. They're treating this like a huge show.

Here's Ethan Carter to talk about the democratic process which has lead us to a gentlemen's contest: arm wrestling. This brings out Mr. Anderson to show us the results: falls count anywhere wins with 85% of the vote. Shocking indeed.

Mr. Anderson vs. Ethan Carter III

This is billed as falls count anywhere but the rules make it sound hardcore. Anderson quickly sends Carter and Tyrus to the floor but the big man gets in some cheap shots. That's fine with Anderson who sends Tyrus into the post and chases after Carter as he tries to get away. We get the first weapons brought in as Anderson pulls out a bunch of chairs to pile up on the floor.

A Mic Check onto the chairs doesn't work so Carter backdrops Anderson

onto the ramp for two. Carter makes the mistake of spitting in Anderson's face, earning him a Regal Roll onto the chairs for two. Back in and Anderson hammers away before planting Carter with a swinging neckbreaker. Tyrus comes back in to earn his check with a t-bone suplex and a corner splash. The spike to the throat puts Anderson down for the pin at 5:39.

Rating: C-. Well that was quick but they were smart to keep this quick given how obvious the booking seems to be. Young is a guy who could bounce right back after all these losses so why not feed him to Carter to get us on the fast track to Angle vs. Carter? Everyone knows that's where it's going so why not just keep this quick?

Bully Ray likes the look of Angle's World Title.

Gail Kim goes up to Awesome Kong and asks if they're on the same side tonight. Kong walks away.

Quick recap of BDC vs. the Rising.

Here's the BDC, wearing masks during their entrance, with something to say. MVP holds up his mask and says it belongs to Homicide, but he can't be here tonight because someone blindsided him on his way back here, sending him to the hospital for surgery shoulder. Now he's not saying the Rising did it, but they must know something about it. MVP goes on a rant about the American government taking foreign oil fields and being cheered, but when the BDC tries to take something, they're called thugs. That's a new word for something censored, which was probably a racial term given how MVP was going.

Cue the Rising, who says they fight in a ring instead of the streets. Think about it though: a man called Homicide isn't the most endearing person in the world. The Rising had nothing to do with the injury, but maybe it was someone closer to home. Where was Kenny King last night for example? MVP says he doesn't care about wrestling. It's all about the money and power that comes with the job. Drew cares about workrate but MVP cares about interest rate. Wasn't MVP the one who came to TNA to make things better for wrestling? MVP wants a match right now so let's do it live. The brawl is on and we take a break.

MVP vs. Drew Galloway

Joined in progress after a break with MVP choking on the ropes and bending the arm around the ropes. A slam off the middle rope gets two and they trade big boots with Drew's knocking MVP outside. Drew follows him and gets slammed head first into the barricade for a loud thud. Back in and the Playmaker is countered into the Futureshock to give Drew the pin at 4:45.

Rating: D+. The match was watchable but this is one of the least interesting feuds I can remember in a long time. They're doing the right things, but there's just nothing to make me care. The (maybe) racist part could be interesting and feels like Corgan's first story addition. It's not likely to make me care about the feud, but the wrestling and promos have been fine. I just don't care.

Post match Eric Young (in CRAZY pink) comes in and helps the BDC beat down the Rising with a chair. Despite Young being an associate of the team when it formed, this is treated as a surprising turn of events.

James Storm is here with a present for a special friend. They should just call him Christmas because he's always giving.

The preview for next week is all about Kurt Angle and asks who's next. I know that's a Destination America ad but it's almost guaranteeing that Angle retains tonight.

Here's James Storm with his present. He can talk about being tough and drinking beer, but it's time to give someone else the spotlight. This brings out Mickie James to a very nice ovation, but Storm wants to talk about her being a mother. Everyone should love their mother, but Storm quickly switches over to Mickie's music career. She's an amazing mother, wrestler and singer, but she's also a great friend. He holds up the box and it's a new guitar. Storm tries to sing a bit but Mickie politely shakes her head no.

They take a picture together (not a selfie Storm) and here's Magnus with a forced smile. Storm has a gift for him too: the spiked helmet from the Brutus Magnus days. Magnus and Mickie leave but Storm pulls out a blanket

for their son Donovan. That's too much for Magnus, who comes back in and breaks the guitar over Storm's head. Like a truly creepy man, Storm starts smiling. They are NAILING this story and Storm is making it awesome. How can he be the same guy that led the worthless Revolution?

Eric Young wants the BDC to have his back to deal with Bully Ray tonight.

We go backstage at Robert Irvine Live (Gail Kim's real life husband and a celebrity chef) where Taryn Terrell shows up. Gail gets in her face and that's about it.

Gail Kim/Awesome Kong vs. Dollhouse

Jade jumps Gail to start but gets thrown down by a hurricanrana, so it's off to Marti vs. Kong. Everyone but Taryn comes in and the Doll House is thrown into the same corner and splashed by the monster. We settle down to Marti hitting a running faceplant on Gail, setting up a cannonball from Jade for two.

Marti slams her down for two but it's off to Jade, who is very slowly slammed down onto Gail's knees. Kim's Black Widow is broken up by Taryn but Gail dives over for the hot tag. The Dollhouse has to save their boss from an Implant Buster and everything breaks down. Jade takes an Implant Buster but Taryn counters the Eat Defeat on Marti with a rollup for the pin at 5:32.

Rating: C. This was fine and the right ending as I'm still loving Taryn and the Dollhouse as a whole. They're setting up the big blowoff with Gail vs. Taryn, but I'm hoping we don't get another Gail title reign. We've been there time after time and I don't see what else she can do with the title.

We look at Jeff Hardy breaking his leg and see Matt holding both Tag Team Titles.

Magnus asks Mickie to have nothing to do with James Storm anymore. Mickie isn't thrilled and leaves.

Here's Matt Hardy to address the Tag Team Title situation. Jeff is going to be healing for a long time, so as of right now, the titles are vacant.

That means it's time for Matt to go home and figure out what's next for him.

As he leaves, here are Bobby Roode and Austin Aries with something to say. Aries hasn't forgotten Young putting him on a stretcher to send him out of the Impact Zone on a stretcher. That brings Aries to another piece of gold: the World Tag Team Titles, which seem to have a curse on them. Yeah they're constantly being vacated, but that sounds like an opportunity. He and Roode have held the Tag Team Titles and didn't get hurt, so Roode thinks the titles should be defended by two of the best wrestlers in the world today.

This brings out Davey Richards, who says no one has fought more battles for those belts than the Wolves. Aries likes the idea, but there's no team in front of him. Not quite says Davey, because Eddie Edwards is back. Eddie has been cleared to wrestle and who better to start against than Roode and Aries? That's fine with them, but Eddie wants to one up it: a best of five series. Hands are shaken and the series is on.

After a break, Matt Hardy goes to leave but Drew Galloway stops him to offer him some food for thought: things are changing a lot and he could use a good man.

Angelina Love is in the ring to talk about being asked everything going on lately. However, she just wants to talk about herself because she's the only Beautiful Person around and the best Knockout ever. Cue Velvet Sky because these two are cursed to be around each other for all eternity. Velvet looks....sleepy. Anyway, Angelina sucks up to her but Velvet, now with pink/purple highlights and a left arm tattoo sleeve doesn't say anything. Instead it's a spear to start a catfight as the fans are going mild. Security breaks it up.

Recap of Young beating Angle in a stretcher match last week.

Young asks Ray if he's going to be the next one to stab him in the back. Ray says he's just here to referee.

TNA World Title: Kurt Angle vs. Eric Young

Bully Ray is refereeing and Angle is defending. Josh on Angle: "If anything ever happened to Captain America, Kurt Angle could easily be an Avenger." A quick belly to belly puts Young down but he fires off some elbows in the corner to take over. Eric is sent to the apron so he runs to the top, only to have Kurt run the ropes and superplex him down. The BDC is watching from the stage as we take a break.

Back with Young getting two off a neckbreaker and choking in the corner. The chinlock slows Angle down for a bit before Angle fights up and wins a slugout. Now we hit the rolling Germans before the ankle lock sends Eric to the ropes. Kurt won't let go so Eric rolls Angle out to the floor. A CRAZY low blow puts Ray down and the BDC starts triple teaming Angle.

This brings out Chris Melendez and the Rising to help Angle before fighting to the back. Young loads up a piledriver on Ray but gets backdropped down, setting up the Angle Slam for two on Eric. Why there hasn't been a DQ called yet isn't clear. Eric hits a quick piledriver for two but goes up for a cross body, only to have Angle roll through into the ankle lock to retain at 14:33.

Rating: C. The match was ok but the most obvious ending ever and an unnecessary brawl in the middle didn't do it any favors. Now hopefully we can get away from the Young vs. Angle story and get on to Carter taking the title at Slammiversary because I never want to see Eric get another title shot.

Angle poses on the stage for a long time and no one attacks him to end the show.

Overall Rating: C. Good enough show this week but it's really nothing memorable. Ray coming back is cool, but they would have been better off by not announcing it as a former World Champion as Dixie's clues made it a pretty obvious reveal. The Sky return was the same obvious swerve, which doesn't leave a lot going on here. This was basically a preview for what they have coming, which is fine as it's the start of a new cycle, but there wasn't much to see here.

Results

Ethan Carter III b. Mr. Anderson – Pin after a spike to the throat from Tyrus

Drew Galloway b. MVP – Futureshock

Dollhouse b. Gail Kim/Awesome Kong – Rollup to Kim

Kurt Angle b. Eric Young – Ankle lock

Remember to follow me on Twitter @kbreviews and pick up my new book of 1998 Pay Per View reviews at Amazon for just \$3.99 at:

<http://www.amazon.com/dp/B00UYAMB8U>

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

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

Thought of the Day: So That Was... .Wow They Really Did That

Time for some house show discussion. I was looking at the results from an NXT house show today. It wasn't the most in depth card in the world, but the main event was Becky Lynch vs. Sasha Banks. Let me say that again: the main event was Becky Lynch vs. Sasha Banks.

Think about this for a second: the main event of a house show was a Divas match. Yeah, that sounds like a disaster in WWE,

but if you saw that as the main event of an NXT show, would you really be disappointed? The fans that I see that as the main event of a card and think “oh ok” tells you quite a bit about the way NXT runs. As I’ve said before: if you build them up properly, the Divas can work very well. That’s not what we’ve gotten anytime in the last ten years or so though and it holds them back quite a bit.

Smackdown – May 7, 2015: Wait, Don’t Tell Me

Smackdown

Date: May 7, 2015

Location: Canadian Tire Centre, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada

Commentators: Byron Saxton, Jerry Lawler, Michael Cole

We had a twist on Monday as Dean Ambrose was added to the fatal fourway at the pay per view for the World Title. While it’s likely that Ambrose was added to the match for the sake of taking the fall, he does add a fresh energy to the match that we haven’t seen so far. This show has a lot to live up to after Monday’s Raw. Let’s get to it.

We open with a recap of Ambrose being added to the title match on Monday. Tonight we have a fourway contract signing.

Opening sequence.

Jerry Lawler is in the ring to open the show with an interview with the freshly crowned King Barrett. The new king doesn’t think much of Lawler because he just likes to call himself a king. Barrett on the other hand defeated three men in twenty four hours to prove his royal worth. If Lawler wants to be in the same ring with him, he must say ALL HAIL KING BARRETT.

Lawler can't get any responds in before Barrett says Jerry is from the trailer parks of Memphis with that other fake king Elvis Presley. Jerry won't say the words so Barrett threatens a Bull Hammer. Cue Dolph Ziggler to call Barrett a Renaissance fair reject. A match is set up right now.

Dolph Ziggler vs. Bad News Barrett

The King gets two off an early snap suplex and knee drop but Dolph dropkicks him out to the floor as we take an early break. Back with Dolph fighting out of a chinlock but getting kicked in the face for two more. Off to a double arm crank before Winds of Change gets yet another near fall. There's the Fameasser for two but Sheamus runs in for the DQ at 6:29. Not enough show to rate but it was just there to set up the next match.

Neville runs out for the save and it's time for a tag match.

Dolph Ziggler/Neville vs. Bad News Barrett/Sheamus

This is joined in progress with Sheamus driving Neville's back into the apron and kicking him hard in the face. The Irish Curse gets two and it's off to the King for another backbreaker. Neville tries to fight up but gets kicked in the face. There's something so awesome about just kicking a guy in the face to put him down. We hit the chinlock from Sheamus before Neville breaks out of the ten forearms to the chest.

Sheamus is sent shoulder first into the post and it's hot tag to Ziggler. Dolph fights off the UK contingent and hits the running DDT for two on Barrett. A superkick gets the same but Ziggler has to duck a Brogue Kick. Neville's flip dive takes Sheamus down and Neville is right back up to break Barrett's rollup with feet on the ropes (like any evil monarch should do). The Zig Zag gives Ziggler the pin over Barrett at 5:45 shown.

Rating: C. We were just kidding ourselves when we thought this was leading somewhere new for Barrett. He hasn't even been king two weeks yet and he's already getting pinned in a tag match. This is a match that really should have gone to a countout or DQ instead of having any of the four getting pinned. Let them fight another day so the pin can mean something more, or maybe have Ziggler, the most expendable of the four,

take the fall.

Ambrose calls himself the chaos theory in the Authority's equation. He's the last guy you want in the match because he's the last guy walking out with the title.

Luke Harper vs. Fandango

This should be painful. Harper teases some Fandangoing before the match and then boots Fandango in the face. Fandango scores with some dropkicks but Harper shrugs off a DDT. The big man nails a superkick of his own and the discus lariat is good for the pin on the dancer at 1:33.

Post match Erick Rowan comes out and beats up Fandango as well. It's not like either has done anything in a few months so why not let them be a team again?

Here's a smiling Lana with something to say. Before she can get there though, she takes the time to soak in a Lana chant. She asks them to stop though as the chants anger Rusev. This brings out the man himself to send Lana to the back while he gets the real work done. In this case that's the same promo he's done about Cena for months now, as he promises to make Cena quit at Payback. This somehow takes two minutes and various Russian to accomplish.

Roman Reigns says he's been Orton's rival forever and he hates Rollins, so the only person he can like in the ring is Ambrose. The quicker he signs tonight, the faster he can punch his way to the title. This is the kind of short, to the point promo that Reigns needs to stick with. There isn't time for him to say something stupid and it stayed on point.

New Day vs. Cesaro/Tyson Kidd/???

It's mystery partner time. Kidd/Cesaro have recruited....Ryback. There are worse options out there. Ryback and Kingston get things going but Kofi has to stop to call off the NEW DAY SUCKS chants. They actually trade hammerlocks to start until Ryback hits an atomic drop so Kidd can nail a dropkick for two. Off to Woods but Cesaro tags himself in to nail a clothesline for two of his own.

In a cool spot, Ryback and Cesaro hit delayed verticals on Big E. and Woods. At the same time, Kidd comes in for a suplex of his own but does a snap instead. All three guys get in on the NEW DAY SUCKS stomps on Woods but he's still able to escape the Sharpshooter. New Day winds up on the floor and all three get flattened by dives and clotheslines as the fans are WAY into Ryback and Cesaro/Kidd. Big E. finally drives Kidd into the apron and barricade a few times to take over. Back from a break with Woods jumping in with a tornado DDT for two on Kidd.

Big E. sends Tyson flying with a suplex but Xavier misses a charge in the corner. Kofi tries to break up the hot tag but Kidd gets to Ryback, who immediately cleans house. Everything breaks down and Cesaro does his running uppercuts spot and loads up the Swing, drawing in Big E. for the save. Instead Cesaro dropkicks Kofi down and the Andre/Snuka splash position sets up Kidd's elbow drop on Kingston. Everything breaks down and Ryback stalks Woods up the ramp....as the lights go out. No one appears but Big E. runs Ryback over. In the distraction, Kofi rolls Kidd up and grabs trunks for the pin at 12:49.

Rating: B. New Day does indeed rock and they're really gelling in the ring. You couple that with a team like Cesaro/Kidd and someone who is figuring out how to be the wrecking ball in Ryback and you have a really solid match. The Wyatt stuff was fine as it gives you an out to end the match without anyone looking bad. Good stuff here as these guys just get better and better every week.

Orton says his strategy for the pay per view hasn't changed because he's going to take out anyone he has to in order to become champion. One of the members of Shield goes down tonight.

Naomi vs. Emma

Naomi and Tamina's inset interview talks about how they're going to remind everyone what they can do. Emma gets sent into the corner to start but does the same to Naomi for an early near fall. A neckbreaker into a nipup puts Emma back down though and a dropkick gets two. Some rollups get more near falls for Emma but the Rear View is enough for the pin at 3:26.

Rating: D+. Just a squash as Emma has somehow fallen even further down the ladder since Santino left. She's a perfect example of someone who got over in NXT and was completely wasted on the main roster. I know there were outside circumstances, but there was no future for her when she was turned into just another smiling Diva with no distinct personality.

Tamina superkicks Emma for good measure.

Tough Enough videos.

Rollins says this is his title and thinks Kane sounds desperate when he tries to take credit for any of Rollins' success. Seth has the mind that Kane will never have and it drives him crazy.

Los Matadores vs. Lucha Dragons

New gear for the Dragons. Kalisto and Fernando start and we're in a chinlock 22 seconds after the bell. Thankfully Kalisto gets up after half a second and headlocks Fernando down before it's off to Cara for a slingshot hilo. Diego comes in with a tilt-a-whirl backbreaker for two but Cara finally comes back with a springboard double cross body. He tries a headstand in the corner but gets kicked down to the floor, allowing Torito to get in a cheap shot as we take a break. In this match?

Back with Cara slamming Fernando down and making the hot tag to Kalisto for a cross body of his own. The twisting cross body puts Diego down and the short hurricanrana does the same. Kalisto's handspring into a spinning kick to the head stuns Fernando again, allowing Cara to small package him for the pin at 8:25. There was no need for a break in this match.

Rating: C. I would say this is a passing of the torch but Los Matadores have been in the dark since they debuted. The Lucha Dragons are far better in the role anyway and can get the crowd going with the LUCHA LUCHA LUCHA chants. Not a great or even good match but the fans were into the Dragons.

Los Matadores blame Torito for the loss.

Kane is here to emcee the contract signing. After a brief intro, he calls

out all four participants as this is already taking a long time. Seth chills on the stage, prompting Ambrose to call him Justin Bieber. I really, really hope that isn't foreshadowing the appearance of that horrible person. Seth mocks Reigns' lack of speaking ability so Reigns has a sentence for him: He's going to sign this contract and then take Seth's head off. The fans chant for Randy and all three challengers sign.

Seth wants Kane to sign for him but Kane says do it yourself. Mercury is told to bring the contract to Rollins, but Seth would rather insult everyone instead of signing. Apparently Roman used to call Ambrose a Roddy Piper knockoff and Reigns can sign autographs better than he can wrestle. Orton is spoiled and only here because of his old man. Seth finally gets inside and signs and hands them to Kane, who he refers to as Mr. Obsolete.

We get the same argument for the 193rd time but Ambrose moves the table out of the way. "We all know how this is going to end anyway so I call dibs on the table." The brawl is on with Ambrose throwing the chairs over the top, and hitting Noble in the head. Rollins dropkicks Reigns into Ambrose but has to bail from an RK0. Dean and Roman get into it but it's the RK0 to Ambrose, Superman Punch to Orton and springboard knee to Reigns to leave Rollins standing tall to end the show.

Overall Rating: C. The long ending segment didn't do much for me, but even worse is that I can barely remember what happened on this show two hours after it started. Looking back it wasn't bad, but there's no staying power to this episode. When your big moments are Erick Rowan turning heel again and the Lucha Dragons splitting up with their mascot, it's clearly just a filler show. You really shouldn't need one of those with three weeks between pay per views.

Results

Dolph Ziggler b. Bad News Barrett via DQ when Sheamus interfered

Dolph Ziggler/Neville b. Sheamus/Bad News Barrett – Zig Zag to Barrett

Luke Harper b. Fandango – Discus lariat

New Day b. Cesaro/Tyson Kidd/Ryback – Rollup to Kidd with a handful of trunks

Naomi b. Emma – Rear View

Lucha Dragons b. Los Matadores – Small package to Fernando

Remember to follow me on Twitter @kbreviews and pick up my new book of 1998 Pay Per View reviews at Amazon for just \$3.99 at:

<http://www.amazon.com/dp/B00UYAMB8U>

And check out my Amazon author page with wrestling books for under \$4 at:

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

Hideo Itami Injured, Could Be Out 6-8 Months

Due to a bad shoulder. He was starting to figure it out but now this stops his momentum cold. Maybe he can come back with a character though as he'll have more time to work on his presence and talking ability.

New Column: Lucha x3

You all know I love this show. I don't know why you should be surprised that I felt like writing about it.

NXT – May 6, 2015: Why Would I Want To Stop This?

NXT

Date: May 6, 2015

Location: Full Sail University, Winter Park, Florida

Commentators: Rich Brennan, Corey Graves, Byron Saxton

We're two weeks away from Takeover: Unstoppable where Sami Zayn (shoulder permitting) will be challenging Kevin Owens for the NXT Title. Other than that, we're closing in on the showdown between Blake/Murphy and Enzo/Big Cass, which hinges around Carmella's possibly changing allegiances. As usual there's a lot of other good stuff going on in NXT so let's get to it.

Opening sequence.

Emma vs. Charlotte

Emma still has Bayley's I'm A Hugger shirt and headbands, which she won't throw to the crowd. Charlotte gets caught in a headlock to start but gets taken down into a headscissors. A cravate with some knee lifts has Emma in even more trouble until she nails Charlotte in the knee to break up something off the middle rope. The knee gets driven into the apron and wrapped around the ropes as Emma seems to have been watching some Flair film.

Back in and something like a standing Curb Stomp to the back draws a BAN THAT MOVE chant and it's right back to the knee with a knee drop from Emma to Charlotte's knee. Off to a half crab for a bit before Emma tries

to drive the knee into the mat, only to have Charlotte land on her feet. A spear (BETTER THAN REIGNS!) gets two for Charlotte and Natural Selection connects for the pin at 5:45.

Rating: C+. This match is a good example of the difference between the NXT girls and the WWE Divas: these girls know how to work a match instead of just doing moves in some order. This felt like it had a logical flow to it instead of going from beginning to end and filling in the gaps here and there. Good little match here, though the knee work didn't mean much.

Bayley comes out post match and helps Emma up. They hug....but Bayley doesn't let go. The Belly to Bayley puts Emma down and Bayley hammers away until Charlotte breaks it up. Bayley gets her stuff back.

Video on Becky Lynch, who talks about going around the world and wrestling everywhere. She wound up here in green and dancing a jig because she's Irish. That's not the real Becky Lynch and she's not going to stand for it.

We get a sitdown interview with Michael Cole talking to Kevin Owens. What he did to Sami Zayn was personal, but because Sami wants the NXT Title back. The title means a better life for his family and that's all that matters. Cole presses him on this and Owens repeats himself but Cole still doesn't buy it. He asks if Owens would have done the same to anyone other than Zayn. That brings Owens back to the night he won the title, when Renee Young asked him about Sami instead of winning the title.

Cole hasn't even congratulated him on winning the title in the last two months, so Cole does just that, but asks for some respect in return. How could Kevin do what he did to someone who was close enough to him to be family? Cole asks about Sami being Owens' best man, but Owens won't get caught by a journalist's question. The truth is that Owens can't give him what he wants, but he's a good father who provides for his family. Oh and follow him on Twitter. This was a very different kind of Cole and I can't say I disliked him.

Bull Dempsey vs. Rhyno

This could be fun if they keep it short. The fans are behind Rhyno as the

guys slug it out, followed by a quick belly to belly from Rhyno, followed by the Gore for the pin at 1:10. Smart choice there.

Post match, Rhyno says he wants Baron Corbin. That would be the next logical step.

Sasha Banks looks at a picture of Fabulous Moolah and says Moolah was the best until she came along. Becky Lynch is trying to use her to make a name for herself, but don't forget who made Lynch in the first place.

The man formerly known as Uhaa Nation signs his contract.

We get a video on Nation, where he talks about everyone coming here and wanting to be a champion. He's studied the great ones' history, but now its time to begin his history. No new name is given.

Scott Dawson/Dash Wilder vs. Enzo Amore/Colin Cassady

Enzo and Cass are nowhere in sight. Fans: "WHERE IS ENZO???" We cut to the back where Enzo and Cass are destroyed by Blake and Murphy as Carmella shouts at them to stop.

Sami has his own sitdown interview with Cole where he says Owens is lying about it not being personal. It drives Sami nuts that Owens has to keep playing these games with him. Next week, Sami will be waiting in the ring so how about they look each other in the eyes and have Owens explain why he did it. If Owens is some family man, set an example for his son and say why he did it.

We get a clip from Cena vs. Sami on Raw but it's not clear if Sami will be ready to go for Takeover.

William Regal is in the ring for the contract signing between Becky Lynch and Sasha Banks. Before signing, Becky lists off the countries she's wrestled in over the years and still can't believe she's here. She's made mistakes and sacrifices along the way but they were all worth it to get here, because she's ready to take over. Becky signs but Sasha drops the pen and pulls out a stamp for her signature instead. Fans: "LIKE A BOSS!" Sasha strikes the first blow and puts Lynch's face on the table with her foot on Becky's head. The table is finally turned over and Lynch slaps on

her seated armbar to make Banks tap.

Clip of Owens destroying Alex Riley after breaking up Riley's match against Sami last week.

Riley says he's having his second knee operation in two years. It's a big risk, but that's how his career has gone from leaving the Miz to leaving his commentary job to get back in the ring to demanding another match against Kevin Owens. However, last week when he was laid out, he heard a THANK YOU OWENS chant. That's what the fans want? The last shot of last week's show was Sami Zayn. That's what Commissioner Regal wants? Well he saw the last time Sami fought Owens and it didn't go well for Zayn. We're not going to be seeing Alex Riley for a long time, because that's what the people want.

Dana Brooke says she's been on a role since she was born. She's seen the new Tapout commercial and can't believe Charlotte is in there instead of the Total Diva. She'll run circles around Charlotte the next time she sees her. Deal with it.

Hideo Itami vs. Tyler Breeze

Finn Balor is at ringside. They circle each other to start until a wristlock sends Breeze running to the floor. Back in and Breeze bails again at the threat of a big kick. Hideo talks to the referee for some reason and gets kicked in the ribs (by Breeze, not the referee), but he nails Breeze in the ribs with a knee to take over. Breeze takes a break on the floor and we take a regular one. Back with Itami dropping some knees to the head and taking his kneepad off for a big one, only to kick Breeze in the jaw instead. Fans: "Hideo's gorgeous!/No he's not!"

Tyler comes back with a variety of stomps and a legdrop for two before we hit the chinlock. A big dropkick puts Itami down again but he punches Breeze out of the air. The top rope clothesline gets two for Itami and the fans want the GTS. They fight to the floor and Itami's Shotgun Kick hits Balor by mistake. Back in and the second Shotgun Kick puts Breeze down for the pin at 12:10.

Rating: C. Itami is getting there but it's some of the slowest

progression I've ever seen. Breeze didn't seem to have his same fire tonight, but at least they did a really good job of setting up the triple threat with the misplaced kick. The false finishes in that match should be great and this was hardly torture to get through.

Breeze goes after Itami post match but Balor makes the save. That earns Balor a Supermodel Kick and Itami gets a Beauty Shot to end the show.

Overall Rating: B-. This was all about setting up the Takeover show and that was done nearly to perfection. The Title match is already set up perfectly, the Tag Title match should be fine and there's another awesome build towards the Women's Title match, which has become the standard in NXT. Good show here, even without a focus on the wrestling.

Results

Charlotte b. Emma – Natural Selection

Rhyno b. Bull Dempsey – Gore

Hideo Itami b. Tyler Breeze – Shotgun Kick

Remember to follow me on Twitter @kbreviews and pick up my new book of 1998 Pay Per View reviews at Amazon for just \$3.99 at:

<http://www.amazon.com/dp/B00UYAMB8U>

And check out my Amazon author page with wrestling books for under \$4 at:

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

Monday Nitro – December 13, 1999: Brace Yourself Starrcade

Monday Nitro #218

Date: December 13, 1999

Location: New Orleans, Arena, New Orleans, Louisiana

Attendance: 6,835

Commentators: Tony Schiavone, Bobby Heenan

How is this already the go home show for Starrcade? Goldberg vs. Hart feels like a midcard match instead of the main event. Based on the amount of time given to each match, it would seem that the Mamalukes vs. Disco/Lash is headlining the card. I'm not even sure what all is on the card at this point. Let's get to it.

We open with Benoit winning a fight against Jarrett in the back.

Opening sequence.

The Artist Formerly Known As Prince Iaukea vs. Maestro

Between the piano being lowered to the stage (with Symphony back) and Iaukea's slow artsy entrance, we're ready to go at nearly ten minutes into the show. Maestro throws him to the floor to start before planting him with a spinebuster back inside. The girls get into it and Prince grabs a rollup with a handful of tights for the pin.

Post match, here's Jarrett with the guitars to knock out both guys. Jeff wants a Bunkhouse Brawl (another name for hardcore of course) with Benoit tonight.

Nash is looking for Hall.

Evan Karagias hits on Spice but Madusa comes up to get in a catfight.

Here's Bret Hart with something to say. He talks about how much he

respects Goldberg, but guarantees a win this Sunday. Cue Goldberg, complete with the full security entrance. How did they know to knock on the door at that point? Goldberg wasn't scheduled for a match, so did Dillinger just think "he might want to respond here?" He thinks Bret is going to be next on Sunday. I'm so glad it took two minutes to get to that point. This brings out the Outsiders who want their Tag Team Titles back. Hall wants to fight now but Nash has to go finish his coffee.

Gene looks down at Madusa's chest as she promises to hurt Spice tonight. This is another of those jokes that are only funny to Russo and Ferrara so we're getting it on national TV.

Terry Taylor tells Luger that he has a tag match against Diamond Dallas Page/Sting with David Flair as his partner. This was announced earlier in the night, which explains why Luger is so surprised. I wouldn't watch the show either.

David Flair chases off a delivery man for reasons of general insanity.

Madusa vs. Spice

Madusa quickly takes her down to start and hammers away but Evan comes in to say calm down. Spice is helpless as Madusa wants Evan to slug her, but Evan won't do it. Madusa gets in a cheap shot and covers Madusa (with two limbs in the ropes) for the pin. Your #1 contender everyone.

Post match Madusa kisses Evan and suplexes him.

Hennig is ready for Bagwell tonight. Those two are fighting again? Rhonda Singh comes in and Russo makes fat jokes. He won't talk to her unless she has an agent.

Revolution recap.

Jim Duggan comes out to say he has three mystery partners on Sunday. He survived surgery to fight for this country and spend time with his wife and children. The lights go out and come back on to reveal Duggan out cold.

Roddy Piper is going to referee Bagwell vs. Hennig. Russo tells him to do

the right thing.

Curt Hennig vs. Buff Bagwell

Roddy Piper is guest referee and makes it a No DQ match just because. Buff throws Hennig down a few times and poses before planting Curt with a slam. This leads to Hennig arguing with Piper for some reason, allowing Buff to grab a rollup for two. Buzzkill is in the crowd and wants to save baby seals. Again I ask, why is this supposed to be funny?

Curt comes back with right hands and chops, followed by the namesake neck snap. Piper counts slowly to start another argument. He begs Curt to slap him but the distraction lets Buff fight back with a swinging neckbreaker. Buff's splash hits knees, but Piper and Hennig get in a fight, allowing Buff to grab a rollup for the pin with a very fast count.

Rating: D. What is this storyline? Russo and Piper hate each other because Piper has to be on TV (because he was big in the 80s you see) and now Piper is on TV as a referee but he's being told to do the right thing, which sounds like Russo speak for let his guys win, but I think Piper is rebelling against him? Oh and Piper seems to be schizophrenic because he keeps talking to the voices in his head.

An unhappy Creative Control is on stage.

Luger goes in to see David Flair and is scared by what he sees in the locker room.

Chris Benoit vs. Jeff Jarrett

Bunkhouse match, meaning a come as you are street fight. Jeff brings a cowbell, a guitar and a bar stool so Benoit comes out with a ladder. The brawl starts in the aisle with Jeff getting the better of it and getting the cowbell because cowboys are awesome. They're like boys, but with cows. Benoit comes back by choking with the bullrope and taking Jeff inside for two off a backbreaker. It's ladder time but Jeff baseball slides it into Benoit's face.

A whip into the ladder has Benoit in even more trouble but he throws Jeff into it as well to make things even. Benoit pulls him off the ladder but

Jeff pulls him down with the rope. Cue Dustin Rhodes but Charles Robinson breaks up Shattered Dreams. There's a guitar to Dustin, at the exact same time he kicks Jeff low. Benoit goes up top but Dustin is shoved into the ladder to send Benoit down in a crash to give Jarrett the pin.

Rating: D+. There were some decent spots here but the ending was, of course, a mess. I don't know why Dustin Rhodes is here as the man in black, especially when he's fighting because they've moved on from the idea of Dustin fighting because the Powers That Be fired Dusty. Instead it's just Dustin Rhodes being Dustin Rhodes which isn't interesting.

Luger doesn't have much to say about the tag match but David Flair has a headless teddy bear.

A sports car arrives.

Piper goes into Russo's office with a ball bat but Hennig nails him with a chair. So Curt is La Parka?

Meng vs. Tank Abbott

Oh sweet merciful goodness. This is a hardcore match because would you want to see them try to wrestle? They slug it out to start as this is designed to look like a shoot. Abbott takes him to the mat and they fight to the floor for a quick double countout. This is the guy Russo wanted to put the World Title on a month later?

Kanyon was in the car and seems to now be a pimp.

Police stop Piper from going after the Powers That Be.

Meng and Abbott are still fighting in the back.

Revolution vs. Harlem Heat/Midnight

Before the match we get the usual "we hate America" jazz. Dean: "We've got heat tonight." Saturn: "Yeah listen to these people." Dean: "No. Harlem Heat." I'm not sure how to feel about that exchange. The lights go out for Midnight and come back with Saturn going after Malenko, presumably out of confusion. Booker takes Dean down to start and it's

already Spinarooni time. Off to Stevie for a slam but Booker tags himself back in.

That's not cool with Stevie as he wanted Midnight to get the tag for reasons not entirely clear. The Revolution quickly takes over with Saturn stomping away in the corner and tagging in Dean, who walks right into the Bookend. Stevie gets the tag but Booker tags himself back in after just a few seconds. Saturn hits Asya by mistake as Stevie tags himself back in to fight Dean and Saturn at the same time. Everything breaks down and Midnight injures her knee on a leapfrog. Booker checks on the knee, leaving Stevie to get rolled up for the pin.

Rating: D+. This was an angle instead of a match but I'm glad we're starting the latest Harlem Heat split. There's nothing left for the two of them to do together and it means we might get to the long overdue Booker push. The match was nothing special but at least we got more man vs. woman.

Stevie yells at his brother.

Luger says Liz won't be there with David tonight because Liz works for him alone. So we have female property.

Rhonda Singh asks Kanyon's agent (J. Biggs, Clarence Mason from the WWF) to represent her. It turns out she can sing and dance. The agent isn't interested, but Chavo comes up to sell Singh dancing gear. I don't see this ending well.

Paul Orndorff is here and summoned to see the Powers That Be.

The Nitro Girls dance when Rhonda joins them in glittery attire. She's horrible of course and shrugs off an attack by the Girls. So in the span of ten minutes, we have man vs. woman, Liz as Luger's property and now this. How long until Russo gets fired?

Finlay is still training Knobbs on how to be hardcore.

Norman Smiley and Jerry Flynn fight in the boiler room. That goes nowhere until Meng and Abbott wander in. Norman and Meng get out while Abbott and Flynn fight.

Orndorff is in the office, where Russo fires him for training Midnight. Paul yells, so he's put in a match with Creative Control.

Sid has a kid named Seth who he calls his coach. Seth says Sid is his favorite wrestler in the world. I think the kid has Downs Syndrome. If he does, I have no issue with this segment whatsoever.

Steve Williams vs. Sid Vicious

Oh man. Imagine this one in 1989 with JR on commentary. Instead it's 1999 with Oklahoma. Before the match, Oklahoma says the Powers That Be have made this a suplex vs. powerbomb match, which I assume means the first person to hit that finisher wins. Dr. Death jumps Sid as he's sitting the kid down at ringside because he's really evil. Back in and Williams hammers away as Oklahoma lists off the resume. Sid blocks some suplexes and hammers away but Oklahoma slips his boot to Williams. He knocks Sid out but Vampiro appears to chase Oklahoma, allowing Sid to powerbomb Williams for the win.

Post match the Outsiders run in and lay out Sid to make sure the kid doesn't get to smile any longer than he should. Sure the kid has a horrible disease, but is that any reason for the Outsiders to not look good?

Post break, Sid is looked at by a doctor and the Outsiders think it's funny.

David Flair/Total Package vs. Diamond Dallas Page/Sting

Did Page turn face again and I missed it? I know he's been going after David but heel vs. heel is hardly unheard of under Russo. David has the headless bear with him but takes a Stinger Splash in the first 45 seconds. Sting tags Page in with a right hand to start a fight between the two of them. Now it's Page taking a splash but Luger sneaks in with a running clothesline to Sting, followed by some crowbar shots. Liz sneaks in to take the crowbar away before laying over Sting to stop some chair shots. David hits Luger with the crowbar so Liz puts Sting over Luger for the pin (from the referee who saw ALL OF THIS). What a mess.

Singh comes up to Champagne Canyon and the agent in the back and asks if they liked her dance. This goes nowhere so Bam Bam Bigelow comes up and gets in Canyon's face. The agent offers a distraction so Canyon can beat him down. Canyon: "Triad that!"

After a break, Bigelow comes to the ring and demands Canyon come out here for a match.

Kanyon vs. Bam Bam Bigelow

Before the match, Biggs wants to talk about legal ramifications and gets shoved to the side so Bigelow can punch Canyon in the face. Some biting and stomps to the head have Canyon in even more trouble but he comes back with a swinging neckbreaker. A suplex sets up a World's Strongest Slam to Canyon and there's the top rope headbutt a bit low. Canyon is up and fine ten seconds later with the Flatliner (now called That's A Wrap) connecting for a clean pin.

Rating: D. Did....did that match just end clean? Did I just see a match without any interference or cheating? You always hear about these things but you never expect to actually see them happen. It was boring stuff though and the ending came out of nowhere with Canyon just popping up and hitting his finisher for the pin.

Norman hides from Meng.

The Mamalukes have a body bag for Lash.

Piper babbles about his chair match later.

Lash Leroux vs. Big Vito

This is a body bag match, which I'm assuming is like a casket match. Lash sucks up to his hometown to start. Vito pounds away to start and nails a superkick for two. Back up and Lash nails a backdrop followed by an elbow to the jaw to send Vito into the corner. A side slam and legdrop get two more, followed by a Disco Inferno style middle rope elbow drop. Disco and Johnny fight on the floor as Lash nails the Whiplash. He puts Vito mostly in the bag which is enough for the win, even though you can see Vito's head and shoulders.

Rating: D+. Was there any point to this being a body bag match? I certainly don't think so, but I'm just a wrestling fan and therefore don't understand such nuances. Nothing match here as the tag match is still set up, even though it's not likely going to be anything special to see. At least this story has gotten some consistent TV time though and I can see what they're going for.

Post match the Mamalukes destroy Lash and put him in the bag, eventually taking him out to their car.

Paul Orndorff vs. Creative Control

So yeah, Orndorff is back and in a match. I'll set the over/under on runs here at 5.5. Paul kicks Patrick in the knee to start and puts him down with a knee lift. Gerald gets suplexed for trying to come in and an elbow drop gets two. Orndorff chokes him with a rope but Patrick makes the save to start the obvious beatdown. Cue Anderson (you remember him Paul. He's the guy that broke your neck and ended your career) and Zbyszko to help beat up the twins, allowing Orndorff to piledrive Patrick for the pin.

Rating: D-. I've never been the biggest Paul Orndorff fan (I don't dislike him but I never got the massive appeal) but you just had him hold his own and beat last week's Tag Team Champions. Yeah he had help, but the Harris Brothers should have a lot less trouble beating up two guys who retired due to neck issues and a commentator who has wrestled like four times in three years.

Slick Johnson reverses the decision and names Creative Control the winners by DQ. Good for them I suppose.

The Mamalukes open the body bag and find...Norman Smiley. Their reactions are actually funny.

Curt Hennig vs. Roddy Piper

Chairs match and another pairing that would have rocked in 1989. Piper apparently has a torn bicep so Hennig goes right after the arm. Roddy comes back with some chair shots and Hennig leaves after about 70

seconds. I see zero point to this match existing.

Bret Hart has been attacked and Goldberg checks on him.

Tag Team Titles: Bret Hart/Goldberg vs. Outsiders

Hall and Nash are challenging. Goldberg comes out to fight alone and does just fine to start with the superkick dropping Nash and a right hand sending Hall to the floor with him. Back in and Hall officially starts for the team with a wristlock but gets put down with the AA's second cousin. A pumphandle slam sends Hall running to the corner and it's off to Nash. Kevin tries his luck by running the ropes but walks into a powerslam for two.

The numbers game starts catching up with Goldberg though and Hall's cheap shot lets Nash take over. The running crotch attack to the back gets two on Goldberg and Hall plants him with a chokeslam. Hart limps down and slugs away for the save. Nash gets caught in the Sharpshooter but Hall makes the save. Everything breaks down with Hall getting kicked down, right before Nash brings in the title belt. Bret punches him down but his knee goes out, despite Nash not touching him, allowing Nash to get the pin and the titles, just before Goldberg Jackhammers Hall.

Rating: D. Angle instead of a match here, but thank goodness they managed to get the World Champion pinned six days before Starrcade and give Hall a second (or third if you consider the TV Title still around) title. This is the problem with having the World Title match participants as champions, but giving it to them for four days made it even dumber.

Trash fills the ring to end the show.

Overall Rating: F+. Well let's see: #1 contender for the Cruiserweight Title loses to a non-wrestler, Sid gets beaten down again, the World Champion gets pinned, Jeff Jarrett still isn't interesting and Hennig and Piper set up and blew off an angle in one night with a match barely breaking a minute. Somehow, this is their go home show (Thunder hasn't meant anything in ages) for the biggest show of the year. Russo booking Starrcade scares the heck out of me and this didn't do anything to make it better.

Remember to follow me on Twitter @kbreviews and pick up my new book of 1998 Pay Per View reviews at Amazon for just \$3.99 at:

<http://www.amazon.com/dp/B00UYAMB8U>

And check out my Amazon author page with wrestling books for under \$4 at:

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

Global Force Wrestling Makes First Roster Announcements

And some of them are pretty familiar.

Chael Sonnen – Analyst

Justin Gabriel

Davey Boy Smith Jr.

Doc Gallows

Karl Anderson

Lance Hoyt

Chris Masters

Quinn Ojinnaka

Lei'D Tapa

Thea Trinidad

Sanada

We waited a year for some WWE/TNA rejects and a few guys from Japan? The shows might be fun, but this is going to need some major work to get anywhere.

Checked Out The Roman Reigns Documentary

It's the standard level of awesome that WWE 24 has always been. These thirty minute short form documentaries are awesome stuff (if not kayfabe destroying) as when else are you going to get to see something like this without waiting a few years for the three disc version? Check this show out as it's just over half an hour and lets you relate a bit more to Reigns.

As a side note, I recorded the E:60 documentary but haven't watched it yet. The extras on Colin Cassady and Tyler Breeze are great previews though and this has the potential to be amazing.