NXT LVL Up - May 13, 2022: Get The Coconuts

NXT LVL Up

Date: May 13, 2022 Location: Capitol Wrestling Center, Orlando, Florida Commentators: Sudu Shah, Nigel McGuinness

We're in an interesting place on NXT as the show is now featuring some of the people who started here. It makes this one feel a bit more like a launching pad and that could open up some doors for something more interesting. Then again, it might have absolutely nothing to do with anything going on here. Let's get to it.

Here are last week's results if you need a recap.

Opening sequence, featuring a bunch of people who will never be on this show.

Sanga vs. Dante Chen

Sanga throws him into the corner to start but Chen swings out of a slam to set up an armbar. A side slam cuts Chen off and some shots to the back of the neck make it worse. The cobra clutch sets up a missed legdrop and Chen hits a quick short DDT. Sanga blasts him with a clothesline and finishes with the chokeslam at 5:07.

Rating: C-. Sanga is another run of the mill monster and it's kind of weird to see him go five minutes with someone as low level as Chen. I kind of like Sanga as his own man instead of being ANOTHER bodyguard though and he didn't look awful here. Give him some ring time and maybe it could work, though it's strange to see him having a regular match like this instead of a total squash.

Elektra Lopez vs. Thea Hail

Lopez powers her into the ropes to start but Hal grabs a rather nifty headlock. Some shoulders stagger Hail but she's back with some running dropkicks. Lopez takes her down by the arm though and a legdrop on the arm makes it worse. The armbar with a chinlock goes on before it's off to a rather nasty arm crank. Hail powers up and manages to take her down, only to miss a dropkick. A Blue Thunder Bomb gives Lopez the pin at 5:06.

Rating: C. I'm not sure what to make of Lopez, as she gets to dominate when she is in the ring but doesn't do it often enough to mean much. Maybe NXT doesn't think enough of her in the ring but she's doing well enough here. Hail might need a costume change but she has been impressive enough to be the next project around here if they want to go that way.

Javier Bernal vs. Trick Williams

Carmelo Hayes is here with Williams. Bernal starts working on the arm and manages to take him down for an early chinlock. That gets shifted into a headlock but Williams slips out and hits a heck of a dropkick. A jumping clothesline gives Williams two and he plants Bernal again, allowing some trash talking. There's a flapjack for two more before Williams grabs a standing armbar. Bernal jawbreaks his way to freedom and it's an atomic drop into a Russian legsweep as we go back to 1987. Williams isn't having that and hits a spinning kick to the face for the pin at 6:20.

Rating: C. Hayes gets the attention and the glory but Williams is a perfectly fine worker in the ring. He looked good enough here and the spinning kick for the finish worked well too. Bernal is another guy who is just on the roster and not looking like anything special, which is where so many people fall in NXT. Maybe they can find something else for him, but it isn't happening so far. **Overall Rating:** C-. Pretty nothing show this week and that isn't exactly a surprise these days. LVL Up continues to be all over the place from one week to the next, as you never know what you are going to get around here. The matches are usually watchable enough, but there isn't exactly a reason to watch most weeks. Get these people back on some small house show circuit or something, because it is going to mean a lot more than this.

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NXT UK – May 12, 2022: Every Anniversary Needs El Generico

NXT UK

Date: May 12, 2022 Location: BT Sports Studios, London, England Commentators: Andy Shepherd, Nigel McGuinness It's a big time show this week as we have the 200th episode (though that doesn't seem to be the case if you actually count them up). Counting issues aside, we have a big main event as United Kingdom Champion Ilja Dragunov is defending against Jordan Devlin in a title match that is also Loser Leaves Town. Let's get to it.

Here are last week's results if you need a recap.

The opening video looks at the title match.

Opening sequence.

Ashton Smith/Oliver Carter vs. Gallus

The winners move on to a triple threat Tag Team Title match and it's the Coffey brothers for Gallus. Mark powers Carter to the mat to start and it's quickly off to Joe for a chop as commentary talks about Joe never winning anything. Carter sends Mark into the corner with a headscissors and starts in on the arm, with Smith coming in to do the same. That doesn't work for Mark, who runs Carter over and hands it back to Joe....who is quickly knocked to the floor.

We settle back down to Joe hammering on Smith, setting up an overhead belly to belly. Joe seems to tweak his knee on a leapfrog though, allowing Carter to come back in with a slingshot shoulder. An assisted 450 gives Smith two but a Silly String moonsault hits raised knees. Joe gets in another suplex and the hot tag brings in Mark to clean house. Mark hits a middle rope bulldog for two on Carter and a belly to back drops Smith. Joe comes back in with a high/low for two, leaving Mark to dive onto Carter. A missed springboard bangs up Joe's knee again and another assisted moonsault gives Carter the pin on Joe at 10:24.

Rating: C+. They kept things moving here but Smith and Carter winning was the only thing that makes sense. The two of them have seemed primed to get the titles for awhile now and

Gallus' losing streak gets to continue. I'm not sure where that is going but things are continuing to go badly, which makes things interesting.

Post match, Gallus isn't happy.

A-Kid has gotten his match with Charlie Dempsey to be held under Heritage Cup rules.

Video on NXT UK over the years and how some of them have gone on to main roster success. They've had some good stuff.

Lash Legend cuts off Emilia McKenzie's interview but doesn't have time for McKenzie getting annoyed at her.

Nina Samuels vs. Ivy Nile

Samuels offers a quick pose off, which is kind of stupid when Nile's biceps are bigger than Samuels' head. Nile takes her to the mat for a headscissors, complete with pushups. Samuels goes to the ropes for a needed breather before snapping Nile's throat across the top. That lets Samuels get in her own pushups, followed by the double fish hook. Nile fights up with the kicks to various parts of Samuels and a running dropkick in the corner gets two. A slap to the face rocks Nile on the ropes but she's right back with the dragon sleeper for the win at 4:43.

Rating: C-. This wasn't much but it is nice to see Nile getting a win over a more established name. Nile seems ready to move up to the title picture soon as it isn't like there is much more for her to do otherwise. Samuels is pretty firmly established in her spot and the Nina Samuels Show stuff can get her right back after another loss.

Damon Kemp doesn't think much of Sha Samuels jumping him last week.

Dave Mastiff and Jack Starz mock one of Die Familie's meetings, including a cardboard cutout of Charlie Dempsey's

head. A beating is promised.

Joe Coffey says he's going to take some time away by himsel.f

Wild Boar blames Eddie Dennis for his troubles last year and now he wants revenge.

Kenny Williams continues to go insane and still believes that Tiger Turan is behind everything. He even has a wall covered in papers as all sane people do.

United Kingdom Title: Jordan Devlin vs. Ilja Dragunov

Dragunov is defending and this is Loser Leaves NXT UK. Devlin gets taken to the mat to start, with Dragunov working on a headlock. The comeback attempt just earns him another headlock before it's time to go with the slugout. Devlin catches him on top with a shot to the face and it's a brainbuster onto the top turnbuckle for a nice tribute to El Generico.

Back in and Dragunov can barely stand so Devlin kicks him in the ribs for two. A running legdrop just wakes Dragunov up but Devlin knocks him into the corner. One heck of a clothesline drops Dragunov and we hit the half crab, complete with some stomps to the head. That's broken up though and Dragunov starts firing off elbows, with commentary saying Dragunov is more volatile than Bitcoin.

Back to back German suplexes drop Devlin again but he's able to crotch Dragunov on top. A moonsault out to the floor drops Dragunov and a reverse cutter gets two back inside. Dragunov catches him on top with a superplex, setting up a hard forearm to the face for two. Torpedo Moscow only hits buckle though, allowing Devlin to hit the Devlin Side for the pin (with Dragunov's foot in the ropes).

Devlin celebrates but here is Johnny Saint to say restart things. Another Torpedo Moscow is countered into a Canadian Destroyer (that was sweet) and a brainbuster gets two. Dragunov is back up with a German suplex and the Torpedo Moscow retains the title/gets rid of Devlin at 16:12.

Rating: B. Dragunov continues his reign in another good match, though some of his kickouts do get to be a bit much. There come points where he feels indestructible and that can be hard to take at times. Other than that, Devlin leaving could be interesting, as he could be on his way to regular NXT or out altogether, or he might be back under some shenanigans. Either way, I'm curious to see what is next for both of them, as Dragunov is in need of a new challenger and no one seems to be ready for him.

Dragunov celebrates and Devlin is crushed to end the show.

Overall Rating: B-. This was a much better show than the last few, as there is only so much you can get out of a show focused on the lower level NXT stars. Instead, this show was about the United Kingdom Title with a big time main event. That is what the show has been needing, though I have a bad feeling that this is a one off rather than a shift back to what made the show work over (most of) the last 200 weeks.

<u>Results</u> Ashton Smith/Oliver Carter b. Gallus – Assisted moonsault to Joe Ivy Nile b. Nina Samuels – Dragon sleeper Ilja Dragunov b. Jordan Devlin – Torpedo Moscow

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Rampage – May 13, 2022: Something About Friday The 13th

Rampage

Date: May 13, 2022 Location: UBS Arena, Belmont Park, New York Commentators: Excalibur, Taz, Chris Jericho

We're still in the weird time slot due to some kind of playoffs (basketpuck or hockball I believe) and that means a grand total of nothing on this show. Granted it means very few people are going to watch it, but it isn't like that is AEW's fault in this case. This week is going to have some Owen Hart Foundation tournament action so let's get to it.

Here is Dynamite if you need a recap.

Opening sequence.

Death Triangle vs. Butcher/Blade/Marq Quen

Penta does the CERO MIEDO to Blade to start and then kicks him in the ribs. Pac comes in to hold Blade in place for the top rope double stomp What's Up. Jericho's voice sounds more than a bit off as Butcher comes in to take over on Pac. That doesn't last long as Butcher is sent outside, allowing Fenix and Quen to come in. A pop up dropkick puts Fenix down and he gets sent outside for a whip into the barricade as we take a break.

Back with Fenix fighting out of a front facelock but Quen and the Butcher are right there to knock Pac and Penta off the apron. Everything breaks down and Quen hits a big flip dive onto Pac and Penta on the floor, leaving Fenix to get clotheslined down for two. A hurricanrana gets Fenix out of trouble as Kyle O'Reilly is shown watching in the crowd. Back in and Penta makes the save, getting to clean house and take over again. Pac's German suplex gets two on Quen and it's the spike Fear Factor. The Lucha Bros hit dives on Butcher and Blade, leaving the Black Arrow to finish Quen at 10:20.

Rating: C+. Death Triangle continues to be just kind of there and that isn't the most exciting thing. I know we're heading for the showdown with the House Of Black but it has taken so long to get the team back together and set up the match that any interest I had in the first place is long gone. The team is still fun to watch, but my goodness the spark is long gone.

Post match the lights go out, the House of Black pops up, the lights go out again, and the House of Black pops down.

Shawn Spears vs. Bear Boulder

Spears shows him the TEN to start so Boulder grabs him in a gorilla press. That's broken up so Boulder settles for a powerslam instead. Spears avoids a charge in the corner though and hammers away in the corner until Boulder grabs him by the throat. Boulder gets in his own right hands in the corner but gets reversed into the C4 to give Spears the fast pin at 2:05. This is the Spears version of the villains beating someone before losing to Wardlow.

Post match Spears unloads on him with the chair.

Tony Nese and Mark Sterling (in a neck brace and with a crutch) are NOT happy with their upcoming match against Hookhausen. Sterling doesn't even have fights! Nese says he has destroyed Danhausen and he's a premiere athlete. He can win on his own, so Sterling should put \$10,000 on them.

<u>Owen Hart Foundation Tournament First Round: Riho vs. Ruby</u> <u>Soho</u>

Soho works on an armbar to start but gets reversed into la

majistral for two. A running kick to the chest misses for Soho and Riho slips out of an over the shoulder backbreaker. Riho hits a double stomp to the ribs to rock Soho but she pulls Riho face first into the buckle to break it up.

There's a headbutt to put Riho in trouble, only to have her tie the legs up and crank back to put Soho in trouble as we take a break. Back with Riho hitting a northern lights suplex for two but hang on as we need to look at things that happened in the break. Soho loads up a Blade Runner, which is reversed into a crucifix bomb for two. Back up and Soho hits a belly to back suplex, setting up a Blade Runner for the pin at 9:06.

Rating: C+. I can certainly go for seeing Soho get a win over one of the bigger names the division has ever seen so this was a nice result. What matters is having some new faces in the division and Soho could certainly use the boost after a pretty rocky start in AEW. I'm not sure how far she goes in this thing, but a win is not completely out of the realm of possibility.

Billy Gunn holds a meeting between the Gunn Club and the Acclaimed, who he thinks could be a great faction. They need hand gestures though, with the Club suggesting crotch chops. Billy shoots that down, but likes the scissoring deal. Now, catchphrases. Gunn Club: "Oh, you didn't…." Billy: "NO! THAT WILL NEVER GET OVER!" The Acclaimed suggests "Yo, listen" and Billy is down with that. Now he has a match for them on Elevation!

Here are Jade Cargill and the Baddies for a chat. Cargill hits the catchphrase but Tony Schiavone has to announce that since Hikaru Shida is injured, so Red Velvet has to face Kris Statlander in the first round instead. That isn't a bad thing for Cargill, but Statlander comes out for the staredown anyway.

Scorpio Sky is ready to defend the TNT Title against Kazarian

because the champ's word is his bond and he promised Kazarian the shot. Kazarian is ready too, and Sky having Dan Lambert and Ethan Page stay in the back makes it even better.

Here is what is coming up on various shows.

TNT Title: Scorpio Sky vs. Frankie Kazarian

Sky is defending. They fight over a lockup to start and neither get anywhere. Sky flips out of a wristlock but Kazarian runs him over with a double to give us a standoff. Kazarian takes him down and drops a leg to the arm, setting up a short armscissors. With that broken up, neither of them can grab their finisher so they collide for a double knockdown. A backslide gives Kazarian two and a fisherman's suplex is good for the same. Sky sends him to the floor though and there's the big flip dive to take Kazarian down again.

We take a break and come back with Kazarian hitting the slingshot Fameasser for two. A hard lariat drops Sky again but he is up with the TKO attempt. That's reversed into a small package for two, followed by the springboard spinning legdrop to give Kazarian a rather delayed near fall. Sky heads to the apron so Kazarian slingshots him in for a heck of a cutter for two. The crossface chickenwing goes on but here is Dan Lambert for a distraction, allowing Ethan Page to come in with a belt shot....for two. Sky (who doesn't seem to have seen the interference) is back up with the TKO to retain at 11;40.

Rating: B-. The ending wasn't exactly great but it might set up something good for the future between the two of them. Odds are we're getting either a rematch or a tag match out of that ending, likely at the Los Angeles show coming up in a few weeks. Sky retaining the title is a good thing, but I don't think there was any real doubt about the result here.

Post match Kazarian tries to tell Sky what happened and Sky yells at Lambert and Page. Sky wants to know what happened, so Page grabs the mic and says yeah he did it. He did it for the team, so what team is Sky on? Then Sky hits Kazarian with the title and the beatdown is on. Lambert calls Sammy Guevara and "W****hausen" (Tay Conti) into the ring and runs as Sammy makes the save (and holds up the title) to end the show.

Overall Rating: B-. Pretty good show this week, though that ending wasn't exactly my favorite. They got back to doing some things on this show, as the tournament has gotten off to a pretty fast start. Granted when you have almost six weeks to set things up, there isn't much of a reason for it not to start well. Nice show here, with nothing close to bad throughout.

<u>Results</u> Death Triangle b. Butcher/Blade/Marq Quen – Black Arrow to Quen Shawn Spears b. Bear Boulder – C4 Ruby Soho b. Riho – Blade Runner Scorpio Sky b. Frankie Kazarian – TKO

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Smackdown – May 13, 2022: I'll Take The Bad Luck

<u>Smackdown</u>

Date: May 13, 2022 Location: Mohegan Sun Arena, Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania Commentators: Michael Cole, Pat McAfee

We're fresh off of Wrestlemania Backlash and the biggest story coming out of the show is Ronda Rousey breaking Charlotte's arm to become the new Smackdown Women's Champion. Other than that, Roman Reigns continued to dominate and has pretty much no one left in front of him. That isn't good with the Cell in less than a month. Let's get to it.

Here is Wrestlemania Backlash if you need a recap.

We open with a recap of the six man main event at Wrestlemania Backlash, with Roman Reigns spearing Riddle for the pin.

Here is RKBro to get things going. Riddle takes the blame for the loss on Sunday but they want Roman Reigns out here right now to let the Usos make the Tag Team Title unification match. Instead, here is Sami Zayn, in a Bloodline shirt, to answer. As the locker room fleader and representing the Bloodline, no one wants this unification match.

Zayn thinks the Raw Tag Team Champions need to go back to Raw, but Riddle dubs Sami as Rusty, because his hair is the color of rust. That's not his name, but Orton says Sami is calling shots for the Bloodline. That gives Randy an idea: Riddle vs. Sami, and if Riddle wins, RKBro gets their unification match. Orton: "RUSTY! RUSTY!" Sami isn't sure, but Adam Pearce shows up and he sure is...but it won't be for the title match, because Zayn doesn't have that authority.

Sami Zayn vs. Riddle

Riddle goes for a quickly broken triangle choke and Sami gets in a few shots. The chinlock is broken up so Riddle kicks him in the head for a knockdown. A suplex gets Sami out of trouble but Riddle blocks the Helluva Kick. Riddle goes up and gets shoved down onto the barricade (ala Rob Van Dam) as we take a break.

Back with Riddle kneeing Sami out of the air for two but Sami knocks him to the apron. Sami's hanging DDT is broken up and Riddle sends him outside for a Floating Bro. Back in and the snap powerslam but Sami bails to the floor before the RKO can launch. With Riddle going after him, Sami gets in a ram into the timekeeper's area, only to have riddle dive back in at nine. The Bro Derek gives Riddle the pin at 10:17.

Rating: C+. This is one of those matches where they were allowed to do their thing and they made it work. Riddle and Zayn could have a decent match in their sleep and they had ten minutes to make that happen here. Riddle bringing back the Bro Derek was nice, especially after Orton mentioned him using the RKO a bit too much this week on Raw Talk.

In the back, Roman Reigns isn't happy about RKBro being here. The Usos have this though and they're going to do something about it.

Post break, Sami Zayn runs into Shinsuke Nakamura and calls him the table's a** (I think). Laughter ensues and Sami looks crushed.

Here is Ronda Rousey to brag about her title win. See, Charlotte was a 13 time Women's Champ (uh, she still is Ronda) but look who has the title now. Rousey says Charlotte was tough but she would die before quitting. She's going to be a fighting champion though so it's open challenge time.

Women's Title: Ronda Rousey vs. Raquel Rodriguez

Rousey is defending and gets powered into the corner to start. An early Piper's Pit attempt is countered with a knee, setting up a clothesline for two. Back to back fall away slams send Rousey flying and an over the shoulder backbreaker makes it even worse. A side slam cuts Rousey off again but Rodriguez misses something off the middle rope.

Rousey strikes away and tries a tornado DDT, only to switch it into a guillotine. That's powered into a suplex for two on Rousey and a swinging torture rack slam gets the same. The Chingona Bomb is countered though and Rousey gets the ankle lock. Rodriguez breaks that up though and a big boot gets two. A powerbomb is loaded up but Rousey reverses into a hurricanrana to retain at 5:54.

Rating: B. Where the heck did that come? This was a star making performance from Rodriguez, who beat Rousey up for the better part of five minutes and got caught instead of getting beat. I liked this a lot more than I would have expected and Rousey was in all kinds of trouble before escaping with the win. Good stuff here and quite the surprise.

Respect is shown post match.

In the back, Aliyah and Shotzi argue over how that should have been their title shot but Adam Pearce doesn't really know what to say. End of segment.

Here is Madcap Moss for a chat. He is proud of his win over Happy Corbin, even if Corbin could have won by making him tap out with one more story about his watch. Now Moss wants to do everything, from forming a team with Sasha Banks called Madcap Boss, win Money in the Bank, replace title belts with title suspenders....and here is Happy Corbin to chair him down, because this feud must continue. Then Corbin slides in the Andre the Giant trophy and uses it to Pillmanize a chair around Moss' neck. Post break, Moss is being loaded into the ambulance and here is Corbin to say it's off to the Mosspital.

<u>Women's Tag Team Titles: Natalya/Shayna Baszler vs. Sasha</u> <u>Banks/Naomi</u>

Naomi and Banks are defending and it's Naomi ducking under Baszler's shot to start. Banks comes in and takes Natalya down, setting up an exchange of rollups for two each. Baszler saves Natalya from the Bank Statement and we take a break. Back with Banks getting caught in a Hart Attack with Naomi having to make the save.

Naomi avoids the stomp to the arm on the apron and gets the tag, allowing her to clean house. The springboard spinning kick to the face gets two on Natalya but Natalya takes Banks down. The Sharpshooter attempt on Naomi is countered into a small package to retain the titles at 8:33.

Rating: C. This match was the culmination of a feud that started and then came to an end. I'm really not sure what else to say about it, as they had singles matches after the tag match was all but set, then they had the title match where the champions retained. These titles continue to be the opposite of interesting, which I believe is called the Natalya.

Ricochet comes up to Drew Gulak, who asks for advice. Ricochet says if he had quit, he wouldn't have the Intercontinental Title. He tells Gulak to be his best self, so Gulak is ready for Gunther. Then Gulak runs into Gunther, who slams him into a door and breaks his chest with a chop.

Kofi Kingston vs. Butch

Xavier Woods, Ridge Holland and Sheamus are at ringside. Butch jumps him to start and hammers on the mat but Kofi sends him to the floor, allowing Woods to play some trombone. Butch gets dropped again and Kofi winds up on Woods' shoulders (more tromboning ensues) as we take a break. Back with Kofi fighting out of a neck crank and hammering away. The SOS gets two on Butch but he's back with an enziguri for a breather. Kofi gets in a kick of his own and the standing double stomp gets two more. Trouble in Paradise is loaded up but everyone gets in a fight on the floor, allowing Butch to grab the Bitter End for the pin at 8:33.

Rating: C+. If WWE just has to have Dunne as....whatever Butch is supposed to be, at least they have gotten past the point of having him lose to small packages over and over. The match wasn't a classic but it was god enough to fill in some TV time, while also letting Butch have a win for a change.

Post match Butch runs through the crowd but comes back to join his friends on the stage.

Sami Zayn wants Paul Heyman to tell Roman Reigns what he did earlier to stand up for the Bloodline. He and Reigns need to be on the same page so Heyman assures him that Reigns is appreciative. Sami is pleased.

Here is the Bloodline to address RKBro. Reigns tells Pennsylvania to acknowledge him and they've been doing this for a little while. They smash them on Sunday and then tell you what's next on Friday. Well they beat Drew McIntyre and RKBro on Sunday, but what is RKBro going to do about it?

Cue RKBro, with Randy Orton saying John Cena is ten times the star that Reigns will ever be. Riddle talks about how he likes to set the mood with his laptop at night and reaches to his nightstand....Orton: "Let me stop you right there." Riddle: "I meant I reached for headphones." Orton: "To be fair, I didn't know where you were going with that."

Riddle was watching their Wrestlemania Backlash match and now he wants the Usos even more. Orton talks about how they are going to unify the titles…and he just realized he's a lot taller than Reigns. The Usos accept the challenge but Reigns isn't sure about this. We'll do it next Friday instead, with the Usos bragging about how they're going to win. Riddle knees Reigns in the face and RKBro bails to end the show. They set up the match, but RKBro's comedy continues to be great as it feels like they're coming up with this stuff off of the top of their heads, which you don't get elsewhere in WWE.

Overall Rating: B-. For a show without much to build from after the pay per view, this show was a pretty good use of two hours. RKBro vs. the Usos is finally set (though I can't imagine a clean winner) and Rousey vs. Rodriguez was a heck of a nice surprise. I had a good time with this show and it flew by, which is always a nice feeling. They still need to come up with something for the Cell, but at least we have some time before we get that far.

<u>Results</u> Riddle b. Sami Zayn – Bro Derek Ronda Rousey b. Raquel Rodriguez – Hurricanrana Sasha Banks/Naomi b. Natalya/Shayna Baszler – Small package to Natalya Butch b. Kofi Kingston – Bitter End

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Southern Underground Pro Nice Night For A Neck Injury: When Eras Collide

Nice Night For A Neck Injury

Date: December 21, 2019 Location: The Basement East, Nashville, Tennessee Commentators: Dylan Hales, Steve McCash

This is from Southern Underground Pro, which I have seen in a co-promoted show over Wrestlemania 37 weekend and it went fairly well. I'm not sure what to expect here but there are some names that I recognize on the card. Granted I don't know what they are going to do, but at least I won't have to look everyone up. Let's get to it.

As mentioned, I don't follow this promotion so please bear with me on storylines and characters.

A rather sweary ring announcer welcomes us to the show and tells the fans to get as close to the ring as they can. Well just not in these spots so commentary and the cameras can see.

The commentator (who is already getting on my nerves) brings out Violence Is Forever (Dominic Garrini/Kevin Ku), who have a trophy (seems to be the Tag Team Titles) and issue an open challenge.

Violence Is Forever vs. Bazooka Horses

Non-title and that would be Graham Bell (who has a bazooka which shoots fireballs) and Warhorse. To make it better, the referee is wearing a Santa hat. Garrini and Bell go to a test of strength to start before taking turns on each others' limbs. Bell gets the better of things by cranking on the wrist before they trade chops. Garrini gets knocked back by one but goes to the leg to cut him off.

That doesn't work for Bell, who is right back with a series of forearms to take over. Ku (in a Merry Christmas Ya Filthy Animals sweater) comes in to face Warhorse, who seems rather intense. A wrestle off goes to Ku, who pats Warhorse on his head for some mind games. Warhorse even gets down in referee's position for some Greco Roman wrestling so Ku kicks him in the leg in a smart move.

Back up and Warhorse slides on his knees (like Kevin does in the Home Alone video games) before ripping off Ku's sweater for some chops of his own. A powerslam plants Ku again so it's back to Bell, who seems to be kicked low. Garrini comes back in and it's a German suplex/running elbow combination to drop Bell hard. A spinebuster gets two on Bell and a hard curb stomp knocks him silly for the same.

It's back to Garrini for a knee to the ribs and Warhorse is drawn in so Violence Is Forever can bring in some crowbars, ala the Wet Bandits. They get caught ripping at Bell's face and somehow that isn't a DQ, apparently because of the season. With nothing else working, Bell grabs Garrini's bare toe and twists it around but gets German suplexed for his efforts....right into the corner for the tag off to Warhorse.

That means house can be cleaned but Garrini saves Ku from a powerbomb. Some Kawada kicks rock Garrini again and Bell hits an F5. Bell is fine enough to, with an assist from Ku, climb the ropes for a moonsault out to the floor onto both of them. Back in and Bell fires off some YES Kicks but Garrini says bring it, setting up a slap fight. A tiger suplex gets two on Garrini but he's right back with a heel hook.

Garrini makes the mistake of mocking Warhorse though, meaning

it's a top rope double stomp to break it up. Now it's Warhorse vs. Ku in another slugout until a snapdragon suplex drops Warhorse hard. Warhorse snaps off his own hard suplex on Ku (who had a previously broken neck).

Ku and Warhorse slug it out again with Warhorse getting the better of things, setting up some rotating running shots in the corner from both Horses. Something like Total Elimination puts Warhorse on the floor and a Gotch style piledriver plants Bell for two. Since this is modern wrestling, Bell pops up and strikes away until a shot to the head cuts him off. A package piledriver into a doctor bomb finishes Bell at 17:27.

Rating: B-. This was a hard hitting fight that got some time and the champs wound up winning, even though it was a nontitle match. I liked what we got here and they started well, as the opener was entertaining. Warhorse is a bit over the top, but he kept it in enough check here to not be a distraction. Solid match here and I'm interested in what else they have, so well done.

Here is Dr. Daniel C. Rockingham, who speaks on a headset and has a rather glittery coat, to say his scheduled debate opponent isn't here tonight, so he wants the biggest disappointment available in the locker room.

Dr. Daniel C. Rockingham vs. Bradley Prescott IV

Prescott has a beer in both hands and dances to the ring. Hold on as Rockingham offers Prescott a brochure with hints about how to make his life better. Prescott does stop to read it, even managing to avoid a charging Rockingham at the same time. Rockingham runs again but Prescott drops to the mat, while still reading the brochure. Back up and Rockingham rips it up, blames Prescott for it, and gets hiptossed for his efforts (complete with screaming into the headset).

We settle down to the two of them missing a bunch of chops in the corner, leaving both of them gasping for air. With breathing restored, Rockingham gets sent over the top to the apron and then knocked down onto a beer can. Back in and Prescott misses a dropkick and gets his neck snapped across the top rope. A kick to the back puts Prescott down as Rockingham yells about going to Yale. Prescott hits a running corner clothesline but he gets run over to give Rockingham two.

They slow down a bit and exchange some stomps until Prescott....gets caught on the ropes while trying a sunset flip. Rockingham takes him down again and gives Prescott a paper cut with the brochure, then spits beer into the cut to make it worse (that's painful). Prescott fights back and slugs away, with commentary thinking he has been watching Rock movies to throw punches like that.

A whip into the corner crotches Rockingham against the post and a step up backsplash gives Prescott two. Rockingham is back with an over the back backbreaker slammed down like a reverse Samoan drop. The ensuing rollup gives Rockingham two but Prescott grabs a bridging German suplex for two of his own. Back up and one heck of a tilt-a-whirl powerbomb gives Rockingham the pin (with commentary sounding shocked) at 9:15.

Rating: C. This was more a battle of the gimmicks than anything else and it worked out well enough. The smarter than you heel will always work and Prescott....well he was kind of a frat boy style guy and that might not have the longest shelf life. Not exactly a great match, but at least the fans seemed into everything.

Post match Rockingham says this is his first win in THREE YEARS. I'd be surprised too.

Alan Angels vs. Ryder Reid

You probably know Angels from the Dark Order in AEW and Reid is a skateboarder. They slap it out to start until Angels gets the better of a slugout. A running hurricanrana takes Reid down and he grabs an armdrag into an armbar. Despite having the hold on, Angels has the referee give him some beer for a nice boost. They roll out to the floor though and Reid gets posted to keep him in trouble. Angels chops the post though and it's time for Reid to go after his fingers. Back in and Angels manages to kick Reid's leg in the ropes and it's a slingshot faceplant onto the apron to plant Reid again.

A moonsault gives Angels two but Reid is back with a wheelbarrow faceplant. Reid puts Angels on his shoulder and spins him over into a DDT for a big crash and another near fall. Back up and Angels kicks him in the head, setting up a suplex into the corner. The Wing Snapper (a Backstabber with feet instead of knees) finishes Reid at 5:39.

Rating: C. This was a rather indy match with both guys doing their moves until one of them got a pin. Angels banging up his hand was the only way to give Reid a chance but it was all downhill from there. The rest of the match wasn't too bad, but it didn't exactly build to anything and they were in and out before it made much of an impression.

Zack Cooper vs. Brett Ison

The fans certainly seem to like the rather large (and seemingly violent/angry) Ison. They trade shoulders and chops to start and an exchange of suplexes have both of them bouncing up. The threat of Ison's spinning shot to the head sends Cooper bailing into the corner and things slow down a bit. Ison hits a heck of a Saito suplex for two, followed by the running boot to the face in the corner for the same.

Street Justice (whatever that is) is broken up and Cooper hits a running dropkick out to the floor. For some reason Cooper tries a handspring on the apron and gets forearmed down for his efforts. Back in and a Shining Wizard gives Ison two but Cooper is back with a Roode Bomb for the same. Cooper goes up and, after shrugging off some headbutts, he knocks Ison off the top and into the corner. Coast To Coast connects for a very delayed two but Ison is back up with a spinning forearm. A hard knee to the face sets up Street Justice (Jay Driller) for the pin at 7:34.

Rating: C+. Ison is every "I'm big and angry and snarling" heel that you've ever seen and that wasn't exactly inspiring. At the same time, this match suffered from a bad case of indy style, as they made it clear that it wasn't going to end until someone hit their finisher, which made the near falls a lot weaker. Commentary hyped up Street Justice so much that it was the only way Ison was winning and since he is big and angry and snarling, it was hart to imagine him losing. The action was pretty good, but it wasn't the best presentation.

Post match, respect is shown.

<u>Aaron Williams vs. Shawn Dean vs. Lee Johnson vs. Nolan</u> <u>Edwards vs. Patrick Heeter vs. Silas Mason</u>

Here's your required Scramble match. You can tell Heeter is a heel because he's bald and flips the crowd off a lot. Mason is the Thrillbilly, which just makes me want to watch a Mickie James match. Heeter gets in the middle of the ring and yells about how he is taller than everyone else (he isn't). With that out of the way, Heeter bails out to the floor (where he points to his head) as commentary puts over how important scramble matches can be around here.

Mason, by far the biggest guy here, cleans house and grabs Edwards low. Williams superkicks Mason down to accidentally save Edwards but it's Dean getting up to clean house. Johnson gets back up for the battle of AEW jobbers and blocks Dean's DDT, setting up Swerve Strickland's running kick to the back of the head. Heeter is back up but Edwards takes everyone down, only to get kicked down by Williams.

Edwards strikes away to stagger Williams, including a pair of kicks to the head. Heeter blocks Edwards' dive so Williams

dives onto him with a....I'm not sure what that was. Dean is right there with a big flip dive to take a bunch of people down so Johnson tries one of his own, only to land on the apron (EGADS). Thankfully he's fine and everyone but Heeter gets back inside.

With everyone else in a corner, Johnson hits a bunch of running shots until Mason switches places with him and does the same thing. Heeter plants Johnson with a sitout F5 but Dean is back in with a Project Ciampa to Edwards. That leaves Dean and Williams to have a rather awkward exchange, capped off by Edwards hitting a neckbreaker.

Johnson hits a standing corkscrew moonsault on Edwards but Mason makes a save with a legdrop. Mason gives Williams a VERY swinging Boss Man Slam but stops to pose instead of covering. Heeter plants Mason, only to have Johnson come in off the top with Spiral Tap to steal the pin at 8:59.

Rating: C. I have made no secret about the fact that I do not like this kind of match. There are WAY too many people doing WAY too many things and they don't allow anyone to really shine. I was worried that they were going with the Heeter win, but thankfully they went with anyone else here. The match was all action, but it was such a mess that it was hard to get much out of it.

<u>Adam Priest vs. Gnarls Garvin</u>

Garvin, billed as Big Beef, is from a trailer park in Louisville, Kentucky and Priest is a guy who got some buzz over at least one Wrestlemania weekend. Priest jumps him before the bell and knocks him to the floor, setting up a heck of a suicide dive. They get inside for the opening bell, with Beef hitting a backdrop to take over. Some chops in the corner don't do much good for Priest, who gets launched into the corner to cut him off.

Beef gets his jacket off and makes me think I'm watching a

Husky Harris match. Priest catches him with a German suplex and a dropkick staggers Beef again, setting up a middle rope moonsault for two. With that not working for him, Beef hits a heck of a powerbomb and a running crossbody against the ropes. A rather big top rope splash finishes Priest at 3:17.

Rating: C-. They kept this quick and that is not a bad thing. Beef is a bigger guy who can move around, but I'm not sure how long he would be able to keep that pace up. At the same time, I was surprised by the ending as Priest seemed to be a bigger deal than Beef coming in. The splash looked good too and it would have been a bit much to have Priest kick out.

Jaden Newman vs. Big Twan Tucker

Twan is indeed big and seems rather proud about staying woke. Apparently Newman has new gear (it's a onesie) and is wearing an unidentified title. Jaden is an extra evil villain by stomping on the referee's Santa hat, making me want to see him massacred. Twan powers him down without much effort to start and then does it again for a bonus. With the on the ground stuff working, Jaden goes up top and gets pulled down onto his face.

The onesie is ripped open so Twan can fire off some chops, including a double hand version that leaves Jaden in shock. They head outside where Twan chops him the rest of the way out of the onesie and then smacks him upside the head. Jaden finally wraps the leg in the rope to take Twan down and a running knee cuts him down inside. A bit too much trash talk lets Twan Pounce him for two but Jaden goes old school evil with the eye rake. Jaden ties up both arms and fishhooks the jaw but has to let go because it seems to be illegal. I'm not sure if that is the case, though I didn't read the updated rule book.

A kick to the head sets up a hard slap but another just wakes Twan up. More strikes rock Jaden and a swinging Boss Man Slam gets two. Jaden's shot to the face, including a top rope punch, only get one but a running flip neckbreaker drops Twan. That's good enough for a victory lap (McCash: "Is your goal to win the match you dumb f***???") which takes way too long, allowing Twan to spear him out of the air back inside. The chokeslam is countered though and Jaden hits a pair of running forearms to the back of the head for the pin at 9:08.

Rating: C. Tucker looked good for a big guy and Jaden was a decent enough heel. There might have been a few too many big spot kickouts but you kind of have to expect that. The other interesting thing is that they kept this clean, even with the villain winning in the end. Not a great match, but sometimes a completely watchable match is all you need.

Bonestorm Title: AC Mack vs. Mr. Brickster

Mack is defending and insists that the referee hold up both of his titles (because he has another one too) so he can handle his own entrance. On the other hand, Brickster has a small saxophone and seems to be a bit of a party guy. Mack tries a chop block (as he did before, putting Brickster on the shelf for six months) but Brickster is ready for him.

The bell rings and Mack misses a charge in the corner, allowing Brickster to start chopping away. A big boot gives Brickster two but he telegraphs the heck out of a missed clothesline in the corner. Mack goes smart by going after the bad leg and the cockiness goes up rather quickly. The fans get behind Brickster but are quieted down when the knee is slammed into the mat.

We pause for Mack to glare at the fans, allowing Brickster to hit a powerslam (from his knees) to send Mack into the corner. Hold on again though as someone throws Brickster a bag containing....a stuffed set of male genitalia with Mack's face on it. The crowd has various chants as Brickster takes Mack outside so fans can hit Mack in the face with it. Commentary gets in various jabs of their own and Brickster hits an ax handle to the back for two. Brickster hits a standing Iconoclasm for two (with commentary SCREAMING at the near fall) but here is Shawn Dean for a distraction. Alan Angels crotches Brickster on top and a hanging Pedigree (or something close to it) retains the title at 8:34.

Rating: C+. I've seen Mack before and I like almost everything that I've seen from him so far. He feels like a seasoned veteran and someone I could see wrestling on a bigger stage. Brickster had a bit of a Brutus Beefcake vibe to him and that is not a bad thing, as he had charisma and the fans got into what he was doing. Nice main event, with Mack feeling like a star.

Post match commentary screams that all of these guys are from Atlanta (including the other title Mack had). Mack yells about how if you invade them, they'll invade you. Brett Ison and Violence Is Forever run in for the save. Brickster talks about being glad to be back and how we can do great things when we come together. He tells us to never stop believing and Don't Stop Believing plays, with the fans singing along. Commentary shouts a lot to wrap it up.

Overall Rating: C+. This was a weird show, as it had talented wrestlers and a very modern feel, but it also felt like it belonged in the early 2000s. For every good thing, there was a lot of the IN YOUR FACE feeling with the swearing (I lost count of the number of wrestlers who was introduced as FIRST NAME F***** LAST NAME) and over the top nature. The positive is that mainly stayed between the matches, which did have high energy and felt fun without any of them being close to bad. Overall, it's clearly a promotion that has been established, but turning it down a notch would be a nice idea.

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New Column: Speaking Of Which

In a week where there isn't much going on, we take a trip inside my wrestling mind.

https://wrestlingrumors.net/tommyhall/kbs-review-speaking/

Smackdown – November 16, 2007: That's More Like It

<u>Smackdown</u>

Date: November 16, 2007 Location: Kansas Coliseum, Wichita, Kansas Commentators: John Bradshaw Layfield, Michael Cole

It's the go home show for Survivor Series and that means it is

time for Undertaker and Batista to stare at each other because their title match in the Cell has been set for a few weeks now. Other than that, we don't have much, but I could go for more of Jamie Noble, who has been a gem in recent weeks. I'm not sure how they fill two hours with that but let's get to it.

Here are last week's results if you need a recap.

We open with a video on Batista vs. Undertaker inside the Cell. That's about as big as it gets on this show.

Opening sequence.

<u>Jeff Hardy vs. Finlay</u>

Non-title and commentary explains that the GM's have agreed that the Brand Split is out the window for this week. Finlay takes him into the corner for a rare clean break to start before going with a rather simple armbar. Hardy isn't having that and picks up the pace by sending Finlay outside for a dive.

Back in and Jeff is sent shoulder first into the post and things slow right back down. The chinlock goes on, with Finlay adding in some elbows for two. Hardy tries to fight out but Finlay goes aerial with a basement dropkick, setting up another chinlock. Back up and Finlay sends him into the corner, allowing Jeff to hit a quick Whisper in the Wind. The slingshot dropkick is loaded up so Finlay grabs the shillelagh but the referee grabs it and calls for the DQ.

Rating: C+. I like the ending here and there is something fun about watching Finlay take someone apart. It is what he does best and you can believe that he is capable of hurting just about anyone you put him in there against. If nothing else, I can go for seeing the Intercontinental Champion not taking a pin in a match designed to set up another one. Jeff clears Finlay out.

We look at Undertaker vs. Shawn Michaels in the first Cell match.

Here is Undertaker for a chat. Undertaker talks about how evil the Cell is but no one comes out of it the same. He has been in it more than anyone else so let's call it the Deadman's Playground. On Sunday, Batista's fate will be the same as everyone else and he will lose the World Heavyweight Championship. Oh and he will rest in peace. Much like Batista last week, this was short and to the point, which is a good thing.

Beth Phoenix/Victoria vs. Mickie James/Torrie Wilson

Mickie and Victoria start things off with Mickie getting out of a wristlock and grabbing a victory roll for two. Phoenix comes in to take Mickie down by the hair but Mickie sends her into the corner. That's enough for the tag to Torrie, who gets in some forearms before Phoenix grabs her with a side slam. The Glam Slam finishes Torrie without much trouble.

Jeff Hardy goes to take care of some personal plans, which is cool with Matt Hardy. Kind of a random interaction.

Undertaker destroyed Mankind in and outside of the Cell.

It's time for the VIP Lounge and MVP gets straight to the point by bringing in Matt Hardy as his guest. MVP talks about how they have been rivals but became partners and champions. Matt likes the sound of that, but brings up MVP pulling Jeff Hardy off the apron on ECW and injuring him to win a tag match. MVP's explanation: he was in a wrestling match and tried to win! That's not good enough for Matt, who wants his US Title shot. MVP says they need to worry about the Tag Team Titles but Matt says they aren't friends. Matt wants his title shot right now....but MVP says they have to defend the Tag Team Titles RIGHT NOW.

Tag Team Titles: MVP/Matt Hardy vs. Miz/John Morrison

Miz and Morrison are challenging. Miz takes MVP into the corner for a clean break to start so MVP knees him in the head. The running boot in the corner tweaks MVP's knee though and that means it's off to Hardy. Morrison comes in and starts going off Matt's knee so the champs can match. A clothesline gives Matt a breather but Morrison twists the knee right back down. Matt fights up again and tries the Twist of Fate but Miz chop blocks him and covers for the pin and titles in a big upset.

Rating: D+. That ending screams shenanigans and it would not surprise me to see something screwy happen after the match. MVP and Hardy did some great things as Tag Team Champions but at some point you have to move on to the next point in the story. That seems to be where we are going now and that is better than almost anything else they could do.

Post match MVP says not so fast because the rematch is being cashed in RIGHT NOW (while referring to Miz and Morrison as 98 Degrees and N'Sync).

Tag Team Titles: MVP/Matt Hardy vs. Miz/John Morrison

Miz and Morrison are defending. Joined in progress with the limping MVP hammering on Miz until the knee buckles. Matt comes in so Miz takes him down by the leg and starts cranking away. The Mizard of Oz gets two on Matt and Morrison grabs a half crab. That's switched into something like a kneebar on the mat and Matt taps to retain the new champs' titles.

Post match MVP helps Matt up...and then takes out the knee again. The big beatdown is on, with Matt's knee being crushed in the steps. A shinbreaker onto the steps makes Matt scream and MVP's leg seeming just fine.

Undertaker shoved Rikishi off the top of the Cell.

Survivor Series rundown.

Mr. Kennedy vs. Rey Mysterio

Rey has bad ribs coming in but is fine enough to snap off an armdrag. Kennedy gets sent out to the floor fast but is ready for the dive, leaving Rey in the ring as we take a break. Back with Kennedy going for the mask before settling for a shot to the ribs to keep Rey in trouble. Some shoulders in the corner and a suplex give Kennedy two, setting up the bodyscissors.

Kennedy cranks away until Rey (who shouts that he can't breathe) makes the rope so it's out to the floor with the ribs being sent into various things. A torture rack of all things stays on the ribs until Rey slips out for a rollup and a near fall. Rey manages a spinning DDT to put them both down for a breather.

Back up and Rey hits the springboard spinning crossbody, setting up the springboard seated senton. A big kick to the head gives Rey two but Kennedy is right back with a tilt-awhirl backbreaker for two of his own. The 619 looks to set up Dropping The Dime but Kennedy is too far away so Rey gets back inside. Kennedy takes him down again and loads up the Green Bay Plunge. That takes too long as well though, allowing Rey to hit a super hurricanrana for the pin.

Rating: C+. Another case of two talented wrestlers having a good match and that is not the biggest surprise. Smackdown has been having these longer matches to give the show a more old school wrestling feel and that is a nice thing to see. This was a nice preview for Survivor Series and it actually gives one of the teams a bit more momentum for once.

Undertaker beat up Randy Orton in the Cell.

It's time for the official weigh-in between Great Khali and Hornswoggle. After they both come out, Hornswoggle goes first and weighs 138lbs. Khali tries and breaks the scale, with Michael Cole saying that if Khali weighs 420lbs, he'll outweigh Hornswoggle by more than 280lbs. Runjin Singh translates Khali's rant about the people he has hurt. Then we get a photo opportunity between then and Hornswoggle cries, with Khali pointing at him and tearing up Hornswoggle's hat.

Batista vs. Mark Henry

Non-title and No DQ. Batista knocks him down to start and they're on the floor in a hurry. Back in and Batista works on the arm before going with a slam to show off. A belt shot to the head finishes Henry fast. This was similar to Undertaker vs. Great Khali last week, but without as much Khali.

Post match Batista takes him outside for a whip into the steps. Batista chokes him with a camera cord and spears him down. Cole attributes this to the Cell possessing his soul, but Batista cuts him off with some chair shots to Henry. Undertaker's face appears on the Titantron (though Batista's bugged out eye look easily tops it) to end the show.

Overall Rating: B-. I liked this show a pretty good bit as they set up some other Survivor Series matches aside from the main event. You can only get so far with the focus being on that one match and it is the kind of build that Survivor Series needed. Good show here, with some longer matches that made me want to see the pay per view that much more.

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<u>NXT UK – May 5, 2022</u>

<u>Dynamite – May 11, 2022</u>

WWE Is Bringing Back A Classic Show Next Month For NXT.

https://wrestlingrumors.net/tommyhall/wwe-bringing-back-classi
c-show-next-month-nxt/

Maybe? Two More Matches Added To AEW Double Or Nothing Card (Kind Of).

https://wrestlingrumors.net/tommyhall/maybe-two-matches-addedaew-double-nothing-card-kind/

Worth The Wait: Update On Cesaro's Wrestling Status.

https://wrestlingrumors.net/tommyhall/worth-wait-update-cesaro
s-wrestling-status/

WWE Hall Of Famer Reportedly Going Through Serious Health Issues.

https://wrestlingrumors.net/tommyhall/wwe-hall-famer-reportedl
y-going-serious-health-issues/

More Details On Roman Reigns' New WWE Deal, Not Appearing As Often.

https://wrestlingrumors.net/tommyhall/details-roman-reigns-new
_-wwe-deal-not-appearing-often/

Here Is How WWE Internally Ranks Some Of Its Wrestlers.

https://wrestlingrumors.net/tommyhall/wwe-internally-ranks-wre
stlers/

Drew McIntyre Wants To Bring Back A WWE Attitude Era Championship.

https://wrestlingrumors.net/tommyhall/drew-mcintyre-wants-brin
g-back-wwe-attitude-era-championship/

WATCH: CM Punk Meets Hook And Danhausen After AEW Dynamite (It Didn't Go Well).

https://wrestlingrumors.net/tommyhall/watch-cm-punk-meets-hook
_danhausen-aew-dynamite-didnt-go-well/

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