

On This Day: June 22, 1998 – Monday Night Raw: He Is The Future

Monday Night Raw

Date: June 22, 1998

Location: Frank Erwin Center, Austin, Texas

Attendance: 10,891

Commentators: Michael Cole, Jerry Lawler, Jim Ross

This is the go home show for the King of the Ring and the first set of KOTR matches, so we'll have four of those tonight. Other than that expect more as far as the C-o-n-spiracy and the whole fallout from that. We also have Kane and Mankind vs. an Outlaw apiece. This looks like a very standard go home show, so let's get to it.

We open with a recap of the end of last week's show with Taker destroying Bearer. Kane will break his silence tonight.

Theme song.

The Cell is above the ring again.

Here's Vince to open the show. He brings out the next WWF Champion, Kane. Bearer is watching on satellite. The fans immediately chant for Austin. Vince says this will be the greatest day of Kane's life on Sunday. Kane has apparently requested a special kind of match. There's no pin, submission, DQ or countout. It's first blood. Vince wants to know how confident Austin is. Kane (who hasn't said anything until now) says that if he doesn't win the title, he'll set himself on fire. I can't help but laugh at this.

King of the Ring Quarterfinals: Ken Shamrock vs. Mark Henry

The Nation is sent out again as they've been for the last few

weeks. Shamrock makes Henry miss and fires off the kicks. He walks into a powerslam to take him down though. Legdrop gets no cover for Henry, which is chalked up to a rookie mistake by JR. Henry hooks on a bearhug and then a splash to the back of Kenny. Back to the bearhug. Shamrock tries to come back with a sunset flip but Henry drops down onto him. And now bearhug #3. FEEL THE ELECTRICITY BABY!!! Shamrock fights back and manages to hit the rana, sending Mark to the floor. Vader runs out and drills Henry. Belly to belly by Shamrock wins this.

Rating: D+. Henry somehow didn't get any better for about 12 years. I mean dude, by the laws of averages and muscle memory you would think that somehow he would get better. That belly to belly was pretty impressive. Shamrock had a lot of talent but was only going to be an upper midcarder at best given the way his character went. Plus injuries on top of that.

Edge is in the audience.

X-Pac vs. Dustin Runnels

Dustin, the newly religious man, offers a handshake but gets a crotch chop for his efforts. The move known as the X-Factor takes him down but it doesn't mean much yet. Dustin crotches him to counter a bulldog but Pac sends him to the floor. Chyna hits him low and momentum shifts again. Pac hits some of those very fast legdrops of his. I've always liked those. Off to a chinlock and we talk about how Austin could make Kane bleed. Dustin makes a comeback and a cross body gets two. One armed suplex gets the same. He loads up the bulldog but Chyna trips him. Pac kicks his head off for the pin.

Rating: C-. It's amazing how much less annoying Sean Waltman is when he's against someone who isn't a giant. Dustin is a good sized guy but they didn't have to make him look like an idiot here to have Pac beat him. That's what gets on my nerves about small guys like Pac and Mysterio: if they're fighting giants, the giants have to look like idiots for the small guy

to win. This has nothing to do with the match. I'm just kind of rambling now.

Pac won't shake his hand again post match.

We talk to Bearer at his home in...wherever it is. He promises to be at Kane's side on Sunday.

Here's Jerry Lawler to rant about Al Snow some more. Snow has apparently stolen the cleaning lady's dress. Jerry has some papers for Snow, and here comes Snow out of the crowd in a dress. Head has the King's Crown. Jerry offers a meeting with Vince for the crown. Lawler gets the crown back and Snow is handed a contract, signed by Vince McMahon. Snow and Head have to team up and face Too Much at King of the Ring. If they win, Snow gets his meeting with Vince.

Snow drops to the mat and says pin me and pay me. Why wait until the PPV apparently? Jerry calls out Too Much but Snow pops up and beats them up with Head.

Edge is now sitting on the stage.

King of the Ring Quarterfinals: Marc Mero vs. Jeff Jarrett

Jarrett knocks him to the floor quickly as the fans are cheering for Sable. There's a gag order on the Sable issue which translates to me that they have no idea what they're doing with the story but they have to have her back. Mero powerbombs Jarrett and hits a moonsault press for two. He might have hurt his knee jumping but still manages a small package for two. Jackie trips Jarrett and Tennessee Lee goes after her. That lets Mero hit Jeff low and hit the TKO but there's no referee. Cue Sable for a distraction and Jarrett grabs a DDT to advance.

Rating: C-. Match was okayish but this was about Sable. I don't think they ever actually revealed what the reason was for her coming back, but that's par for the course in this

ear. Anyway, decent match and a weird thing to see Jarrett as the face in one of these, especially after that character totally bombed as a face for the Horsemen.

Jarrett says he's seen the light and will be king.

Kane vs. Road Dogg

I don't see this lasting long. Billy is sent to the back. Roadie tries to stick and move but there's too much Kane. A big boot puts Road Dogg down and there's the smother that Kane has been using on Cena lately. Road Dogg takes a beating but manages to get in some punches and a clothesline to send him to the floor. And never mind as Kane takes over again quickly. Chokeslam is loaded up but Roadie hits him low...to no effect. The chokeslam hits and Tombstone finishes.

Rating: D. Just an extended squash here but it made Kane look unhurttable going into the match on Sunday. That's the point of this and it also pushes the tag title match which is coming eventually. See how easy it can be to efficiently book a show? Why don't people get that more often?

Bearer talks about the Conspiracy and Taker wanting to shut him up last week. Screams are heard and Taker comes in and destroys Bearer again. Various stuff is destroyed and the feed cuts out.

And now, it's time.

Edge vs. Jose Estrada

All that is known about Edge is that he's a tortured soul from Toronto. He comes in through the crowd and Estrada jumps him. Edge comes back with a spear and sends him to the floor. Edge hits a flip dive over the top onto Estrada...and breaks Estrada's neck, putting him out for months. Edge wins by countout. The replay shows that Edge's leg landed on the top of Jose's head. It only lasted about 30 seconds.

And that's how Edge debuted.

Kane is freaking in the back as Foley tries to calm him down. There's a buzz from Kane's voicebox.

Jose is taken out on a stretcher. Based on the replay, it's hard to say who's at fault. When you flip forward like that, it's hard to control where you land. Probably a combination of both.

King of the Ring Quarterfinals: Dan Severn vs. Owen Hart

Severn is in that t-shirt of his. He spears Owen down and you know he wants it on the mat. The American hits a German on the Canadian but gets caught in an enziguri. Fisherman's suplex gets two for Owen. Severn comes back but gets caught in a neckbreaker. Owen rolls outside and grabs a chair. Severn grabs it and in the distraction, X-Pac comes in and cracks a chair on Owen's back. Severn's submission ends this. Too short to rate but the match was fine.

The Nation runs Severn off.

Post break Rock calls out DX for a fight and here they come. Remember that it's still HHH vs. Rock in the tournament later. DX comes out but suits hold them back.

King of the Ring Quarterfinals: HHH vs. The Rock

Just Chyna out there with either person. Winner gets Severn at the PPV. Rock takes over to start and hammers HHH down. He ducks his head though and HHH grabs a swinging neckbreaker. HHH takes over and drops the Flair Knee for two. Rock takes over and hits a suplex for two. There's the People's Elbow but HHH kicks out. Rock punches HHH, HHH punches Rock, HHH hits the facebuster to take over. Rock sends him to the floor but as he poses, Chyna DDTs him for two. They trade sleepers and Chyna tries to interfere for some reason. The distraction lets Rock hit a low blow and win with a fisherman's suplex.

Rating: D+. How was that 8 minutes long? Usually the rule of thumb I use is that each paragraph of text is about four minutes of video. How in the world was this an 8 minute matches? It was mainly punching for one thing and nothing at all stands out about it. Definitely one of the weakest I can remember from these two, but their big one is coming.

DX and the Nation run out and it's a big brawl.

Here's the semi-finals for the KOTR:

Shamrock

Jarrett

Severn

Rock

Kane is still freaking out. Mankind says stay here because he has to go have a match.

Mankind vs. Billy Gunn

Mankind talks about being a history fan and having a picture of men from Gettysburg near his bed. As he's talking about this, the Cell is lowered. The story was about time healing all wounds, but he doesn't want to heal the wounds with Taker after what Taker did to Paul Bearer last week. They're not going to prosecute him though because it's a family matter on Sunday at the PPV.

Here's Billy and the Cell is still down. All Mankind to start including the running knee in the corner. He takes Billy to the mat with a body scissors and the Cell is up. Billy tries to fire off some punches and they go to the floor. Chyna's interference doesn't really work at all. She gets ejected and they stay on the floor. Billy drops him onto the railing and into the post but it doesn't really do anything. Billy dropkicks the steps into Mankind's face and hammers away but Mankind keeps getting up. Fameasser (called the Rocker

Dropper) doesn't do anything and a piledriver is countered. Mandible Claw ends this.

Rating: D. The problem here was that the ending was inevitable. I mean, did anyone think Billy Gunn was going to win this? The match just went on and wasn't all that interesting at all. The Outlaws were good at just about everything, except for that whole having matches thing. They were more of an act than a team, which makes things like this a bit annoying.

Mankind can't find Kane.

Here's Sable of all people with about 5 minutes left in the show. She brings out Austin in the white baseball jersey which never really worked for him. He wants Sable to go flip Vince off for him. Austin looks around for anyone wanting a fight and then accepts Kane's challenge. In one of the funniest lines I can ever remember, Austin says if Kane lights himself on fire, he'll be there with marshmallows, hot dogs and beer and we'll have a big campfire. Here comes Kane but blood flows from the ceiling onto Austin. Now the white shirt makes more sense. Kane says on Sunday the blood will be real.

Overall Rating: D+. I really didn't like this one as much as I did last week's. This was more about getting all of the things that we had to get done before Sunday done. The lack of Vince has been hurting the shows as he's only been in the opening segments lately. The wrestling here continues to be weak, but seeing Edge debut, even though it was shot, was very cool.

Here's King of the Ring if you're interested:

[King of the Ring 1998 – Kane Is Champion](#)

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Thought of the Day: The WWE Is Wrestling

Matt Striker made some comments after being released from WWE. Among other things, he had this to say:

Without that company on top of the food chain, nothing else trickles down. There are no independents, there is no Japan, there is no Europe or 'that other place' without WWE. So say what you want, but when you strip away all the things you don't like about [WWE] you have to respect what they do.

While the stuff about Japan and Europe aren't true, there's something in there that I think gets overlooked. WWE is so far and away the biggest and most dominant wrestling company in the world that it's unreal.

TNA is the second biggest company in the US. Last Saturday night they drew 1000 fans at best to a baseball stadium in Lexington, Kentucky where the majority of the seats cost \$15. Let's say they made \$20,000 in ticket sales. At Wrestlemania this year, WWE made \$12.7 million in ticket sales alone while selling out an NFL stadium.

ROH had one of their biggest moments ever when another company bought them and they were syndicated nationwide. WWE has had a show on cable TV for over 20 years running now which dominates whatever network it airs on. It's publicly traded on the New York Stock Exchange alongside companies like Coca-Cola and Wal-Mart.

Have you ever seen a TNA or Chikara shirt at a retail store? WWE has a section at Wal-Mart next to stuff like Disney and Marvel Comics. If wrestling isn't your thing, go to the

electronics section and buy a movie for the night. If you're interested, you can get one produced by such studios as FOX, Warner Brothers or WWE Studios.

TNA made a big deal out of getting a two hour timeslot on Spike several years back. ROH is thrilled by having an hour a week at whatever time you can find them in your area if your area happens to get the Sinclair networks. WWE has at least 6 hours of new televised shows a week plus several hours of internet content a week.

I could go on and on, but you get the idea: WWE is so ridiculously far ahead of everyone else that they are wrestling for all intents and purposes. If TNA went out of business tomorrow, they would be missed for a bit and then a lot of people would forget about them in a few years. If WWE went out of business tomorrow, the entire industry would be in chaos.

Now go ahead and tell me how wrong I am and how WWE really isn't all that great. I look forward to laughing at your false hope.

I Want To Talk A Little Bit About Bobby Roode

You'll often hear about how Bobby Roode is the best thing in TNA right now and has been for the last few years. I see talent in him, but he's not quite superstar that everyone thinks he is. There's just something

missing about him and today we're going to look at what that may be, although it's not as hard to find as you may think. The thing holding him back can be found in two men: Booker T and Bret Hart. Let's get to it.

Let's start back in 1991.

The Hart Foundation loses the tag belts at Wrestlemania VII and quietly split so Bret can move on to his long awaited singles push. He wins the Intercontinental Title at Summerslam and moves on to the world title about 15 months later. his first world title reign doesn't go all that well and he loses the belt about four months later at Wrestlemania IX. he wins the title back at Wrestlemania X and goes on to become the guy in the WWF for the next few years.

Now let's look at Booker T. Harlem Heat goes on sabbatical in late 1997 due to Stevie Ray's injury and Booker wins the TV Title the night after Starrcade. Over the next few years he dominates the midcard and wins the world title in the summer of 2000. While WCW would be out of business in less than a year, Booker's ascension to the main event was handled quite well with Booker going from a solid midcarder to the top star the company had. He transitioned to the WWF main event scene and eventually won a world title there after rising through their ranks.

On the third hand you have Bobby Roode, who also went from a successful tag team to the world title and being one of the top stars in the company. Roode held the world title longer than anyone in company history, yet I don't think there's much of a case to be made for his title reign meaning all that much. Bobby turned heel after a match with James Storm and held the title for about nine months, yet he never became all that big a deal. Now why is that the case?

What we have here are three cases of guys going from a successful tag team and becoming the world champion later in their career. Of these three, Booker's first title win and reign might have made the most sense. Bret's title win came out of nowhere at a house show in Canada that was released on a Coliseum Video called Smack Em Whack Em (check that tape out. It's one of the best home videos ever released). Roode's win came on Impact a few weeks after the biggest show of the year. Booker's came on PPV (albeit as a substitute for Hogan).

So what was holding Roode back? There are several instances and all can be compared to the other two title reigns.

First of all, there's the look of change. This one really is simpler than it sounds: when Roode became a singles guy, he looked just like he did when he was in Beer Money. Think back to Booker T winning the world title. He was wearing black trunks and boots in a very simple look, which was different than what he had worn earlier in his career. When he was in Harlem Heat he had worn a singlet and when he had been in the midcard it was a pair of long tights.

It doesn't sounds like much, but the attire a person wears to the ring can mean a lot. Think back to Hulk Hogan. He's by far the biggest hero of all time and when he turned heel, the look started to change. He was wearing black, he had a beard, and started wearing sunglasses. Jericho switched to trunks when he turned heel and Undertaker is always altering his look, even a little bit at a time. Bret and Roode had the same look they had had for years before winning the title: a singlet for Bret and trunks for Roode.

Another thing that slows Roode down is his name: Bobby. I know he's had that name for years, but it sounds like the name of a nine year old paper

boy, not the world heavyweight champion. Look at some of the biggest names ever: Hulk, Savage, Stone Cold, Rock. Then we have Bobby, which sounds like it belongs on the Mickey Mouse Club. I know it's minor but I have no idea why he changed it from Robert, which at least sounds more serious.

Back to the big things, let's take a look at the finishing move. What is Roode's finisher? The exact answer doesn't exist, as Roode has several of them. I've seen him get wins with a Crossface, a fisherman's suplex and the spinebuster. The Crossface doesn't work for him as a heel due to wrestling law #84: top faces shall not submit. The fisherman's suplex is ok at best and the spinebuster is so common that it's barely a finishing move at all.

On the other hand look at someone like Hart. He had one and only one move and it was OVER when he hooked it on someone. Booker started using the Bookend around the time of his main event push as well and there are others who changed finishers upon getting a big push. Roode's matches always felt like he was looking for a way to get a fast win instead of having some big move to knock someone out cold.

Now we get to the most important thing of all: the way Roode won the title. As I mentioned before, Roode's title win came a few weeks after the biggest show of the year. The details of his title win make it even less impressive. Over the course of the summer, Roode had competed in and won the Bound For Glory Series, a points based competition to earn himself a world title shot. Roode had literally spent four months building himself up for the title showdown against Kurt Angle.

The match was built up, Roode was ready, it was the main event of the biggest show of the year....and Roode lost. Angle cheated to retain the

title, but at the end of the day it was Roode getting pinned in his big moment. Roode would go on to win the title about two and a half weeks later, but his fans didn't know that at the time. Instead they saw four months of hope and buildup wasted on another Kurt Angle win, because goodness knows he doesn't have enough of them in his career.

The idea was supposed to be that Roode wouldn't know when he would get another title shot and would do anything to win in his second try. That's all well and good, but the same result (Roode using the beer bottle to beat his longtime partner James Storm) could have been accomplished with Roode defending the title instead of capturing it from Storm. Have him say something like "Yeah I hit James Storm with a beer bottle. I'm the World Heavyweight Champion and I'll do ANYTHING to hold onto my title." Same result, Roode wins the match at BFG, and there's no failure.

For comparison's sake, look at the first title wins of the other two guys I've been talking about: Hart and Booker T. Bret won his first major shot at the title in a 30 minute war against Ric Flair by making him give up in the Sharpshooter. Booker T won his first world title match on PPV by pinning Jeff Jarrett with the Book End. Wouldn't you agree that both of those results sound better than "won the title in his second attempt after botching his big chance?"

Let's take a quick look at Roode's title reign with the focus just on the PPV title defenses. We have: a cheating win over an injured AJ Styles, a draw against AJ Styles, a DQ loss to Jeff Hardy, a win after Sting hit Hardy with the title belt, a win over Sting after Sting knocked himself out, a win over Storm when Storm knocked Roode out of the cage, a win in a ladder match, a win after hitting Sting with a beer bottle but Sting winds up standing tall to end the show, and the loss to Austin Aries.

In other words, Roode defended the title nine times on PPV and won a total of one match either on his own or without cheating. I understand the idea of a heel cheating to win, but once in awhile he needs to do more than escape with the title. It made his reign look weak and made him look like a guy who was lucky rather than good. The same thing was said for the Honky Tonk Man during his Intercontinental Title reign and that's not something you want for the world champion.

So does all that mean that Roode's career is hopeless and he can never be a top guy? Of course not, as Bret went on to be the top guy in the company for years to come. It was a bad world title win and a pretty bad reign after he got his hands on the belt, but it doesn't mean he isn't talented. Roode is comparable to guys like Booker T and Bret Hart and both of them wound up in the Hall of Fame. Roode's first title reign didn't work all that well but the potential is there, which is a very important point. You might even call it the "It Factor."

Thunder – January 29, 1998: The Radicals And Jericho Steal The Show. Imagine That.

Thunder

Date: January 29, 1998

Location: Mid-South Coliseum, Memphis, Tennessee

Commentators: Tony Schiavone, Lee Marshall, Bobby Heenan

Back to Thursday nights here with the fourth episode of the series. The main story continues to be the destruction of the NWO as Nitro ended with Hall and Hogan standing around while Sting beat up Savage. The main event

tonight is the Steiners challenging for the tag titles in a match we haven't seen before. That shouldn't make sense so let's get to it.

The intro has changed to a thunderstorm theme which doesn't work as well.

The set is now a traditional one with a regular entrance and the Thunder logo on top of it.

US Title: Diamond Dallas Page vs. Sick Boy

Page takes it to the mat but gets caught in an armbar. Sick Boy bails to the floor and the stalling begins. Back in and Page pulls him down but Sick Boy nips up. The discus lariat misses so Page goes to a tilt-a-whirl side slam for no cover. Sick Boy goes back to the apron for a springboard missile dropkick to take over. A spinning belly to belly suplex gets two on Page but Sick Boy misses a kick to the ribs. The discus lariat looks to set up the Diamond Cutter but Sick Boy takes out the knee. Not that it matters much as Page throws him up for a flapjack but pulls him down into the Cutter for the pin.

Rating: C+. This was much better than I expected which is what I've said for both Sick Boy matches I've seen. He looks good in the ring and can fly through the air for a guy of his size. The Diamond Cutter to end it looked great as Sick Boy's head bounced off the mat to knock him out cold.

The Flock decides not to jump Page.

Here's JJ Dillon with an announcement: Nash is being fined \$50,000 for his powerbomb on Monday and if he does it again, the fines will grow.

Meng vs. Jim Duggan

Duggan wins a quick slugout and takes it to the floor where he whips Meng

into the steps and beats on him with Jimmy Hart's jacket. Back inside and Meng does what he does best: hit Duggan in the head. It has little effect on the thickheaded Duggan so Meng keeps pounding away. They slug it out until Duggan misses a charge into the corner, allowing Meng to put on a nerve hold. Back up and a double clothesline puts both guys down, allowing Hart to get up on the apron with the 2x4. Duggan intercepts the throw and cracks it over Meng's back but chases after Hart instead. Back in and the Tongan Death Grip ends Jim.

Rating: C. This was far better than I was expecting it to be with Duggan looking much better than I would have expected him to. Meng continues to get small pushes every now and then, which is likely to build him up for a feeding to a bigger name later on. Both guys were working hard here and it was better than it should have been.

Raven vs. Marty Jannetty

Anything goes again and Marty's music still doesn't fit him at all. Jannetty takes him into the corner to start and dropkicks Raven to the outside. He pounds on Raven on the floor but gets sent hard into the post to change momentum. Raven throws in a chair for the drop toehold and Marty is in big trouble. Marty hits a quick bulldog and slams Raven's head into the mat a few times for two but Raven is smiling. A superkick puts Raven down and the top rope fist gets two, but Raven dropkicks the chair into Marty's face to knock him silly. The Evenflow DDT is good for the pin for Raven.

Rating: C-. Another decent match here with Marty looking decent in defeat. Raven smiling while he's in pain is still very creepy and fits his character perfectly. The Raven's Rules all the time stuff isn't a problem because the weapons and violence aren't the focus of the matches. That DDT looked great too.

Jerry Lee Lewis is here.

Bill Goldberg vs. Yuji Nagata

The pops are getting louder and louder. Nagata goes straight at him but Goldberg chokes him down. Goldberg takes him down with a quick leglock but Nagata makes the ropes. Yuji's slam is countered into a spinning neckbreaker and it's the spear and Jackhammer for another fast pin.

Goldberg vs. Meng is announced for Saturday Night. There's the bigger name Meng was being set up for.

We recap Savage's rant against Hogan, Bischoff and the rest of the NWO from Nitro.

Here's Hall for the survey with the NWO taking the crowd tonight. Hall wants to know when he gets his title shot from World War III but now it's time to bring out Dusty Rhodes. Dusty talks about corporate America tearing down what he built in 1991 and taking away the tradition of professional wrestling. He lived on the 12th floor and got tired of dealing with the suits every day. Now he's tired of carrying Tony Schiavone for the last four years.

Then Dusty started hearing from Eric Bischoff and realized that the NWO is why you're here tonight. Dusty says the NWO is the future and they've gotten Dusty the biggest checks of his career. This time, WCW isn't going to make any comeback with anybody because the NWO is going to crush them all. "You hear that marks on the internet?" Also, the powerbomb should be reinstated because a 500lb man shouldn't be in the ring if he can't protect himself. Dusty Rhodes ladies and gentlemen.

Scott Hall vs. Disco Inferno

Hall slaps Disco around to start and does the Giant mocking bit. A quick attempt at the Outsider's Edge is countered and Disco hits the Chartbuster out of nowhere. Dusty puts the foot on the ropes and brings

Hall out to the floor for a chat. Back in and Hall pounds away on Disco before hitting the fallaway slam and the Edge for the pin.

Here's Nick Patrick for the first time since he was suspended. Patrick insists that the count at Starrcade was a normal count and that Bret should be suspended, not him. He's going to have his lawyers look into this and wants to referee the rematch to prove how awesome he is.

TV Title: Booker T vs. Perry Saturn

Booker is defending and is in blue Harlem Heat attire instead of his usual singles tights. Saturn pounds him down in the corner to start but Booker comes back with right hands of his own. Apparently Saturn is getting this show because Martel has a concussion. A powerslam gets two for the champion and they head to the outside with Saturn being sent into the barricade. Back inside and Saturn gets two off a brainbuster but crotches himself on the middle rope. Booker hits the side kick and ax kick but has to fight off the Flock. Martel comes out to help but Booker sends Saturn into him and rolls Saturn up to retain.

Rating: C. This was your usual fast paced match between the two as the three way feud is starting to develop. Booker is nailing the singles push now and has transitioned from the tag team ranks with ease. I'm also surprised at how well Martel has fit into this feud as I didn't remember him being anything at all in his return push.

We see the end of Nitro with Hall and Hogan turning their backs on Savage.

Eddie Guerrero/Chris Jericho vs. Dean Malenko/Chris Benoit

This should be awesome. Jericho and Malenko get things going but the fans are all over Eddie. Dean quickly takes him down to start but it's off to Eddie to send Dean into the corner. A rollup gets two for Eddie but he

walks into a powerslam for two. Off to Benoit vs. Jericho with Benoit hitting a hard clothesline to take over. Jericho comes right back with a delayed vertical suplex and some chops in the corner. You know Benoit is cool with that and takes over with chops of his own.

Jericho comes right back with a German suplex and the Lionsault for two before Guerrero comes back in. Benoit tries the Crossface but Jericho makes the save as everything breaks down. Dean throws Guerrero into a northern lights suplex but Jericho breaks up the Cloverleaf attempt. Jericho hits a missile dropkick on Dean but Malenko reverses the Liontamer into a rollup for two. Dean hooks a superplex on Jericho and Benoit adds the Swan Dive. Eddie tries a Frog Splash on Malenko but only hits feet, allowing Benoit to hook the Crossface on Jericho for the win.

Rating: B. This was a six and a half minute match with the action of a match twice that long. These guys were arguably the most valuable guys in WCW for a long time as you could just throw them out there in any combination and get a good match. Benoit and Malenko looked very good together as a team.

Post match Benoit says his chapter with Raven has come to an end. Tenay asks Benoit why he's never had a title shot but Benoit says he doesn't need one. DDP pops up in the crowd (Marshall: "is that Scott Hall?") and says that the promoters don't see Benoit as a main eventer. They didn't see Page as a main eventer either, but Page is interested in the idea. If Benoit wants a shot at the US Title, all he has to do is ask. Benoit agrees to the title match a week from tonight.

Tag Titles: Steiner Brothers vs. Kevin Nash/Konnan

Konnan gets to defend the belts because of Wolfpack Rules. Rick starts off with Konnan with Steiner pounding him down into the mat and hooking an STF of all things. Konnan makes the rope but gets caught in a release German suplex to send him over to Nash. The Steiners knock Nash to the floor and do their signature pose.

They head back inside and Nash pounds on Rick in the corner with the knee lifts and elbows to the head. Konnan comes in for a stump puller of all things but Scott breaks it up. Kevin gets the tag and gets caught by a Steiner Line but here's Buff Bagwell to challenge Scott to a posedown. Back in the ring, Nash hits Rick with the belt for a DQ.

Rating: D. This didn't have time to go anywhere and was mainly storyline stuff anyway. The Scott vs. Buff posedown stuff is fine as a catalyst for the Steiner Brothers' split which had to happen at some point. I'm not wild on the Wolfpack Rules idea as those usually only work when there are two members of a team, but the NWO could pretty much make up whatever rules they wanted around this time.

Post match Nash powerbombs the referee and is taken away by security. Nash: "Make sure Jack Ruby isn't out there. That's how Oswald got it."

Overall Rating: C+. This was the same formula as last week and it still works quite well. They're using Thunder to focus on the midcard and it offers a nice contrast to the storyline heavy Nitro. The lack of Hogan and Sting allows the show to build on other stories which makes for a more interesting show. Good stuff again this week.

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On This Day: June 21, 2012 –

Impact Wrestling: Everything Is The Same

Impact Wrestling

Date: June 21, 2012

Location: Impact Zone, Orlando, Florida

Commentators: Mike Tenay, Tazz

It's Open Fight Night 3 and the BFG Series gets going tonight as well. The two main focuses of the show though are going to be Aries decision about forfeiting the X Title in exchange for a world title match and Dixie revealing what is going on with her and AJ. TNA is on a total roll at this point so hopefully they can keep things going. Oh and we might be able to find out who attacked Sting. Let's get to it.

Here's Hogan to open things up. He isn't going to give the masked men any more publicity but things will be made right for Sting. That's enough about that though so let's talk about Austin's choice. Here's Aries to answer Hogan's ultimatum. He talks about being given two options, either to drop the title for a shot or keep this title. Aries says he has Option C: he'll hand over the title for his title shot, but every year the X Champion gets the same option at Destination X. Hogan says ok, and here's Roode.

Bobby freaks out and asks if Hogan and Aries are kidding him. He told Hogan to stay in the office a long time ago. Roode wants to know what Aries thinks he's doing because the X Title means nothing to Roode. He talks about how he won't be a footnote and says he'll keep his title at Destination X. Aries says this is Open Fight Night so let's do it right now. They brawl in the aisle until the agents break it up. Once they're split up, here's Anderson, who says he'll win the BFG Series and face the winner.

Bound For Glory Series: Mr. Anderson vs. Christopher Daniels

They're going to have everyone face everyone in this which is a BIG improvement over last year where they seemingly had people fighting at

random. Also every match has a ten minute time limit. Daniels works on the arm of Anderson which may have been injured by Roode last week. An elbow to the face puts Daniels down but the Mic Check is countered into a Blue Thudner Bomb. Anderson pops back up again and hits his spinning neckbreaker into the Mic Check for the pin at 3:04, giving Anderson 7 points.

Rating: C-. This was barely long enough to rate which makes it hard to talk about. This is the first part of a LONG series so it's hard to say where things are going from here. Anderson seems to be getting a push in this as he's coming in after being the #1 contender. I'm not wild on either of these guys but how much can you complain about in three minutes?

AJ thinks there's another way to do this. Dixie isn't sure.

Brooke is in the back with the Knockouts who might be getting the title match tonight. The girls have to tell her why they want the title. ODB says she's different than everyone else. Madison says she's held the title forever and Brooke tells her to drop the crush. Mickie says she's the best female wrestler in the world and Madison says she's the second longest reigning champion ever. Madison gets thrown out. Velvet didn't say anything.

Robbie challenges anyone in the BFG Series to a match.

Bound For Glory Series: Robbie E. vs. Kurt Angle

Suplex, Angle Slam, ankle lock, ten points for Angle in 31 seconds.

Video on Taeler Hendrix who is the Gut Check girl tonight.

Here's Magnus who says he's going to pick his opponent for a BFG Series match here. Women around the world want a shot at him so he knows what it's like to have women trouble. He doesn't go after other men's wives though, so AJ, get out here.

Bound For Glory Series: AJ Styles vs. Magnus

AJ charges into the ring and starts fast. A backbreaker puts Magnus down

but AJ changes his mind before going up. Magnus pops up and catches AJ's cross body into a suplex. Cool counter. AJ snaps off his dropkick but the Pele misses. Off to a chinlock which AJ breaks before Daniels and Kaz come out with more papers. The distraction allows Magnus to hit a Juvy Driver for the pin at 2:31 for seven points.

Taeler Hendrix vs. Tara

Gut Check time. Tara suplexes her down but gets caught in a quick sunset flip for two. Tara chokes her in the corner for awhile before getting caught in a Stratusphere. Joseph Park is being taken out for some reason. Hendrix comes back with some clotheslines but a spin kick misses. Widow's Peak and it's over at 2:36.

Back from a break and Park wants to know why he's being taken to the back. It turns out to be a trap set by Ray, who yells at Park. Park talks about Ray beating him up last week and gets shoved for it. If Ray ever sees either of them again, it'll be the last time they're ever seen.

Bound For Glory Series: Samoa Joe vs. James Storm

Joe pounds him down into the corner and hits his kick to take Storm down. The armbar is countered as Storm makes the rope so Joe slaps on a nerve hold. Storm fights out of it but walks into a snap powerslam for two, followed by an armbar. They trade forearms but Joe goes back to the arm to slow Storm down. There's a crossface chickenwing but Storm breaks that quickly as well. The Cowboy goes up top but gets kicked in the head. No MuscleBuster but Joe hooks the Clutch. That gets broken up and the Last Call ends this at 3:56.

Rating: C. This wasn't bad but Joe seemed to be outmatched by Storm at almost every turn. I like Joe being all fired up again and he looks like he's lost some weight on top of that. Storm is pretty clearly the favorite to win the whole series which is probably the right move, but again I don't know if they need to spend three months building that up when he has a built in story already.

We recap the AJ/Dixie stuff which has been going on for awhile now.

Back to the Knockouts Reality Show with Velvet saying she never got a rematch. ODB gets thrown out because of Eric Young. Next.

Bound For Glory Series: D'Angelo Dinero vs. Bully Ray

This is another call out, this time by Bully. Ray jumps Pope to start and gets some quick two counts. A boot to the face puts Dinero down but a splash misses for Ray. Dinero comes back with some elbows but Ray hits a corner splash. As he pounds away in the corner, here's Abyss in the crowd. He tells Ray to bring it and the DDE sends Ray to the floor. Abyss comes over the rail and goes after Ray, who gets back in the ring but walks into an STO for the pin at 3:45.

Rating: C-. Not much here as these short matches are getting a little annoying. Abyss vs. Ray is still probably the most interesting story on the show right now which is covering a lot of territory. Pope was pretty much there to fill in a spot and there's nothing wrong with that, but I'm not sure if he's going to be able to do that forever.

Hogan makes Hardy vs. RVD as the main event because they're the only two BFG people that haven't fought tonight.

Here's the Montgomery Gentry video with Velvet in it.

Knockouts Title: Miss Tessmacher vs. Mickie James

Ok then. Feeling out process to start with Mickie taking her down to the mat pretty quickly. She hooks a chinlock with a bridge and even adds in a cheap shot. Mickie hasn't ever been heel in TNA that I remember so that could be something interesting to see. Brooke gets in a few shots including a facejam out of the corner but Mickie takes her down with that spin kick of hers for two. Tessmacher hooks a sunset flip out of nowhere for the pin at 5:20.

Rating: D+. The match was nothing of note but it was fuel for Mickie's apparent heel turn. See, this is a big difference in what you get in today's TNA than what you would likely get under Russo's TNA. Here, Mickie has had little things like the music video going to Velvet to start her down this path before she just does it. With the old system of

stuff, it would happen all of a sudden and you would have to fill in the gaps yourself. Here, it's slowly built up and we get the payoff for the build. That's called good storytelling.

Bound For Glory Series: Rob Van Dam vs. Jeff Hardy

Van Dam takes him down with a leg scissors but Jeff speeds things up, hitting a legdrop to the back of Van Dam's head and a pair of dropkicks for two. Hardy sends him to the floor but van Dam comes off the top with the jumping kick. Rolling Thunder gets two as does the split legged moonsault. Hardy comes back with a bulldog but the Swanton misses. Van Dam goes up and tries a 450 of all things, but Hardy moves. DDT gets two and the Twist gets the pin at 3:48.

Rating: C+. This was pretty good but again the shortness of it isn't helping anything. The 450 was a nice surprise and it's good to see someone getting a clean pin in the main event here. Granted that's what's been happening lately though so I can't complain much in that regard either. Good stuff here, but way too short.

Here are AJ and Dixie for the big reveal. The fans still cheer for Styles because he's their hero. Dixie has trouble talking and AJ says we don't have to do this. Some woman comes out and says she wants to do this. Both of them seem to know who she is and she seems to be pregnant. She says she's known both of them forever and says they've both helped her a lot. She's going to tell us the truth: they're not having an affair.

This chick says she's an addict and she's stolen money to pay for it. She's woken up with a stranger more than once and had to go to AJ and Dixie for help. AJ took her to rehab and the video/photos were about her. Daniels is freaking out in the back and here he comes. AJ runs him over as the girls get out. Here's Kaz as well and AJ beats him up too. AJ kills Kaz with a powerbomb and Peles Daniels. He pounds away on him as the show ends.

Overall Rating: B-. I was happy with the amount of wrestling we got, although the longest match being less than six minutes if I remember right didn't help much. I like the way this show is going lately though as Hogan has been kept to a MUCH more reasonable amount and the angles

have been given time to grow and develop, which was probably the biggest issue with Russo's booking. Another solid episode here.

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Smackdown – June 21, 2013: Get Some Butter Because Smackdown Is On A Roll

Smackdown

Date: June 21, 2013

Location: Nutter Center, Dayton, Ohio

Commentators: Michael Cole, John Bradshaw Layfield

We're past Payback now and the main story is the double turn by Ziggler and new world champion Alberto Del Rio. That's the best outcome as Del Rio was only working to an extent as a face while Ziggler was getting over more and more as a good guy. Other than that we have Bryan vs. Orton tonight in a continuation/rematch from their stopped match on Raw. Let's get to it.

We open with a recap of the results from Payback. That's one thing I liked about WCW: other than the main events, they made sure to not tell you who won a lot of the matches until the replays were off PPV. Now you have clips of the endings to most of the matches, leaving no reason to buy the replay.

Here's Daniel Bryan to open the show. Until Monday, he had never had a match stopped due to injury in his entire career. The doctor asked if he could continue and he said YES, but the company line was that they were

worried for his health. Realistically though, they stopped the match because they think he's the weak link and not tough enough.

The worst person in all of this was Randy Orton and we get a clip of Orton helping Bryan up after the match. Bryan says that if Orton thought he was the strong link, he would have begged for the match to keep going. The match should have kept going, but Bryan's YES chant is cut off by Randy Orton.

Orton comes to the ring shaking his head and mouthing the words "you're wrong." Randy says the match was stopped for Bryan's well being, not because anyone thought he was weak. Bryan kept coming during the match and that made Orton respect him even more. When Orton helped him up, it was out of respect, not pity. Bryan yells that Orton is patronizing him after giving Bryan respect for beating Shield last week. Orton says fine, if Bryan wants a rematch he can have one tonight. This time though, Bryan will be carried out.

Sheamus vs. Cody Rhodes

Cody drew the long straw to get this match tonight. Sheamus gets two off a quick suplex but Cody elbows out of the fireman's carry roll. Cody goes to the middle rope but gets snapmared down before rolling to the floor. Rhodes sends Sheamus into the barricade before stomping away back inside. A running knee to the head gets two for Cody and it's off to an armbar.

Sheamus fights up but misses a charge into the corner, giving Rhodes two off a rollup. The slingshot shoulder is countered into a Fujiwara Armbar but Cody just lets it go. Sheamus shrugs all of the offense off and hits a sledge to the Cody's face. The fireman's carry slam looks to set up White Noise but Cody rolls out, only to be pulled into the Cloverleaf for the tap out at 5:37.

Rating: D. This was bad even by this pair's standards. The total lack of selling of the arm by Sheamus was surprising as Cody worked on it for a few minutes before Sheamus just fought back like it was nothing. The main problem here though is the same we've seen with every one on one match between the Scholars and Sheamus: the winner is never in doubt.

Sandow jumps Sheamus post match.

Wyatt Family promo.

Intercontinental Title: Curtis Axel vs. Wade Barrett

The title looks good on Axel. Miz is on commentary for this rare heel vs. heel match. Axel grabs a headlock to start but Wade forearm him down for two. Curtis comes back with a good looking dropkick to take over and drops some elbows to the chest for two. Wade grabs a quick suplex for two of his own as the announcers debate if Barrett should have gotten his rematch on Monday. Barrett hits his big boot to send Axel out to the floor and another big boot hits for two back inside. Axel avoids a middle rope elbow and hits a Hennig necksnap followed by the McGillicutter to retain at 4:40.

Rating: D+. This was an 80s punch/kick for the first few minutes until Barrett turned things up a bit at the end. Axel pinning Wade clean is an important step for him as now he's pinned the former champion without any help at all. It would appear that Miz is next but hopefully there's more to the title after that match.

Post match Miz gets in the ring to stare down Axel but Heyman gets the champion out of the way.

Video on Mark Henry's fake retirement and attack on Cena from Raw.

AJ Lee vs. Natalya

Non-title. Natalya immediately takes AJ down but can't hook the Sharpshooter. Instead she puts on a strange looking leglock where Natalya's knees are between AJ's knees and stretching them apart with both girls on their backs. AJ makes the rope and puts on a quick sleeper....as we take a break? In this match? Back with Natalya getting two off a snap suplex and a clothesline. Natalya shouts that AJ has no respect but AJ counters a slam into the Black Widow for the pin at 2:20 shown of 4:50.

Layla and Kaitlyn are watching in the back when Aksana comes up and calls Kaitlyn trash. Kaitlyn snaps and beats Aksana up before pouring trash on

her.

Chris Jericho vs. Alberto Del Rio

Non-title again. Jericho takes him into the corner to start and chokes Del Rio on the middle rope before getting two off a knee to the back. Del Rio gets a boot up in the corner to drop Jericho but misses a running kick and falls out to the floor. Jericho hits the springboard dropkick to drop Alberto again. A Ricardo distraction lets the champion get in a cheap shot to take over as we take a break.

Back with Del Rio sending Chris back to the floor and whipping him into the barricade. They head back inside and Alberto misses a charge into the post to shift momentum again. The top rope ax handle looks to set up the Walls but Alberto spins out and kicks Jericho in the head for two. The corner enziguri misses though and Jericho hits the running bulldog and Lionsault. Jericho loads up the Walls but Del Rio counters into the cross armbreaker which is countered into the Walls but Chris has to go after Ricardo. Jericho puts Rodriguez in the Liontamer but Zigler runs in for the DQ at 5:34 shown of 8:04.

Rating: C+. The sequence right before the ending was good but I'm not wild on the ending. It wouldn't hurt Jericho to lose here and make Del Rio look good, even if it was by cheating. The Zigler vs. Del Rio feud is getting good in a hurry and the match should be a solid blowoff. This was fine for a TV match though and could have been better with more time.

Del Rio runs off and Jericho gives Zigler a Codebreaker post match. Jericho leaves and the champion comes back to pick the bones with a hard kick to Zigler's head. The audience sounded like they were looking at a heel turn by Jericho but I don't think it was meant to be one.

Drew McIntyre vs. Christian

Christian sends him to the floor and hits a baseball slide to take Drew down. Back in and Christian tags him with an uppercut but dives into a spinning sitout Rock Bottom from McIntyre for two. Not that it matters much as Christian takes out the other Band members and hits the Killswitch for the pin at 1:50.

Post match Christian says it feels great to be back here for one more match. Cue Shield to lay Christian out with the TripleBomb.

Video on Brock Lesnar.

We recap the events of Raw with Punk splitting with Heyman and fighting Del Rio in the main event. Alberto walked out on the match and was jumped by Zigler, only to have Lesnar come out and attack Punk.

Heyman doesn't want to talk about the Punk issues so he turns the interview around on Renee Young, asking her a lot of personal questions about topics like her father and her ex-fiance. Heyman suggests that next time, she should talk about Curtis Axel.

Randy Orton vs. Daniel Bryan

Bryan charges right at Orton and they slug it out in the corner. Orton throws him to the mat and stomps away but Bryan gets up and fires right hands. It's rare for Bryan to throw punches and they're better than I expected. Randy knocks him right back down but misses a knee drop to the face. Bryan kicks away and hooks a leg lock, only to have Orton counter into a headlock. Orton blocks the NO Lock and hits a backbreaker to finally give them a breather. The first few minutes of the match were continuous punching and holds.

Orton drapes Bryan ribs first onto the top rope and suplexes him over the top and out to the floor as we take a break. Back with Bryan fighting out of a superplex and dropping Orton with a missile dropkick. Daniel fires off the kicks in the corner and hits a running dropkick for two. Bryan moonsaults over Orton out of the corner but walks into the snap powerslam for two. Orton gets caught in a backslide for two and Bryan fires off the kicks to the chest and head for a two count.

Bryan goes up again but gets crotched and superplexed down for a very close two. The Elevated DDT connects but Bryan rolls to the floor to avoid the RK0. Orton drops Bryan back first onto the barricade but Bryan shoves him into the barricade. The flying knee off the apron sets up the FLYING GOAT and Bryan beats the count back in at 10:36 shown of 13:06.

Rating: B-. This was a nice back and forth match and they did a good job of making Bryan look strong after last week's big win over the Shield. The idea of Bryan being able to get back in at the alst second kept both guys look strong which is a good idea for Orton going forward.

Bryan wants the match restarted but Orton just stares at him as the show ends.

Overall Rating: B-. This was another good show as we had some solid action and nothing bad on the entire show save for a dull Sheamus vs. Rhodes match. Bryan continues to be so over it's unreal and the Ziggler face push is coming quickly. The WWE is starting to get on a roll which is a good sign after a very dull spring.

Results

Sheamus b. Cody Rhodes – Cloverleaf

Curtis Axel b. Wade Barrett – McGillicutter

AJ Lee b. Natalya – Black Widow

Alberto Del Rio b. Chris Jericho via DQ when Dolph Ziggler interefered

Christian b. Drew McIntyre – Killswitch

Daniel Bryan b. Randy Orton via countout

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Thought of the Day: Who Said The 80s Were Dead?

The Hogan formula is still alive and well. This string of title defenses for Cena is right out of Hogan's monster of the month playbook from his big title reign. Cena has already beaten Ryback and Henry is up next. neither feud has gotten a ton of TV time and the matches are rarely in doubt, but Cena is the perfect guy to vanquish monsters until he's ready for a big feud.

On This Day: June 20, 2012 – NXT: When The Awesome Began

NXT

Date: June 20, 2012

Location: Full Sail University, Winter Park, Florida

Commentators: Jim Ross, William Regal

It's FINALLY a new season of this shindig and things are really shaken up. We're permanently in Florida now with FCW and NXT merging and I can't say I'm complaining a bit. These will now be up on Thursdays instead of Wednesdays as they only air internationally at the moment, so I have to wait for the videos to surface online. I don't know what to expect from this so let's get to it.

The opening video is about how each generation has its own stars that define their era. NXT is about those that strive to make their own history. Cool video and this looks great so far.

Regal welcomes us to the show in a voiceover. I really like the arena as

there's a small Titantron which looks like it belongs in a more intimate setting.

Here's JR to welcome us to the show. He brings out Dusty Rhodes who apparently is the new General Manager of NXT. The main event is McGillicutty vs. Kidd and Dusty is very excited about it. You can say a lot about Dusty Rhodes and a lot of it is critical, but you can NEVER say he comes off as bored or dull. The guy always sounds like he cares about what he's talking about and that makes a ton of difference.

Video on Bo Dallas which I believe we saw last week. His dad is Mike Rotunda, more famous as IRS. He talks about smiling all the time and being ready to go at any time.

We get the Vince Hospital clip from Raw.

Bo Dallas vs. Rick Victor

Regal and JR are on commentary so I can't complain there. The crowd sounds fired up already and I'm really digging this so far. It looks different from the regular WWE setup which is a nice change of pace. Dallas controls with some armdrags to start but Victor chops away in the corner. Snap powerslam puts Victor down and a spear gets the pin for Dallas at 2:17. I didn't see enough of Dallas here to tell what I thought of him but it wasn't bad.

Dallas says you just saw his game plan being executed and that this is just the beginning. He talks about his smile some more. Dallas is only 22 and looks even younger than that, but that's the point of being in the minors like this. He has potential at least.

Video on Seth Rollins who talks about being the change we've been waiting for. He debuts next week.

Video on Antonio Cesaro and how awesome he is. He's The Future and will also debut next week.

Damien Sandow vs. Jason Jordan

The announcer messes up Sandow's hometown, calling it Palto Alo. Sandow

does his usual schtick, talking about how this is an unworthy opponent. Therefore, he won't be wrestling tonight. No match.

Video on The Ascension, which is a stable I've heard a lot of good things about. They're standing on a rooftop and say they will rise. There are only two here instead of the three that I believe they usually have.

Raw ReBound is about John vs. John.

The Ascension vs. Mike Dalton/CJ Parker

Ascension is Conor O'Brien and Kenneth Cameron. Their entrance is pretty awesome with music that sounds like something out of a thriller movie's trailer and blue lighting. They actually look intimidating and above all else, they look DIFFERENT. That's been missing so badly on this show as everyone is just out there in trunks wrestling. Cameron and Parker start things off and the Ascension controls early. Off to O'Brien who stomps away on Parker in the corner. Ascension hits rapid fire elbows followed by a jawbreaker from Cameron into a flapjack by O'Brien for the pin at 1:11. I like what I see again. The finisher is called The Downcast.

Video on Bray Wyatt, more commonly known as Husky Harris. He's in a small town in the south and says that it's time for parents to quit lying to their children because monsters like him are real. I've heard rave reviews about this character and I think I can see why.

Derrick Bateman is looking for Johnny Curtis in the bathroom where Curtis is brushing his teeth. They leave the room together and Bateman looks annoyed. Apparently they're the main event next week. Curtis washes his hands on Bateman's shirt. These two still annoy me.

Tyson Kidd vs. Michael McGillicutty

Kidd works over the arm to start as the fans chant USA. McGillicutty runs Kidd over and counters an O'Connor Roll, only to have Kidd fire off kicks. Michael bails to the floor for a breather before locking up in a test of strength. Kidd climbs the ropes to escape and hooks the armbar again. Kidd throws him over the top and face first into the apron. That's followed by a suicide dive and we take a break.

Back with Tyson stomping McGillicutty down in the corner and hitting a leg lariat for two. McGillicutty sends him to the apron and hits a knee lift, followed by an elevated neckbreaker for two. We hit the chinlock but Kidd gets back up quickly. Kidd hooks a sunset flip but McGillicutty hits a clothesline to the back of the head for two. McGillicutty puts him in the Tree of Woe and chokes away.

Kidd gets put in the Tree of Woe again but his baseball slide misses, giving us his pop's signature crotch shot into the post. Kidd speeds up and fires off a bunch of kicks including a dropkick to the side of the head for two. McGillicutty counters a springboard clothesline with a dropkick for two.

Kidd comes back with a moonsault press for two. The fans are really getting into this. Dungeon Lock doesn't work and McGillicutty hits a Saito Suplex for two. McGillicutty puts on a half crab which is supposed to be called a Sharpshooter. The Perfectplex is countered into a small package for two. Kidd grabs the Dungeon Lock for the tap at 14:07.

Rating: B. These two continue to have some excellent chemistry together. Their styles mesh just right and they have yet to fail to have a good match. Kidd is in that weird spot where he's not going to be able to be a full time guy on the main rosters but he's great for something like this. McGillicutty is about the same but he's not quite as good. Together though they're a solid combination.

Overall Rating: B. For a debut episode, they nailed this one pretty well. Based on this episode, it's a great upgrade over what I spent a year watching. It's nice to see some fresh faces and above all else, this show had an energy to it. I want to see more of this and that's the most important thing for the first episode of a show like this. Good stuff and I'm excited about this show.

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NXT – June 19, 2013: It's Morphing Time!

NXT

Date: June 19, 2013

Location: Full Sail University, Winter Park, Florida

Commentators: Tom Phillips, Brad Maddox

We're into the Bo Dallas era on NXT as he won the title from Langston last week. Due to the title situation the rest of the main stories have been put on hold for the last few weeks. The only other major story going on is the Women's Title tournament which is only halfway through the first round. Hopefully things pick up a bit tonight. Let's get to it.

We open with a recap of Langston losing the title to Dallas last week. They treat the title win like a big feel good moment even though the fans seem to universally hate Dallas.

Welcome Home.

Adrian Neville vs. Bray Wyatt

This is a result of the long feud the Wyatt Family had with Neville/Oliver Gray over the tag titles as well as Adrian eliminating Wyatt from the battle royal a few weeks ago. Neville pounds away to start but a hard shot to the face puts him down. Adrian fights out of the corner but gets elbowed down for two. Bray sends him to the apron but charges into a kick to the head, only to have the Wyatt Family break up the corkscrew shooting star for the DQ at 2:07.

The Family comes in for the beatdown but Kassius Ohno and Corey Graves come in for the save. Dusty Rhodes comes out to make a six man tag for the main event.

Dolph Ziggler tells us not to try this at home.

Angelo Dawkins vs. Sami Zayn

This is Angelo's debut. Dawkins tells Zayn to bring it on but gets caught in some crisp armdrags to send him into the corner. The powerfully built Dawkins slams Zayn down and we hit the chinlock. Sami fights up but Angelo knocks him into the corner with a hard elbow to the face. Dawkins charges into a leg lariat and Sami climbs the corner for the tornado DDT to pin Angelo at 2:57. Both guys looked good here.

Video on Leo Kruger who says he isn't as creepy as people think he is. He's lived a peculiar life which has made him an exotic human being. Everything is about to change.

NXT Women's Title Tournament First Round: Sasha Banks vs. Summer Rae

Rae gets a quick two off a Russian legsweep as the fans are behind Sasha. Summer stomps on her in the corner and pulls her to the middle for a two count. A modified Stroke gets two for Rae before she pulls on Sasha's arms and puts her feet on Sasha's shoulders for a painful looking submission hold. Banks counters into a rollup for two and the match turns into a catfight. They slap it out and Sasha hits a Sin Cara style armdrag out of the corner for two. Summer comes back with a reverse DDT into a standing legdrop for the pin at 3:32.

Rating: D+. Summer looks great in her outfits but the work in the ring isn't nearly as good. Paige carried her to a good match but Sasha isn't ready to do something at that kind of level. The match wasn't horrible but Summer's time on offense didn't look very good at all. You can see

Rae vs. Paige for the title coming though and there's nothing wrong with that.

Here are the updated brackets:

Paige

Alicia Fox

Summer Rae

Emma/Aksana

Xavier Woods says we might remember him from episodes such as #151 where he beat El Local or #155 where he beat El Local. Tonight he makes his return and a beep of his wrist communicator (same ringtone as the communicators the Power Rangers used in the old days) says it's time to go. "It's morphing time."

Xavier Woods vs. Jake Carter

Woods has been gone becoming a Jenga world champion and winning a Nintendo 64 tournament. He takes Carter down by the arm but gets caught by a hard shoulder block and a headscissors. Off to an armbar on Carter as Maddox talks about Woods' plan to find and marry Topanga from Boy Meets World. I can't believe I've reached the age where my childhood has a nostalgia character. Carter fights up and hits a Hennig neck snap for two. Xavier comes back with a dropkick and the IT'S MORPHING TIME rolling clothesline before Lost in the Woods (Gail Kim's Eat Defeat) ends Carter at 3:10.

Rating: D+. The match was nothing of note but this is the kind of fun character that is going to appeal to late 20s nerds who miss the 1990s. Woods has been around before and it's been long enough that I had forgotten how much fun a guy like him can be. The match wasn't all that

great, but the fun carried this.

Sami Zayn says that the match with Dawkins wasn't impressive. It was a message for Antonio Cesaro because Zayn wants a rubber match because Cesaro attacked him after their match last week. Your move Antonio.

Dusty Rhodes comes in to see Sylvester LeFort. Next week Dawkins and Garrett have a #1 contenders match against Ohno and Graves for a shot at the Wyatt Family.

We get a video of Bo Dallas shouting in a car, saying that he won't be at the show this week because he's been doing so much stuff since winning the title. We get photos of him at Disney World like he promised. "Don't stop Bo-Leaving!." He'll be back next week. This has to be a heel turn.

Langston is back next week as well.

Wyatt Family vs. Kassius Ohno/Adrian Neville/Corey Graves

Harper starts with Graves with Corey going straight at the big man. A headlock brings Harper to the corner and it's off to Ohno to pound away. Harper gets in a right hand and it's off to Rowan for a slugout. Ohno comes back with a running boot to the face and it's back to Adrian. Wyatt comes in and this a running splash in the corner but Neville counters a slingshot into a double stomp into Bray's chest to take over.

Bray punches him down and brings Harper back in but Adrian hooks a quick hurricanrana to take Luke down. Back to Graves as things stay fast. Graves goes to the corner and wraps Luke up in a figure four neck lock over the top rope but gets dragged into the wrong corner as we take a break. Back with Harper dragging Adrian to the corner for a heavy beating from Wyatt.

Off to a chinlock on Neville as Bray has a creepy look on his face.

Graves fights up and tries a sunset flip but has to avoid a seated splash from Wyatt. The hot tag brings in Ohno to face Rowan with the Family member launching Kassius over the top and out to the floor. It's back to Harper for some choking and a hard uppercut. Ohno is down but Harper would rather stand around than go for a cover. Some elbow drops get two for Luke and it's back to Rowan to continue the beating.

A pumphandle backbreaker gets two on Kassius but they ram heads off an Irish whip and everyone is down. Double tags bring in Bray and Adrian with Neville cleaning house. A standing shooting star press gets two on Wyatt followed by a big dive from Neville to take out Rowan, Harper and Ohno. Back in and Harper pulls Bray away from the Red Arrow (corkscrew shooting star), allowing Wyatt to pin Adrian at 9:00 shown of 11:30.

Rating: C. The ending was a mess but the rest of the match was a good old fashioned six man tag. The Family continues to be dominant and follows a formula similar to the Shield: you can beat them when you split them up but when you have the team united, they're nearly unbeatable. Bray looks awesome at this point though with the looks on his face being very disturbing when he's in the ring.

Overall Rating: C+. This is what NXT does better than anything: keep things moving and don't spent a ton of time on any given story. We also got something set up for next week in the #1 contenders tag match and the returns of Langston and Dallas. Good episode this week with a mix of fun and action in an entertaining hour.

Results

Adrian Neville b. Bray Wyatt via DQ when the Wyatt Family interfered

Sami Zayn b. Angelo Dawkins – Tornado DDT

Summer Rae b. Sasha Banks – Standing legdrop

Xavier Woods b. Jake Carter – Lost in the Woods

Wyatt Family b. Corey Graves/Kassius Ohno/Adrian Neville

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Impact Wrestling – June 20, 2013: The Summer Looks Bright

Impact Wrestling

Date: June 20, 2013

Location: Peoria Civic Center, Peoria, Illinois

Commentators: Mike Tenay, Taz

Tonight is the start of the BFG Series which will run for the next three months heading into the biggest show of the year in October. Perhaps more interesting though is Sting reforming the Main Event Mafia tonight to aid him in his war against Aces and 8's. It's also the return of Open Fight Night as the summer begins for TNA. Let's get to it.

Sting arrives to open the show, dressed to the nines in a suit and sunglasses sans paint.

We open in the arena with every BFG Series member other than Hardy and Roode. Hogan comes out to hype up Open Fight Night before calling out the two missing competitors. Everyone in the Series will get to have a match tonight and it's Hardy who gets the first pick due to winning a fan vote. Before he can make his pick though, Austin Aries cuts him off.

Austin says he'd love to be the man that gets to face Hardy first but Jeff is too scared to do that. Christopher Daniels warns Hardy not to pick either he or Kazarian unless Jeffery wants to suffer the most

demoralizing defeat of his career to start the Series. Hardy finally gets to talk and picks Bobby Roode in a not very surprising announcement. Jeff tells the Creatures to mount up and everyone brawls as we go to a break.

For clarity's sake, every match in the Series tonight comes with a callout beforehand. I won't bother recapping them as it's just guys saying who they want to fight. The person listed first is the person who got to call the second person out.

Here's how the scoring works for the Series:

10 – Submission

7 – Pinfall

5 – Countout

2 – DQ Victory

2 – Draw

-10 – DQ Loss

Also each match has a 15 minute time limit.

Bound For Glory Series: Mr. Anderson vs. Joseph Park

Anderson takes him to the mat with a headlock to start before slapping Park in the back of the head. He lets Park grab his own headlock, only to counter just as easily. A legsweep takes Park down and Anderson is making this look easy. Park grabs his own headlock out of nowhere and wrestles Anderson down before slapping him in the back of the head in a cute bit. Anderson is ticked off and kicks Park's knee out before pounding him down in the corner. Park avoids a splash in the corner and gets two off a quick rollup as things pick up a bit.

A neckbreaker puts Park down and we hit the chinlock for a bit. Park's comeback is cut short by a pull of the hair but Anderson misses a Swanton. Joseph makes a quick comeback but misses a splash in the corner, allowing Anderson to hit the rolling fireman's carry slam. Park pulls Anderson's legs out for a Boston crab but here's Doc for a distraction to break it up. Park slams Anderson down but Doc shoves him off the middle rope while Anderson has the referee, allowing Anderson to hit the Mic Check for the pin and seven points at 5:06.

Rating: C-. This was fine and Park being the fall guy at first isn't a bad idea. You can push him as getting more experience as the competition goes on and making a hard charge at the end, perhaps with some assistance from his brother. The match wasn't anything great but Anderson winning could make for some interesting situations down the line.

Post break Anderson and Doc argue over who is going to be the next VP of the club. Ray says we'll put it to a vote because tonight he has to deal with his wife Brooke.

Bound For Glory Series: Jay Bradley vs. Austin Aries

Aries takes it to the floor almost immediately and hits a big plancha off the top rope. Back in and Aries hits the slingshot elbow drop but can't hook the Last Chancery. Austin goes up again and gets kicked down to the floor before a knee drop to the chest gets a near fall for Bradley. Some fast elbow drops get two for Jay but he misses a running boot into the corner, getting himself caught on the top rope.

Aries fires off kicks to the leg and gets two off a missile dropkick. Bradley kicks Aries out of the air as he tries the corner dropkick but Austin blocks the Boomstick with a discus forearm. Another Boomstick is ducked and Aries grabs a quick powerbomb followed by the corner dropkick. The brainbuster to Bradley is good for the pin and seven points at 3:39.

Rating: C. The more I see of Bradley the more I like him. He has a ring presence to him which is something you can't teach anyone to have. He's here to be the fall guy in the Series but I see some decent potential in him in years to come. Decent little match here with the exactly right result.

We look at Sting announcing the Main Event Mafia's reformation last week.

Sting says the Mafia grows tonight.

Post break Sting asks someone if they're in the Mafia. The unseen guy shakes his hand and apparently Sting has a deal.

Chavo gives Hernandez a pep talk for his match.

Bound For Glory Series: Hernandez vs. Christopher Daniels

Daniels goes right at him to start but gets caught in the overhead belly to belly from Hernandez. Chris takes the eyes to take over but Hernandez powers out and slugs Daniels down. The running dive from the apron takes Daniels down as Hernandez is bleeding from the mouth. Daniels dives into what appeared to be an Alpha Bomb (slam into a powerbomb) but slips away and hits a low blow to put SuperMex down. The BME pins Hernandez at 2:19 to give Daniels seven points.

Bound For Glory Series: Kazarian vs. Magnus

Magnus knocks him to the floor to start but Kaz comes back in with a forearm to the face and a cravate. Kaz's spinning crossbody is countered into a very modified powerslam/suplex for two as the crowd is into Magnus. The Brit no sells a missile dropkick (Kaz was supposed to miss but connected anyway), allowing Magnus to hook a Texas Cloverleaf for the submission at 2:54 for ten points. That's a good move that someone needs to bring back.

Hulk is on the phone and saying things feel perfect when Bully Ray comes up to him holding a hammer. Hogan grabs him by the throat and wants to fight right now. Hulk says Ray and Brooke are done tonight but Ray asks him why Brooke stopped the shot to the head with the hammer a few weeks back.

Here's Brooke Hogan for the state of the Knockouts division address. Eric Young and ODB have the KO Tag Title belts again. Dang it all. Mickie gets her own special entrance and thinks she's the one giving the speech tonight. She brags about being so awesome and says it's easier for her to carry the title on her shoulder than it is on Velvet's bad knee.

Brooke cuts her off and wants to start with Eric Young. She reminds him of a chat they had a year and a half ago and Eric says that technically he isn't a woman. He hands Brooke the KO tag belts and says that it's National Kissing Day. Eric kisses ODB and they run off to the back. As for Velvet, she gets her rematch next week because her knee is fine. Gail Kim wants her own rematch which she'll get in Las Vegas...against Taryn, in a ladder match.

After a quick talk from the announcers, Hulk sends Brooke home for the night due to fear of Ray.

Bound For Glory Series: AJ Styles vs. Samoa Joe

No callout here as these are the last two guys left (Tenay: "You can tell by process of elimination." Or the graphic we saw before the break) but AJ has something to say. With all the lights dark, AJ says that this isn't about Aces and 8's, TNA, the fame, the glory or the money. It's about not needing a hero because he's tired of doing things for everyone else. Joe pounds him into the corner to start but AJ grabs a headlock to slow him down.

After a good while in the hold, Joe fights up but misses a running boot into the ropes. AJ pounds away in the corner and drops Joe with a clothesline. Joe misses a charge in the corner but catches AJ with the enziguri to put him on the floor. The Samoan tries a charge but has to land on his feet as AJ slides back in. AJ's dive lands on the apron but Joe kicks his leg out to ram AJ face first into the apron as we take a break.

Back with Joe elbowing AJ in the face and pounding in some headbutts. AJ hits a quick dropkick to send Joe to the floor where a baseball slide puts Joe into the announce table. We're told there are five minutes left which tells me TNA has a fast clock. Back in and AJ hits the springboard forearm but can't suplex the plump Samoan. Instead AJ charges into a snap powerslam but he rolls out of a cross armbreaker attempt.

Joe looks for a superplex but AJ falls on top of him in a kind of crossbody for no cover instead. Back up and AJ pounds away but Joe punches him into the corner and fires off knee lifts. AJ rolls him into the Calf Killer but Joe sits up into the Koquina Clutch. AJ rolls out of that into a cradle for two as we have a minute left. They slug it out with thirty seconds left and head to the mat but the clock runs out at 13:40 for a time limit draw, good for two points each.

Rating: C+. These two are always worth seeing and this was no exception. You can't have AJ tap out here as it would make him look pretty lame, but you also don't want to have Joe lose this early in the Series. This was a

solid TV match but as soon as you hear the time limit being announced you could smell the draw.

Ray is on the phone with Brooke and talks her into coming back tonight. He sends D-Von, Doc and Knux out to get her here safely.

Hulk talks to Sabin, Suicide and Kenny King about their match next week and how the winner can trade in the title for a shot at Ray in July.

Bound For Glory Series: Jeff Hardy vs. Bobby Roode

The brawl starts on the ramp with Hardy taking over as they get to the ring. Roode takes him straight down into the Crossface but Jeff makes a rope before too much damage is done. Bobby catapults him throat first into the bottom rope before stomping away on the downed enigma. A vertical suplex sets up a knee drop for two and Roode keeps pounding on Jeff.

Hardy gets up a boot in the corner and hits a middle rope splash for two as momentum swings. An atomic drop sets up the low dropkick for two on Bobby but he grabs a quick spinebuster for two of his own. Jeff counters the fisherman's suplex into the Twisting Stunner, but Roode rolls away from the Swanton. Bobby throws the Crossface back on but Hardy rolls through into a cradle for two. Another Twist hits for the pin on Roode and seven points at 6:15.

Rating: C+. This was the short version of the good match these two are capable of. You know Hardy is going to make a deep run in the Series so seeing him win early on isn't a big surprise. Roode will do fine in this as well as you need a strong heel later on in the competition. Good start here for both guys.

Sting says we have some Family business to tend to tonight.

Here's Ray to close the show. He talks to the three X Division guys who think they're going to take the title from him in July. He'll do whatever it takes to keep the title, but he has more important things to talk about tonight. Ray calls out Brooke but gets Sting with the Main Event Mafia music instead. Sting says he went back to his family because he

can't wrestle for the title again. That doesn't mean he can't get retribution on Ray tonight though.

Sting takes off his jacket and gets ready to fight before taking off his shirt. Ray calls out for the bikers but we see all of them down in the back. Sting goes after Ray and chases him up the ramp, only to have Kurt Angle, rocking a suit, take Ray down and put him in the ankle lock as the show ends.

Overall Rating: C+. The matches weren't great tonight, but there was a clear direction here that we haven't seen since Lockdown. The entire spring was spent building up to a filler show at Slammiversary, so having something to build up to with BFG is a very nice breath of fresh air. Sting and Angle as the Main Event Mafia is interesting but it's something we've seen before: TNA's old guys against the Aces and 8's. It still should be entertaining though. Good show tonight.

Results

Mr. Anderson b. Joseph Park – Mic Check

Austin Aries b. Jay Bradley – Brainbuster

Christopher Daniels b. Hernandez – BME

Magnus b. Kazarian – Texas Cloverleaf

AJ Styles vs. Samoa Joe went to a time limit draw

Jeff Hardy b. Bobby Roode – Twist of Fate

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