

Day One 2022: They Had To Do Something

Day One 2022

Date: January 1, 2022

Location: State Farm Arena, Atlanta, Georgia

Commentators: Michael Cole, Pat McAfee, Jimmy Smith, Corey Graves, Byron Saxton

It's the first show of the year and as interesting as that is, everything has changed at the very last minute. Universal Champion Roman Reigns has announced that he has tested positive for Coronavirus, meaning that he is out of his title defense against Brock Lesnar. Worry not though, as Lesnar is now in a five way for the WWE Title. Let's get to it.

Kickoff Show: Ridge Holland/Sheamus vs. Cesaro/Ricochet

Sheamus has called Holland the replacement for Cesaro in the Bar, while Ricochet eliminated Sheamus from a recent gauntlet match. Cesaro starts with Sheamus, who bails into the corner and brings Holland in. That's fine with Cesaro, who hits a tilt-a-whirl backbreaker, followed by assisting Ricochet for a flipping stomp to Holland. That looked BAD as Ricochet's boot hit him right in the face.

Sheamus comes back in for the Irish Curse to take over on Ricochet as a bloody Holland is taken to the back. The reverse chinlock goes on as we're told Holland has a broken nose and will not be back in the match. Ricochet kicks him away and brings Cesaro back in to hammer on Sheamus for a change.

Sheamus is sent outside for a whip into the barricade. Back in and the Swing sets up the Sharpshooter but Sheamus makes the rope. Ricochet comes in for a save and knocks Sheamus outside, where he gets caught with White Noise on the floor. Cesaro catches the returning Sheamus with an uppercut for two but the

Brogue Kick gives Sheamus the pin at 9:47.

Rating: C. In case you didn't understand that Cesaro and Ricochet are essentially done in WWE, they just lost a handicap match on the Kickoff Show. I know that they were probably losing anyway even without the injury, but you can't throw in a curve to save a bit of them here? Like have Sheamus cheat or something? It's hard to imagine the two of them recovering if this is how they're seen by WWE, and that doesn't seem likely to change.

The opening video talks about how this is a new year and a new opportunity, with a member of Migos (musicians who are appearing tonight) talking about how important this is. We also get the usual clips of the major matches. There is no mention of Reigns, but we do get a quick mention of Lesnar being added to the WWE Title match. In this situation, that is all that can be done.

Commentary recaps the Reigns/Lesnar situation. Of note: they keep referring to this as the first "premium live event" of 2022, because this company has to make EVERYTHING sound corporate and more impressive than it really is.

Smackdown Tag Team Titles: Usos vs. New Day

The Usos are defending and are coming off a loss to New Day thanks to the referee missing a tag. Woods shouts out to his hometown and grabs Jimmy's arm to take him to the mat to start. Kofi comes in so Woods can hit a backsplash, setting up Kingston's splash for two. Back up and Jimmy kicks him to the floor, where Jey adds a clothesline to take over. Choking and a cheap shot have Kofi in more trouble and there's the running Umaga attack in the corner.

Jimmy knocks Woods off the apron as McAfee talks about how hard it is to remember 2020 because 2021 was just like counting. A superkick to the ribs has Kofi down again but he manages a shot to the face, allowing the hot tag to Woods. The

Honor Roll sets up a Cradle Shock for two on Jimmy and everything breaks down. A pop up Samoan drop (the "Alley-0os" (like in Uso) according to McAfee) gets two on Woods but he gets the better of a slugout with Jey.

It's back to Kofi for a jumping clothesline and the Boom Drop but Trouble in Paradise is broken up. Jey comes back in with the Superfly Splash for two so it's time to go after Kofi's previously injured knee. The rope is grabbed and everything breaks down again, with Kofi grabbing the SOS for two. Daybreak gives Woods the same but he gets sent into the corner. A bunch of superkicks drop Kingston and the double Superfly Splash...gets two as Woods makes a diving save. With the kicks not working, the Usos bust out a 3D of all things to finish Kofi at 17:09.

Rating: B. This is the latest proof that WWE is capable of having a great match when the wrestlers are allowed to go out there and do their thing without some kind of wacky idea. These guys could have a classic in their sleep and they did it again here, as it was all kinds of great action and a rather surprising finish. Yes it was something we've seen before, but it was still awesome.

Video on Big E., who loves being positive but can turn on the seriousness when he needs to.

Big E. is ready for everyone, even if no one had this on their New Year's Bingo cards tonight.

Migos are big fans and can't wait to see the show.

Drew McIntyre vs. Madcap Moss

Happy Corbin is here with Moss so they call Atalanta fat and McIntyre's prom date ugly. Moss, in suspenders, stomps away in the corner to start but McIntyre reverses into some chops. A suplex gets two on Moss and they head outside, where Corbin offers a distraction. That's enough for Moss to post McIntyre

to take over and it's a running shoulder for two back inside.

McIntyre fights out of a chinlock and sends him hard into the corner, setting up the overhead belly to belly suplexes. The Futureshock is broken up so McIntyre settles for something like a Sky High for two instead. Moss can't quite get a neckbreaker so McIntyre takes him into the corner. The top rope superplex is broken up and McIntyre is tied in the Tree of Woe. That's fine with him as he does the situp into the big toss off the top. The Claymore finishes Moss at 9:40.

Rating: D+. This is certainly a match that happened and for some reason it happened on a major show like this one. I have no idea why they didn't put this on television if it just had to happen but at least they didn't do anything screwy like having Moss win (or even come close). McIntyre needs to move on, though there is a good chance that he has to beat Corbin soon too.

Kevin Owens calls this a tragedy or a travesty, whichever you prefer, because this was a three way match to start and now it's five people fighting for one title. Worry not though, because he's going to go talk to Seth Rollins.

Video on Seth Rollins, looking at how he got here and all of his successes.

Raw Tag Team Titles: Street Profits vs. RKBro

RKBro is defending and come to the ring with Migos. Dawkins and Riddle start things off with Riddle getting taken down in a hurry. That's not the best start so it's off to Orton for a headlock. With that not getting them very far, it's off to Ford, who gets dropkicked down. Riddle comes back in for the assisted Floating Bro for the early near fall. Back up and Riddle gets caught in the wrong corner so the double teaming can begin.

Dawkins gets two off a suplex but Riddle kicks him away

without much effort. It's back to Orton to take over, including a double hanging DDT to the Profits. The RK0 is countered into a rollup to give Ford two and Orton is sent shoulder first into the post. That's enough to send the champs outside, where Ford hits a HUGE running flip dive over the corner. Back in and Ford heads up top, only to miss...something. Instead Riddle comes back in to set up a pop up RK0 to retain the titles at 10:17.

Rating: C+. We have had two Tag Team Title matches tonight. One of them ended with a 3D and the other ended with a pop up RK0. Are you starting to see why this company can be seen as repetitive at times? The match wasn't anything memorable and is just another win for the champs, but it was completely acceptable for a PPV title defense.

Post match everyone celebrates together, including Migos. Ignore Ford still being down and having to crawl to the apron.

Drew McIntyre doesn't have much to say about his win, but Happy Corbin and Madcap Moss jump him, with Corbin crushing his neck with a chair.

Video on Bianca Belair, who came a long way to get a scholarship to the University of Tennessee.

Brock Lesnar is asked about the WWE Title match and goes into a Paul Heyman impression, saying he is a free agent...thanks to Heyman. Tonight he is winning the WWE Title, and that is a spoiler.

We recap Edge vs. Miz. Edge returned a few weeks ago but the returning Miz (with Maryse) returned for a big talk off, with both of them praising and insulting the other's careers. Miz got the better of things more than once, but Edge gave them a Broodbath (erg) to ruin the renewal of their wedding vows. Now it's a showdown.

Miz vs. Edge

Maryse is here with Miz, while Edge gets the Brood/Alter Bridge double entrance. Feeling out process to start and Miz bails into the corner from the threat of an Edgecution. Miz knocks him outside though and sends Edge into the barricade to take over, setting up the top rope ax handle to the head back inside. It's time to go after Edge's leg before a reverse DDT gives Miz two.

Miz kicks him to the apron but gets planted face first on the floor for his efforts. They're right back on the floor, with Miz trying the Skull Crushing Finale on the announcers' table. That's reversed into Edge's faceplant onto said table and it's a high crossbody for two back inside. Miz goes back to the leg but the Figure Four attempt earns him a kick into the corner. Edge is sent shoulder first into the post though and it's right back to the leg. Now the Figure Four can go on but Edge turns it over, leaving Miz to struggle for a long time.

With that broken up, Edge goes to the Crossface, only to have Maryse get Miz's boot into the rope. Back up and stereo big boots put both of them down and they get a breather. Miz takes him into the corner for the kicks to the chest and the running clothesline before going up top. Edge is right there with a super hiptoss of all things but the spear hits the corner. Maryse gets in a cheap shot of some kick and the Skull Crushing Finale gets two. Cue Beth Phoenix (who stands there glaring at Maryse until her music hits) to chase Maryse off, leaving Edge to spear Miz for the pin at 19:59.

Rating: B-. This took some time to get going but the fans were into it by the end. I'm a little surprised by the ending, but you can see the mixed tag coming, probably at the Rumble. That should make for a good match, though I'm not sure how much we need another month of these two fighting. The match was good stuff, with the leg work being a fine way to go and Maryse getting involved set up the finish, though it never hit that next gear.

MVP and Bobby Lashley aren't worried about Brock Lesnar being added to the title match.

We recap Becky Lynch vs. Liv Morgan for the Raw Women's Title. Lynch had to cheat to beat Morgan in their first title match but Morgan wanted/got a rematch. Before accepting though, Lynch injured Morgan's arm so she isn't coming in at 100% here.

Raw Women's Title: Becky Lynch vs. Liv Morgan

Lynch is defending and has goats on the shoulders of her jacket. Liv starts fast and knocks Becky outside for some rams into the announcers' table. Back in and the Manhandle Slam is broken up, allowing Liv to roll her up for two. The Rings of Saturn send Becky straight to the ropes but she is able to catapult Liv throat first into the bottom rope. After a random shot of a fan in the crowd, Lynch hammers away on the mat as we keep cutting to the fans.

Morgan fights back and kicks her into the corner before hammering away with right hands of her own. There's the enziguri to rock Lynch again and a middle rope dropkick gets two. Becky gets a cross armbreaker out of nowhere but Liv slips out and takes her down again. Liv goes up but gets knocked down, only to come back with a running springboard sunset bomb for two. A belly to back faceplant gives Lynch two but she misses a middle rope legdrop.

Liv is right back with a missile dropkick (to the stomach) and Becky bails to the floor. That means a big suicide dive but Lynch takes her around for some rams into the announcers' table. Back up and Liv sends Becky into the steps before stomping on the arm like Lynch did to her. That's broken up and Lynch hits her in the face but Lynch is right back with something like Oblivion off the top. The Rings of Saturn goes on again but Lynch reverses into a cradle for two. Another Oblivion is countered into the Manhandle Slam and the pin at

17:14, with Lynch reaching for the ropes to cheat but not quite getting there.

Rating: B-. These two were working hard out there and it wound up being a good match as a result. Morgan is not polished in the ring yet and still seems to be in over her head a lot, but she is getting better at making the most out of what she can do. This was about as close as she could get without winning, though aside from Rhea Ripley, I'm not sure who else on Raw is available for a fresh feud with Lynch at the moment. Maybe they run this back one more time, but that might be going too far with the feud.

Seth Rollins isn't worried about the other four people in the WWE Title match because they're not Seth Freaking Rollins. He's going to stomp heads and win.

Johnny Knoxville, of Jackass fame, is in the Royal Rumble. Really.

We recap the WWE Title match. It was original a triple threat but then Bobby Lashley was added. Then Brock Lesnar was added to make it even wackier.

WWE Title: Bobby Lashley vs. Brock Lesnar vs. Kevin Owens vs. Seth Rollins vs. Big E.

Big E. is defending and it's one fall to a finish. It's a big brawl to start and Lesnar fires off suplexes on Owens and Rollins. Big E. hits some running clotheslines to put Brock on the floor. Lashley sends Big E. into the post and hits the spear to drive Lesnar through the barricade. Lashley gets back in, where Owens and Rollins superkick him down.

Rollins knees Lesnar off the apron and Owens adds the bullfrog splash from the apron for a bonus. Some steps to the ribs put Lashley and Lesnar down before it's time to set up the announcers' table. Lashley fights both of them off but Big E. Rock Bottoms him through the table in the big crash.

Owens and Rollins are back up with a double DDT to drive Lesnar into the steps but Big E. takes Rollins down. The pop up sitout powerbomb gives Owens two on Big E. and Rollins adds a frog splash for two. Lesnar is back in with F5's all around but Lashley is back in to spear Lesnar down for two more. The Hurt Lock has Lesnar in trouble until Big E. makes the save. There's the Big Ending to Lashley but Lesnar escapes and hits an F5 on Big E. for the pin and the title at 8:23.

Rating: B. This was straight out of the Summerslam 2017 playbook, albeit with less time. They hit the gas to start and then never stopped, which is how a match like this should have gone. Lesnar winning the title is a surprise, though it seems like we are heading for a showdown between him and Lashley, which should be incredible. Big E.'s title reign was in trouble from the start and ended even worse, but dang I feel sorry for him to have to lose it like this. It was a heck of a match, but the idea of a long Lesnar reign makes my head hurt.

Overall Rating: B. It was a rather solid show, with only McIntyre vs. Moss bringing it down (and that is more to do with the match existing than the match itself). While there is nothing that blew the roof off, there were a bunch of good matches that felt like they belonged on a pay per view. The ending changes more than a few things and should set up the WWE Title match at the Royal Rumble, so it did have some important moments. Good show here and we could see some interesting things as we start the Road To Wrestlemania.

Results

Usos b. New Day – 3D to Kingston

Drew McIntyre b. Madcap Moss – Claymore

RKBro b. Street Profits – Assisted RK0 to Ford

Edge b. Miz – Spear

Becky Lynch b. Liv Morgan – Manhandle slam

Brock Lesnar b. Big E., Kevin Owens, Seth Rollins and Bobby Lashley – F5 to Big E.

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BREAKING: Roman Reigns Has Coronavirus, Off Day One

You knew something like this was going to happen to someone.
<https://wrestlingrumors.net/tommyhall/breaking-roman-reigns-off-wwe-day-one/>

Lesnar has also been added to the WWE Title match, making it a five way. The important thing is Reigns' health, which already does not have the best history. Hopefully everything works out, but there is a good chance that this is the latest of a whole lot of similar situations.

Day One 2022 Preview

We've got a new show this week and this time it is based around a new year. I'm not sure how interesting that is for a full pay per view, but WWE has set things up around flimsier premises before. The good thing is the card looks pretty solid and we could be in for a nice event. That is assuming the Coronavirus pandemic doesn't wreck anything at the last minute. Let's get to it.

Kickoff Show: Ricochet/Cesaro vs. Sheamus/Ridge Holland

This was added earlier in the week and it sounds good on paper. If nothing else, it is nice to see Ricochet and Cesaro getting some kind of a spot, as they so often feel like people just there to fill in time on television when no one else is available. Sheamus and Holland could make for a nice mentor/mentee twist on the Bar, which seems to be the focal point of how we got here in the first place.

As for the match, I can't imagine Sheamus and Holland losing when they seem to be a bit of a project for the future. It doesn't help that Ricochet and Cesaro are the definition of jobbers to the stars at this point and I can't imagine that is going to change in the span of a Kickoff Show match. That's more than a bit depressing, but both of their ships seem to have sailed a long time ago.

Edge vs. The Miz

Let's get one of the bigger ones out of the way first as we have what could have been a much more interesting match that just never made it to that next level. These two had some outstanding promo battles but after that it turned into a much more standard WWE build towards a big match. It still feels like a pretty good showdown, but there is something missing from the whole thing.

I'll go with Miz winning due to some Maryse interference, which brings us to the missing thing: Beth Phoenix, who seems rather likely to come back and make this a mixed tag, maybe even at Wrestlemania. I don't know if it's interesting enough to go that far, but it's hard to imagine that we don't get the tag match at some point. You have a pretty hard time getting there with Edge winning, so Miz takes the first match.

Smackdown Tag Team Titles: Usos(c) vs. New Day

Yes, we're at it again, as these teams seem destined to feud forever. The good thing is you can more or less guarantee a near classic with this one so it isn't like it's a bad idea. I'm sure the match will be very good, but it is a little hard to get excited when it seemed they were building to King Woods vs. Roman Reigns for the Universal Title and instead we're getting a match that has been done nearly to death.

The more I think about it, the more I could see New Day winning here so we'll go with that. It's not like they need another title reign, but the Usos have held the things for a long, long time now and it might be smart to shake things up a bit. Throw in Paul Heyman being fired by Reigns and the team might be a little shaky by comparison. Either way, this should be a near classic, as these four tend to have.

Raw Tag Team Titles: RKBro(c) vs. Street Profits

I'm not sure how, but this feels like a heck of a showdown between two teams that are quite the big deals. RKBro has held the titles for about four months while the Profits are one of the better teams going today. That should make for a showdown and they worked well together in their previous match. That's a nice feeling to have for a Tag Team Title match for a change, as it doesn't happen on the red side very often.

I'll take RKBro to retain, but they're getting into a weird spot with their title reign. They are all but out of teams to give them a run for their money (save for the Profits here)

and I don't know who takes the titles from them if they make it out of this one. There aren't many other options so while there is a chance they do a switch here, I think there is enough left in RKBro to validate them holding the titles.

Drew McIntyre vs. Madcap Moss

Here's the easiest match on the show, as you have a former multiple time World Champion against a literal comedy guy. Somehow this match is taking place over a sword that was stabbed into a desk, which has to be up there for the weirdest/weakest reasons to have a pay per view match. I think we all know what to expect here and in this case, that is not a bad thing.

McIntyre wins here, in what should be dominant fashion, as even Happy Corbin's interference isn't enough to keep Moss around. It would not be out of the question to see McIntyre challenging for the Universal Title at Wrestlemania and there is no sense at all in having him lose what feels like a squash. Then again, it makes little sense to have him in this match in the first place, but at least he should win it pretty easily.

WWE Title: Big E.(c) vs. Seth Rollins vs. Kevin Owens vs. Bobby Lashley

They are in a pretty awkward spot here as Lashley is looking like the star of stars on Monday Night Raw at the moment but Big E. has already gone over him twice. It also doesn't help that Lashley was such a dominant champion and had cleared out the main event scene, so it isn't like they have many other options for him should he get the title back. That leaves Rollins and Owens as the underdogs, which could open some doors for them.

I'll still go with Big E. though, as Rollins doesn't seem likely to get the title back and Owens is probably there to take the pin. Big E. has been badly overshadowed by Lashley in

recent weeks and I'm not sure how much longer he is going to keep the title. It seems like Lashley's to win, unless they find something else for him to do in a hurry. Big E. retains for now though, even if it is just keeping it on him for a short while.

Raw Women's Title: Becky Lynch(c) vs. Liv Morgan

Man alive I wanted to get into this match but, as usual, WWE has managed to take away almost everything that made Morgan interesting in the first place. The fans got behind Morgan because she was an underdog who probably shouldn't be here but kept fighting anyway. Now she is being presented like a main event star and it has taken me pretty far out of the whole thing.

As much as I would love to see Morgan win the title, I can't imagine they pull the trigger on anything that doesn't involve one of the already established big stars. That has plagued WWE for a long time now, even if Morgan taking the title could be a heck of a feel good moment. Lynch is likely to retain here, probably in a more definitive manner than before, and then WWE will wonder why the division is falling apart right in front of them.

Smackdown World Title: Roman Reigns(c) vs. Brock Lesnar

Oh boy I'm not sure where to go with this one and that makes for a pretty fascinating main event. The Paul Heyman factor changes everything, and now the question is not so much when Heyman returns but rather does he do it here. That would be a heck of a fast turnaround for him to be back though and I don't think it happens so soon. That gives us a problem though, and unfortunately I think I know where it's going.

I think they actually do the title change here, as Reigns isn't good enough to beat Lesnar without Heyman in his corner. That is going to open up a long list of issues, but for now I think Lesnar takes the title, likely setting up some big

showdown at Wrestlemania for when they really want to do something new. These two are forever joined at the hip, and this time I think it's Lesnar taking the title again.

Overall Thoughts

Overall, I'm liking what we're seeing with this show and it could be a good one. Now that being said, this is WWE and there is always the chance that they are going to screw something up. I'm not sure how big of a show this is going to be going forward, but the first edition is a stacked card that could be quite good if it lives up to its rather high potential.

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Daily News Update – January 1, 2022

Happy New Year edition.

Make sure you check out some recent reviews.

[Impact Wrestling – December 30, 2021](#)

[Rampage – December 31, 2021](#)

[WWE's Top Ten Moments Of 2021](#)

Why Kevin Owens Was The Only WWE Day One Main Eventer Around This Week.

<https://wrestlingrumors.net/tommyhall/kevin-owens-wwe-day-one-main-eventer-around-week/>

WRESTLING RUMORS: WWE Shoots Down Several Possible Day One Changes.

<https://wrestlingrumors.net/tommyhall/wrestling-rumors-wwe-shoots-several-possible-day-one-changes/>

Update On Injury Issues For Monday Night Raw Star.

<https://wrestlingrumors.net/tommyhall/update-injury-issues-monday-night-raw-star/>

One For Two: WWE Announces Plans For Unified Titles.

<https://wrestlingrumors.net/tommyhall/one-two-wwe-announces-plans-unified-titles/>

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WWE's Top Ten Moments Of 2021: Just Make It Two

WWE's Top Ten Moments Of 2021

Date: December 31, 2021

Hosts: Pat McAfee, Michael Cole, Becky Lynch

It's not exactly Smackdown but at least it's a special show. As the title might suggest, this is a Top Ten special for the year, which has me wondering what WWE might count as best. They do know how to pull some good things out of the archives though and maybe they can do that again here. Let's get to it.

I'll be posting the full versions of matches rather than the clipped editions.

Cole and McAfee welcome us to the show and promise a big

celebration. McAfee is starting big, by bringing out the third host: Becky Lynch. The champ is glad to be here and throws us to #10.

From Summerslam.

Raw Tag Team Titles: RKBro vs. Omos/AJ Styles

RKBro is challenging after officially reuniting on Raw. Riddle goes after Omos to start and gets tossed down in a hurry as the strikes don't work. The sleeper doesn't do much either as Omos isn't playing around here. AJ comes in and it's time to kick away at Riddle. That doesn't last long either as Riddle dives over and makes the tag.

Orton unloads on Styles and even kicks Omos off the apron to the floor. The hanging DDT is broken up though and Omos chokeslams Riddle onto the apron. That's enough of a distraction for AJ to snap Orton's throat across the ropes. A moonsault takes Riddle down on the floor but the Phenomenal Forearm doesn't work. Orton ducks and grabs the RK0 for the pin and the titles at 6:31.

Rating: C+. They didn't bother doing anything but try to have a feel good moment here and that worked out well. Omos and Styles have done everything they need to do with the titles and it is a good move to switch things over. RKBro is the best thing going on Raw so give them the good moment and let things move on.

Video on Roman Reigns.

Here's #9.

From Wrestlemania.

Sami Zayn vs. Kevin Owens

It's pretty awesome that these two are getting to face each other at Wrestlemania. Sami comes out first and introduces

Logan Paul, who does not seem that popular. Owens plants him with a Pop Up Powerbomb at the bell so Sami rolls outside. That means Sami has to grab the ropes to avoid an apron powerbomb. Sami gets dropped ribs first across the top rope and there's the Cannonball to crush him again.

The threat of Owens going to the top sends Sami outside again but this time he catches Owens with a brainbuster on the apron for a big reaction (egads). Back in and the Michinoku Driver (Cole calls it a Blue Thunder Bomb, but Graves "saves him from the internet" by correcting him. Cole: "Thanks Corey. I got enough of that last night.") gives Sami two so he puts Owens on top.

Some headbutts send Sami flying and the frog splash gives Owens two of his own. A fisherman's buster onto the knee knocks Zayn silly for two more but ht he's right back with the exploder suplex into the corner. The Helluva Kick and Stunner both miss so Sami grabs the Blue Thunder Bomb for two. Another exploder sets up a nasty half and half suplex to rock Owens and the brainbuster gets another near fall.

Sami takes him up again and gets countered into the swinging fisherman's superplex to crush Zayn and have Paul slumped over in his chair. Back up and Sami hits the Helluva Kick but makes the mistake of trying another one, allowing Owens to hit a superkick. Another superkick sets up the Stunner to pin Zayn at 9:17.

Rating: B-. A lot of what made this work was just seeing Owens vs. Zayn at Wrestlemania. These two have one of the deepest histories in modern wrestling and it must be so special to them to get to do this. Good match too, with Owens getting a win like he deserves after having such a great series with Reigns. Also, thanks for getting the show on track after the awful first hour.

Post match Paul checks on Sami as he gets up so Sami yells a

lot and reminds Paul that Owens is the enemy. Paul shoves him down and storms off so Paul raises Owens' hand. The Stunner leaves him laying so Owens can hug his family. Paul is helped out and asks why Owens did that.

McAfee and Becky are having a good time without Cole, who throws us to #8.

From Summerslam.

Raw World Title: Goldberg vs. Bobby Lashley

Lashley, with MVP, is defending. They circle each other to start and we get the big power lockup. Lashley gets backed into the corner and shoves Goldberg back. A shoulder doesn't stagger Goldberg but his flying shoulder drops Lashley. A powerslam into a World's Strongest Slam crushes Lashley and a clothesline takes him down again. Neither of them can hit the Jackhammer so Lashley knocks him down for the forearms to the back of the neck.

Goldberg sends him flying but MVP pulls Lashley outside to avoid the spear. That's fine with Goldberg, who hits the spear on the floor instead. Back in and Lashley bails outside to avoid another spear. MVP hits Goldberg in the knee with his cane so Lashley takes out the leg. The Hurt Lock is blocked and the fans aren't pleased. Another shot to the knee puts Goldberg down and he rolls outside. The knee is sent into the post hard twice in a row and Goldberg collapses before Lashley can try the spear. That's enough and the referee stops it at 7:12.

Rating: D+. Goldberg's stuff was looking better than usual at the start and then it turned into WWE trying something emotional. They're probably setting up a rematch or something, because Goldberg is the most overly pushed legend in WWE history. I have no idea what this was supposed to accomplish other than to make Lashley look like someone who can't get the job done almost six months into his reign. It was an

acceptable power brawl for a bit and then it was the leg stuff over and over until the finish.

Post match Lashley unloads on Goldberg with chair shots to the knee and Goldberg is done. Goldberg's son Gage tries to run in and jumps on Lashley's back so Lashley puts him in the Hurt Lock. MVP grabs the mic and says Lashley didn't know who it was as Goldberg crawls onto his son. MVP and Lashley bail as Goldberg swears vengeance and Gage looks bored. They had this much time to set things up and their big idea is to make it about Goldberg's kid? There is NO ONE ELSE who can get a spot like this than Goldberg? WWE is dying for fresh stars and they use an emotional angle on Goldberg?

Video on the rise of Nikki Ash.

It's time for #7...which is also from Summerslam.

Raw Women's Title: Nikki Ash vs. Charlotte vs. Rhea Ripley

Ash is defending. Ripley gets sent outside to start and it's Nikki grabbing a rollup for two. Back in and Ripley gets rolled up for the same but Charlotte sends Nikki outside. The big fight is on with Ripley and Charlotte slugging it out until Ash comes back in with a rollup for two. That earns her another toss to the floor and Ripley grabs a northern lights suplex for two on Charlotte.

A big boot knocks Ripley off the apron but Nikki is back in with a tornado DDT for two. Charlotte picks Nikki up but Ripley is back in to German suplex both of them at once. The missile dropkick gets two on Charlotte so she and Ripley fight to the floor. They stand in place and look up at Nikki as she gets ready before diving onto the two of them. Back in and Charlotte suplexes both of them, followed by a double DDT.

The chops have Ripley and Nikki rocked but they double team their way out of trouble. Charlotte sends both of them outside and goes up for the corkscrew moonsault, which lands straight

on Nikki and drives her HARD into the barricade. That was terrifying and thankfully Nikki is up so Ripley can put her into the Prism Trap.

Charlotte breaks that up and it's the Prism Trap to Charlotte, who reverses into the Figure Eight. Nikki comes in off the top to break it up and the swinging neckbreaker gets two on Charlotte, with Ripley making the save this time. Ripley is sent outside and Charlotte avoids Nikki's high crossbody, setting up the Figure Eight for the tap to make Charlotte champion again at 13:12.

Rating: B-. I think I've run out of ways to talk about how many title wins Charlotte has these days but it's better to just pull the plug on Nikki as a champion at the moment. This has been a complete nightmare since she won the title and if they just want to get it back on Charlotte, go for it. Ripley seems to be a lost cause as well though, as she has been flattened by the Charlotte train. The match itself was quite good with some awesome near falls, but there is a certain deflating value when Charlotte gets the title back.

Video on Shinsuke Nakamura.

Pat McAfee heavily approves of Nakamura, but Lynch does not approve of McAfee's approval.

We look at the roller coaster year of King/Happy Corbin.

Here's a look at the debuting stars of the year.

From Wrestlemania at #6.

Miz/John Morrison vs. Damian Priest/Bad Bunny

Bunny gets a huge entrance of his own, coming into the stadium on a semi truck. Miz and Priest start but Miz wants Bunny instead. That's exactly what Miz gets and Bunny looks a bit nervous. Bunny drops him with a right hand so Morrison has to remind Miz that bunnies are lucky. Another right hand sends

Miz into the ropes again so he takes Bunny into the corner for a change.

A kick to the ribs puts Bunny down but he's right back with La Majistral for two. Morrison freaks out, saying Miz needs to start thinking like one of the best of all time. Back up and Bunny slides through Miz's legs and snaps off a fairly long headscissors. There's a headbutt to Morrison but he catches Bunny with an elbow. Miz comes back in with a chinlock but Bunny is back up with more right hands. A sunset flip gets two so Miz kicks him in the face to cut off another comeback.

Miz knocks him into the corner again as the fans try to get behind Bunny again. Bunny manages to get a boot up in the corner though and a tornado DDT plants Miz. The diving tag brings in Priest to clean house in a hurry, including tossing Miz at Morrison. The South of Heaven chokeslam gets two on Miz and Bunny comes back in for stereo Broken Arrows for a double near fall.

Bunny goes up top and hits a big dive to take out Miz/Morrison (Saxton: "I knew bunnies could hop but I didn't know they could fly!"). Miz is right back in for the Skull Crushing Finale for two on Priest with Bunny making the save. Bunny hits a Canadian Destroyer on Morrison on the floor and a high crossbody finishes Miz at 15:01.

Rating: C. Yeah Bunny got in a lot of stuff here, but are you going to tell the biggest star willing to do something with WWE that he can't do something? Bunny probably got in more offense than any other celebrity in recent memory and he looked fine enough doing it. Miz and Morrison have been treated as clueless putzes for years now so it isn't that much of a stretch to see them lose here. Priest got in some points by association here so this went about as well as it could have, with Bunny being FAR better than I would have bet on.

Long video on Edge vs. Seth Rollins.

#5, from Crown Jewel.

Edge vs. Seth Rollins

Inside the Cell to start big. Edge slugs away in the corner to start as the fans declare this awesome in a hurry. Rollins gets kicked in the face to send him outside but comes back in with the springboard knee to the face to take over. A suicide dive only hits Cell though and Edge sends him hard into the steps. Edge throws in the steps and hits the Edgecution for two but already seems to be limping a bit. It's already time to go for the chair bar but Rollins is back up with the Sling Blade.

They head outside again with Edge sending him into the Cell to regain control. Edge tries the Crossface but Rollins grabs the chair bar to hit him in the eye and escape. Rollins knocks the chair into Edge's face and hits a frog splash for two. It's already time for the table at ringside but first Rollins has to plant Edge with the Unprettier (which is suddenly Edge's move) for two more.

Rollins takes his sweet time going up top, allowing Edge to shove him into the Cell and through the table for the big crash to the floor. The steps are thrown in, with Edge busting on the Edge-O-Matic to plant Rollins again. Edge leaves Rollins on the steps and goes up top to drive a chair into him for the big crash and a delayed near fall. Rollins is back up with a superkick into the Pedigree for two of his own and they're both down. The Stomp is loaded up but Edge counters into a Buckle Bomb to set up the spear for the VERY near fall.

With nothing else working, it's time for a ladder, which knocks Rollins right back down. Rollins is able to whip Edge into the ladder in the corner and let's get another table for a bonus. The ladder is set up as well but Edge fights up to meet him on top. That's not the best idea though as Rollins busts out a sunset bomb through the table for another near

fall. Some superkicks drop Edge to his knees and a basement superkick puts him down.

Since that isn't enough, Rollins wraps a chain around his boot for another low superkick. The Stomp onto the chair is countered with a crotching using the chair, allowing Edge to kick him down for a change. There's a low superkick to Rollins and Edge grabs a Crossface, complete with a wrench in Rollins' mouth. That's not enough either though as Edge puts Rollins' head onto the chair, setting up the Stomp for the pin at 27:40.

Rating: B. It was a heck of a fight and they beat each other up rather well, but this is what modern Cell matches have become: TLC matches with a big cage on top, which can leave things feeling a little cramped. There's so much stuff around and inside of the ring that it almost feels messy, which isn't what I would like to see in a Cell match. Going back and forth with the moves and spots that brought them here (including what is apparently now Edge's Unprettier) worked, though it never hit that next level. In other words, most modern Cell matches.

We look at Bianca Belair winning the Royal Rumble, sending us to #4.

From Wrestlemania.

Smackdown Women's Title: Sasha Banks vs. Bianca Belair

Banks is defending and they both look to be near tears to start. Feeling out process to start with Banks having to slip out of something close to a torture rack but getting caught in a double chickenwing. Banks manages to send her outside but the suicide dive is caught, allowing Belair to gorilla press her and walk up the steps for a toss over the top. Back in and Belair picks her up, does some squats, and slams her but Banks nails a running knee to take over.

The double arm crank goes on but Belair gets up and powers her into the corner. Banks is sent to the floor where she tries to pull Belair's braid. That's fine with Belair, who uses it to pull Banks into the post. Banks misses running double knees into the barricade and the both beat the count. Back in again and Belair muscles her up for a suplex, bounces her off the top, leans Banks forward, and then drops her back for two.

Belair shoulders her down again and then drives in some shoulders in the corner. The 450 hits knees though and Banks tries a hurricanrana, which is countered into back to back powerbombs. Banks sends her into the corner though and it's a kick to Belair's face, setting up a double springboard tornado DDT for two. With Belair down, Banks goes up and starts with the Meteora but changes into a splash halfway down.

Belair tries to get up so Banks uses the braid to pull her down into the Bank Statement for a rather clever setup. That's broken up with a roll into the ropes so Banks hammers away in said ropes. Banks goes up so Belair tries a running hurricanrana, only to get tied in the Tree of Woe.

The top rope double stomp misses and so do the running knees, which go into the buckle. Now the 450 connects for two and Belair screams a lot on the kickout. The KOD is countered and Banks grabs the braid, which is used for a heck of a whip. Now the KOD can connect for the pin and the title at 17:20. Cole shouts about a kickout before switching to Belair winning.

Rating: B. I saw someone give the perfect description of this as brains vs. brawn, which is exactly what it was. Belair is an athletic freak and someone who can do almost everything you ask of her in the ring while Banks is the seasoned veteran who knows how to take on anyone. Banks couldn't hang with Belair physically so she had to fight smart, but eventually you just can't get around that kind of power and athleticism. Very good match and an awesome story to wrap things up.

There is a HUGE welt on Banks' side from the hair whip. Belair celebrates to end the show.

We take a long look at John Cena's return.

Becky likes returns, such as this one at #3.

From Summerslam.

Smackdown Women's Title: Bianca Belair vs. Sasha Banks

Belair is defending....but not against Banks, who isn't cleared, despite being advertised all the way through the Kickoff Show. We have a replacement.

Smackdown Women's Title: Bianca Belair vs. Carmella

Belair isn't impressed, but hang on another replacement.

Smackdown Women's Title: Bianca Belair vs. Becky Lynch

Yeah that works and Lynch is challenging, after taking Carmella out that is. We get the big Belair vs. Lynch staredown and Becky officially challenges so the match is on. Bell, right hand, Manhandle Slam, new champion in 23 seconds. I would really hope that there is more to it than what we just saw, as beating Belair, who has been on fire in recent months, like that is a bad idea. There is nothing wrong with pushing Lynch, but don't sacrifice someone as awesome as Belair to do it.

Video on Drew McIntyre.

From Raw, September 13, here's #2.

Raw World Title: Bobby Lashley vs. Big E.

Lashley is defending....or he would be if not for his knee injury. Big E. slaps him in the face and that's enough to ring the bell. Lashley takes him to the mat and the brawl is on. A spear cuts Big E. down for two but he goes back to Lashley's

bad leg. The Big Ending gives Big E. the pin and the title at 1:18!

We'll wrap it up the only way we could. From Summerslam, here's #1, after Roman Reigns retained against John Cena.

And then Brock Lesnar comes back. Paul Heyman cowers in the corner and Reigns looks scared. Lesnar gets in the ring and Reigns and Heyman slowly back away. Lesnar, as a good guy for the first time in what feels like forever, poses to end the show. That's about all there was left for Reigns at this point as Edge beat Seth Rollins, so well done on a big surprise.

Long video on Brock Lesnar vs. Roman Reigns.

Day One rundown, with no match changes announced so far.

Becky and McAfee leave Cole alone, but he tries to follow them. That was rather sad.

Overall Rating: C. This was a really weird one, as you would think it was an advertisement for Summerslam on DVD. There were ten moments included and eight of them were from Summerslam or Wrestlemania. Those are two of the biggest shows of the year, but maybe spread the wealth out a bit? It wasn't a bad show and it's an easy two hour sit which helped promote Day One, but this was a weird way to go for a Best Of 2021 special.

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Rampage – December 31, 2021: That's How We Wrap It Up

Rampage

Date: December 31, 2021

Location: Daily's Place, Jacksonville, Florida

Commentators: Excalibur, Taz, Ricky Starks

It's the very last show of the year for any company, as this one is going all the way to an hour before the New Year on the east coast. There is a fairly big card tonight with an anything goes women's tag and Cody Rhodes defending the TNT Title. That doesn't sound too bad so let's get to it.

[Here is Dynamite if you need a recap.](#)

Opening sequence.

Anthony Bowens vs. Darby Allin

Max Caster's rap is about the booster shot and putting people away like Ghislaine Maxwell. Allin starts fast with an early rollup for two, sending Bowens bailing to the floor in a hurry. Back in and Allin ducks a clothesline and dropkicks Bowens right back to the floor. We take a break and come back with Bowens catching a splash in the corner but Allin grabs some rollups for two each anyway.

Allin heads up for the Coffin Drop but gets knocked down, with his arm landing pretty hard. A twisting DDT out of the corner gives Bowens two so he goes up, only to have Allin run the corner and step on his hand. Sting and Caster get in a fight on the floor, allowing Bowens to send Allin into the barricade. Back in again and Allin grabs a Code Red for two, setting up a flip dive to the floor to take out the Acclaimed. The Coffin Drop finishes Allin at 10:08.

Rating: C+. Pretty nice match here as they gave Allin an opponent he should beat and then did just that. It's the kind of match that works out well as Bowens has no business beating someone like Allin while Allin gets a win over someone he should beat. I could go for more like this, especially when it didn't overstay its welcome.

Post match, Andrade El Idolo comes out for a distraction, allowing the Acclaimed to blast Sting with the boombox.

We get the return of Technique With Taz, looking at Hook. These are always cool and show a very different side from an analyst. Like analysis.

Penelope Ford/The Bunny vs. Tay Conti/Anna Jay

No DQ and the fight is on in a hurry. Conti and Jay take them down to start and set up a table on the floor but Ford posts Jay hard. A bicycle kick takes out Conti and Ford goes up top for a moonsault onto Conti onto the table...which doesn't budge an inch in a very painful looking crash.

Back in and Ford breaks a bottle over Conti's head to knock her silly. A bunch of weapons, including a very specially painted table (including a brass knuckles design) goes in, with Bunny and Conti already busted open. The table is put in the corner and the villains load up some open chairs in the middle of the ring. Back in and Jay suplexes Bunny onto the chairs and we take a break.

We come back with Jay trying the Queenslayer but getting driven through the table for her efforts. It's already time for some thumbtacks, with Jay superplexing Bunny onto said tacks for two, with Ford diving in for the save. The save sends Ford's hands into the tacks but she is fine enough to kick Conti down. Some stomps onto a chair crush Conti, setting up a piledriver from the apron through a table to knock Conti silly. Back in and Bunny grabs the brass knuckles but Jay wraps barbed wire around her arm and grabs the Queenslayer to finish Bunny at 11:19.

Rating: B. This one took some time to sink in and I'm still not sure what to think about it. They were working very hard and it felt like they were trying to prove a point, but it also felt like they were trying a bit too hard. I'm not wild on having all of the blood and violence and carnage in any match and this was no exception. Throw in that I'm not sure the feud warranted such a violent match in the first place and this was a lot. That being said, I couldn't take my eyes off of it and can absolutely appreciate the effort so I'll go with a pretty solid performance here.

Video on Hangman Page vs. Bryan Danielson.

Here's what's coming at various show.

The face to face interview has Dan Lambert talking about how Cody Rhodes made a bunch of deals to get where he is. Arn Anderson doesn't want to hear it and says tonight, Cody is going to show something.

TNT Title: Cody Rhodes vs. Ethan Page

Cody, with Arn Anderson to counter Scorpio Sky and Dan Lambert, is defending. They start fast with Cody headlocking him down but Lambert grabs a foot to cut things off. Page grabs a suplex for two but they head to the apron, where Cody can't hit Cross Rhodes. Back in and Cody goes after the leg, setting up an Indian Deathlock as we take a break.

We come back with Page hitting a gordbuster and Sky getting in a cheap shot. Cue Dustin Rhodes to go after Sky, but the distraction lets Cody hit Cross Rhodes for two. Cody takes him up top but gets caught in a heck of a super powerslam for two more. They slug it out with an exchange of kicks to the head, only to have Cody come back with the Cody Cutter. Cody goes up and gets pulled down with the Iconoclasm. The Ego's Edge is escaped though and it's a string of Cross Rhodes into the Tiger Driver 98 to finish Page at 14:18.

Rating: C+. As usual, it's a perfectly serviceable Cody Rhodes match and little more. While he might not be the most popular name in the world right now, he can still put in a completely watchable, if not good, match with just about anyone. That is his firm ceiling most of the time though and a match without much drama in this spot wasn't breaking through anything. This was more a way to get Cody on the show for a first title defense and it did both things successfully.

Overall Rating: B-. I'm not sure what kind of an audience this is going to draw, but it had three good matches with a very memorable street fight in the middle. Rampage has figured out what kind of a show it needs to be and now we're getting some more entertaining shows as a result. The street fight is the only thing worth seeing, but dang it was a spectacle to behold.

Results

Darby Allin b. Ethan Page – Coffin Drop

Tay Conti/Anna Jay b. The Bunny/Penelope Ford – Queenslayer to Bunny

Cody Rhodes b. Ethan Page – Tiger Driver 98

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Impact Wrestling – December 30, 2021 (Best Of 2021 Part 2): The Celebration Continues

Impact Wrestling

Date: December 30, 2021

Hosts: Josh Matthews, Scott D'Amore

It's the last show of the year and just like last week, that means it is time for the second half of the Best Of 2021. That could make for a good show, as Impact Wrestling knows how to pick and choose their best stuff. There should be some solid picks here, as was the case last week. We also have some more awards to hand out so let's get to it.

As usual, I'll be copying and pasting the full version of the matches rather than the clipped ones airing here.

Josh and Scott welcome us to the show.

We see the last few minutes of Moose retaining the World Title over Eddie Edwards in a Full Metal Mayhem match at Turning Point.

Kaleb With A K is doing a photo shoot for the Influence when the IInspiration interrupts. They insults each other's outfits and the IInspiration's own photographer comes in, leaving Kaleb With A K unhappy.

From Bound For Glory.

Knockouts Tag Team Titles: IInspiration vs. Decay

The debuting IInspiration is defending and Harley Cameron sings them to the ring. We get all of the signature IIconics poses and it's time for an official introduction. They say they are here to inspire up and strike the hands on hips pose....so yeah they're still the same team, minus some of the annoying voices. Rosemary (in orange) scares McKay into the corner to start so Rosemary sideslams Lee for two instead. Havok comes in to scream and hammer away, setting up the Upside Down from Rosemary. That's enough for Lee to grab a suplex and McKay grabs a quickly broken chinlock.

They take each other down by the hair and it's back to Havok to crush the IInspiration in the corner. Lee manages to send Havok outside though and it's McKay coming back in to take over. The bulldog onto McKay's knee gets two but Rosemary is back with a Scorpion Death Drop. Havok misses a legdrop though and gets sent into the post. That just makes her scream, so she gets sent in again, followed by another posting. Rosemary makes the save but gets sent into McKay's knee. A sitout powerbomb/neckbreaker combination is enough to give McKay the pin and the titles at 8:58.

Rating: C. The action wasn't great, but the IInspiration feels SO much bigger than any team that has held the titles since their return (save for maybe Fire N Flava). It isn't like Rosemary and Havok were some legendary team (with their 98 day reign ending here) so this is the right call. It isn't a case of Impact bringing in WWE rejects and putting them over, because this is a nice upgrade for the titles.

It's time for the Knockouts Tag Team of the Year Award with the following nominees:

Decay

IInspiration

Fire N Flava

Jordynne Grace/Rachael Ellering

Influence

Grace and Ellering win, which is a little surprising but the Influence hasn't won anything, Fire N Flava are half gone and the IInspiration has been here about a month and a half.

Eddie Edwards, Rich Swann, Willie Mack, Heath and Rhino are ready for Violent By Design and the Good Brothers at Hard To Kill.

We look at the Top Ten Social Media Posts of the Year, with Christian Cage winning the World Title on the debut of AEW Rampage.

From Slammiversary.

Impact Wrestling World Title: Kenny Omega vs. Sami Callihan

Omega, with Don Callis, is defending and it is No DQ. Callis lists off Omega's greatness, including saying he is the King of the Deathmatch and better than Terry Funk. Callihan jumps Omega to start and hits the Cactus Special for an early two. As Callis joins commentary, Callihan sends in a bunch of chairs but Omega blocks a fork to the head. Omega's sunset flip is blocked and Callihan busts out a pizza cutter to slice Omega open.

Another rake across the head makes it even worse and a Death Valley Driver sends Omega outside. Callihan follows but gets caught with a trashcan to the head, allowing Omega to grab some weapons of his own. More shots put Callihan down and the moonsault with a trashcan onto the leg keeps him in trouble.

The chair is wedged in the corner so Omega loads up....the One Winged Angel, which is countered into a rollup. The kickout sends Callihan head first into the chair though and he's busted open too.

Omega grabs a fork to stab the head, as well as the inside of the mouth. They head outside with Callihan chopping the post, meaning Omega can load up the table. The Snapdragon off the apron is broken up, as is the piledriver from the apron. Instead, Callihan piledrives him through the table and throws in a piece of plywood. A trashcan to the head rocks Omega again and a side slam onto the top of the open can makes it worse.

Callihan sends him hard through the board in the corner for two and it's time for a chair wrapped in barbed wire (Callis: "Never would have happened when I ran this place!"). Omega manages a V Trigger though and another one gets two. A bunch of stuff is piled up in the middle of the ring and Omega hits a superplex through all of it. Another V Trigger sets up a failed One Winged Angel attempt and Callihan Tombstones him onto the barbed wire chair for two.

Omega rolls outside and throws salt in Callihan's eyes, causing Callihan to take the referee out. The blind Callihan gets belt shot and piledriven but there is no referee. Cue the Good Brothers but Eddie Edwards and Chris Sabin cut them off. Callihan hits a package piledriver for two so it's time for the bag of thumbtacks. Callis gets up for a distraction so Omega can throw tacks in Callihan's eyes. Another V Trigger connects, followed by another V Trigger with tacks on the knee. Omega puts the tacks in Callihan's mouth for another V Trigger and the One Winged Angel onto the tacks retains the title at 27:33.

Rating: B. I'm never sure what to give something like this but the violence was good, as it was supposed to be. The match didn't feel like the nearly half an hour it got, but the V

Triggers and the easy kickoff off the Tombstone onto the chair were a bit much. I liked what we got and while there wasn't much drama, I'm not sure how much there could be in something like this.

We look at Jonah debuting and laying out Josh Alexander.

From Impact, December 2.

Jonah vs. Jay Vidal

Jonah runs him over, tosses him around, and finishes with the top rope splash at 1:49. That splash still looks incredible as the impact is perfect.

From Slammiversary.

X-Division Title: Chris Bey vs. Ace Austin vs. Josh Alexander vs. Trey Miguel vs. Petey Williams vs. Rohit Raju

Alexander is defending in Ultimate X, with commentary saying that wrestling skill has little importance here. It's a big brawl to start (as it should be) with Bey going for the belt early and getting caught just as fast. Alexander is left alone so Austin comes back in and gets German suplexed. Raju goes up top and jumps for the belt, only to crash down. Bey comes in and hits a big running flip dive back to the floor. Williams follows with the slingshot hurricanrana and Miguel hits some kind of a running DDT.

Raju and Austin go up at the same time until Austin gets shoved down onto the pile for the huge moonsault crash. That leaves Raju to bust out a grappling hook and climbs up, taking WAY longer than it would have had he just gone as usual. Williams makes the save, sending Striker into a more complicated than necessary metaphor about Williams being the foundation of the division. After Williams clears Raju out, here is Bey to take Williams down as well. Bey and Miguel wind up going for the belt at the same time, though Miguel is a lot

further away.

An attempt at a hurricanrana doesn't quite work so Miguel kind of spears Bey down instead to drop everyone. A Tower of Doom is loaded up but they have to stop to prevent Raju from pulling the title down with a hook. Everyone else is down so Raju grabs a chair and tries the hook again, only to get dropkicked down by Miguel. Williams comes back in for a Sharpshooter on Miguel, with Raju adding a Crossface for the tap. That means nothing so Alexander goes up, only to get caught hanging upside down with the belt behind him.

Therefore, Bey is fed up to him for an ankle lock as Alexander is still hanging from the X. It makes no sense but DANG that is an awesome visual. At the same time, Bey chokes Austin, who headlocks Williams, who still has Miguel in the Sharpshooter. Raju lets go and chairs Alexander down to get everyone a needed breather. Austin goes up and tries for the belt but slips a bit, allowing Bey to dive off the top with a cutter to put them both down again. Williams is back up with the Canadian Destroyer on Raju and a running version drops Miguel.

That lets Williams go up but Bey Bey get son Alexander's shoulder to cut him off...and gets planed with another Canadian Destroyer. Well that worked. Alexander isn't having any of this Destroyer stuff and gives Williams the C4 to knock him silly. Raju breaks up Alexander and Miguel's slugout, meaning it's a Downward Spiral to plant Miguel off of Alexander's shoulders. That lets Raju go up but Miguel makes the save and takes him down.

Alexander superplexes Miguel down though, meaning he and Bey can go up at the same time. They wind up hanging upside and pull the belt down at the same time, only to have Austin springboard in and...completely crash without grabbing the title. The distraction lets Alexander knock Bey down and retain at 15:46.

Rating: B+. Yeah this was pretty awesome with everyone trying something and a bunch of insane spots. The match isn't supposed to have much of a story or flow to it and that's perfectly fine. This is the company's version of the ladder match and they nailed it here, though I have no idea who takes the title from Alexander at this point. Whoever does is going to let him move up to the main event scene though, as there is nothing left for him to do.

Video on W. Morrissey.

Here are the nominees for Men's Wrestler of the Year:

Kenny Omega
Christian Cage
Moose
Josh Alexander
Rich Swann

Josh Alexander wins, as he kind of had to.

We see the last few minutes of Rich Swann beating Moose to retain the World Title at Sacrifice.

Here are the nominees for the Men's Match of the Year:

Kenny Omega vs. Rich Swann (Rebellion)
Kenny Omega vs. Sami Callihan (Slammiversary)
Moose vs. Rich Swann (Sacrifice)
Christian Cage vs. Josh Alexander (Bound For Glory)
Ultimate X (Slammiversary)
Josh Alexander vs. TJP (BTI/Impact – June 3)

The winner comes later.

Mercedes Martinez doesn't like Deonna Purrazzo speaking her name so the challenge is on.

The hosts talk about the knockouts division.

The Men's Match of the Year: Josh Alexander vs. TJP. Again, kind of the clear favorite/winner based on how much it was hyped at the time.

Before The Impact: X-Division Title: Josh Alexander vs. TJP

Alexander is defending in a sixty minute Iron Man match. Fallah Bahh is here to sweep the steps for TJP and Petey Williams is here with Alexander. They go with the grappling to start with Alexander being shoved down in a hurry. A test of strength goes to Alexander but he can't break TJP's bridge. Instead TJP flips him over but gets caught in a bodyscissors. With that broken up they go back to a standoff until Alexander grabs a headlock of his own. That's reversed into a headlock takeover until they jump up to another standoff.

Alexander goes to a crank on the ankle, which he pulls into a bow and arrow hold. TJP flips out again and it's another standoff as they have a lot of time to use here. This time TJP takes him down by the ankle, setting off an exchange of mat holds. TJP pulls on the leg but Alexander grabs a chinlock for the break. That's reversed into a hammerlock with TJP flipping over him to stay on the arm. Alexander gets his own armbar with TJP not being able to flip out of it so easily this time. He finally manages to send Alexander outside and a Bahh distraction lets TJP hit the slingshot dropkick (and a good looking one at that).

Back in and TJP starts in on the ribs, including a belly to back suplex for two. Alexander dragon screw legwhips him down but TJP slams the leg into the mat to put Alexander in more trouble. A headlock on the mat has Alexander in more trouble but gets reversed into a headscissors. TJP tries to spin out but gets reversed into something like a short piledriver.

TJP is fine enough to try a Muta Lock but gets reversed into a chinlock into an abdominal stretch. With the holds not working, Alexander rolls some German suplexes but gets pulled

into a Kimura. That's reversed into an ankle lock (on TJP's other ankle) to send TJP to the ropes with 45:00 to go.

Alexander is busted open just a bit as he hits a belly to back suplex for two. A cannonball down onto the leg sets up some twisting around the rope to keep TJP in trouble. The chinlock eats up some more of the clock but TJP fights up to send him into the corner. Now the facewashes work but Alexander takes him down into a cradle for the first fall at 19:52.

We get a thirty second rest period before and the canned noise cranks up. TJP takes him down into a chinlock into a cravate, which is reversed into a chinlock with a knee in TJP's back. A backbreaker drops TJP again and Alexander sends him outside in a heap. Just to show off, Alexander picks him up and walks up the steps to drop TJP inside. A surfboard in the ropes (that's a new one) makes TJP scream until Alexander lets go.

Back in and Alexander goes up, with TJP catching him in a top rope superplex. TJP tries to roll it into another suplex but they crash over the top to the floor instead. The brawl on the apron sees TJP dropped down onto the apron as we hit halftime. Alexander drives TJP through the ropes with a running crossbody for another crash. Back in and TJP lifts him up for another backbreaker but TJP is right back with something like an Indian Deathlock. That's broken up as well and Alexander hits a very delayed (as in about a minute) vertical suplex.

With TJP down, it's off to another double arm crank. That's broken up so TJP tries to power him down for a cover. With that not working, TJP tries a Sharpshooter but switches over to a Muta Lock instead. That doesn't last long but Alexander is back up with a German suplex to put them both down. TJP unloads in the corner but charges into a hot shot onto the buckle.

We have twenty minutes left and it's time to crank on TJP's ankle again. That's broken up with an enziguri, followed by a

toss to send TJP shoulder first into the post. With TJP still in the ropes, Alexander grabs a half crab while sitting on the top. The chinlock goes on until TJP sends him chest first into the corner. The Black Widow goes on until TJP turns it over into a cradle for two with fifteen minutes left. A tornado DDT sends Alexander outside and there's a slingshot dive to put him down again.

Alexander is right back up with a suplex onto the apron (egads) and TJP is mostly done. That's a bit too much for Alexander so he takes him to the stage and loads up a piledriver. Cue Chris Sabin and Trey Miguel to say that's too far but the distraction inadvertently allows TJP to hit a Tombstone powerslam (basically Riddle's Bro Derek). A bunch of the roster comes out to watch as Alexander stumbles down the ramp and rolls in to beat the clock with 10:00 left.

TJP hits a running knee in the corner but the Mamba Splash takes too long and only hits mat. Alexander can't follow up either though and gets tied in the Tree of Woe so TJP can hit him in the face quite a few times. A sliding dropkick connects as we have eight minutes left and Impact officially begins. TJP hits a springboard shot to the face for two but a double clothesline puts both of them down. Alexander tries the double underhook but gets reversed into a Falcon Arrow for two more.

We have five minutes left as TJP hits a running boot in the corner. TJP does it again but this time it is countered into the ankle lock. That's countered into the Detonation Kick for two and the Mamba Splash connects for another near fall, as these kickouts are getting to be a bit much. Another Detonation Kick is countered into the ankle lock with three minutes left. TJP reverses into the kneebar, which he turns into something like a reverse Figure Four with two minutes left.

Alexander picks the ankle to retain and puts on the grapevine with 45 seconds left. TJP nearly taps but gets up and bridges

back to tie it up with 2 seconds left and time expires. Therefore, we go to sudden death so both guys pull themselves up in the corner during the rest period. They slug it out until Alexander hits a Regal Roll to set up a moonsault for two. The powerbomb onto the knee gets two more so it's the double underhook piledriver to FINALLY finish TJP at 63:36.

Rating: B. This was very good and the sixty minutes flew by, which is pretty hard to do. They didn't waste a lot of time here, making this almost all action throughout. It helps that they have some awesome chemistry together and both came out looking great. Alexander is turning into a star around here and I'm really curious to see what happens with him. Heck of a match here that is actually worth the watch.

Josh and Scott thank the fans and wrap it up.

Hold on though as the Undead Bridesmaids announce that Su Yung is needing more souls....because she is pregnant.

Overall Rating: B+. What else is there to say here? This was a really fun show with everything ranging from very good to completely watchable. It's really hard to screw up something like this and they made it work very well throughout. Impact is doing a lot of things right at the moment, to the point where they have me invested in Zack Ryder vs. Big Cass in a World Title match. Keep this up and the company might actually stay good for a long time to come.

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NXT UK – December 30, 2021 (Best Of 2021 Part 2): Title Time

NXT UK

Date: December 30, 2021

Hosts: Pretty Deadly

It's the final show of the year and for the second week in a row, it's time for a Best Of special. The good thing is that NXT UK has quite the collection to pick from, as this was a pretty awesome year for them. Odds are we'll be seeing a lot of Ilja Dragunov here, plus some more of the bigger names from NXT UK. Let's get to it.

As usual, I'll be posting the full versions of the matches rather than the clipped ones.

Pretty Deadly welcomes us to the show and throws us to the greatest moment of all time.

We recap Pretty Deadly becoming #1 contenders to the Tag Team Titles and setting up their title shot against Gallus.

From February 25.

Tag Team Titles: Pretty Deadly vs. Gallus

Gallus is defending and Mark Coffey drives Sam Stoker into the corner to start. It's off to Lewis Howley, who is armdragged into an armbar without much effort. Wolfgang takes Howley down by the arm as well and there's the same thing to Stoker. Therefore it's already back to Howley as the champs are dominating to start. A double monkey flip sends Howley to the floor and Pretty Deadly needs a breather.

Back in and Howley manages a hiptoss but gets rocked with an

uppercut. Wolfgang shrugs off some double teaming and we get the big staredown that would take us to a commercial if NXT UK had commercials. We settle down to Wolfgang being distracted by Howley so Stoker can knee him to the floor. A double backbreaker gets two on Wolfgang and it's time to take turns choking in the corner.

Stoker's running elbow to the jaw gets two and it's time to work on the arm. Wolfgang knocks Howley down without much trouble and the double tag brings in Coffey and Stoker. Coffey cleans house without much trouble and a belly to back suplex drops Stoker for two. Howley comes in off a blind tag to kick Coffey in the head for two but Coffey kicks him even harder. Wolfgang is back in to catapult Howley into a Samoan drop but Stoker makes a save.

Coffey chokeslams Stoker onto the apron and a spear gives Wolfgang two on Howley. There's a clothesline to put Howley on the floor but Stoker slaps Wolfgang to send him over the edge. The chase is on with Howley getting in a cheap shot to knock Wolfgang into the barricade. Back in and Stoker's Codebreaker gets two on Coffey so Howley brings in a title. Coffey knocks it out of his hands but it's a tornado DDT to drive him into the belt. The spinebuster/neckbreaker combination (Spilled Milk) gives us new champions at 15:03.

Rating: B-. This took some time to get going but then they got into a groove with the classic formula working. The ending with everything breaking down worked out rather well. There was little doubt about the title change here and that's ok. Gallus had held the titles for far too long already so the title change was necessary. Not a great match, but it did what it was supposed to in this situation.

Video on Pretty Deadly as the Tag Team Champions.

Quick clip of Moustache Mountain taking the titles from Pretty Deadly in December.

Some wrestlers (Dave Mastiff, Jack Starz, Ashton Smith, Saxon Huxley, Primate and A-Kid) wish us a Happy New Year.

Ilja Dragunov, Oliver Carter, Rohan Raja, Sam Gradwell, Nathan Frazer and Amele wish us a Happy New Year.

Video on Walter's dominance as United Kingdom Champion.

From June 24.

Ilja Dragunov vs. Joe Coffey vs. Rampage Brown

Time for a hoss fight and I'm trying to get my mind around Coffey's weird green/white trunks. Brown drops Dragunov to start but gets suplexed by Coffey. It's Dragunov getting back up to pull Brown to the mat for some elbows to the head. Coffey sends Dragunov outside before slugging it out with Brown. That means a Boston crab to Brown with Dragunov having to hammer away for a good while to break it up.

Brown is back up with a double clothesline to put the other two down, followed by a double suplex to send both of them flying. Coffey manages to backdrop Brown to the floor but Dragunov is back up with a bridging German suplex. Dragunov comes up holding his ribs as he goes up but has to fight Coffey off. That means Coffey goes crashing down, allowing Dragunov to jump over Brown into a backsplash for two.

Brown slams Dragunov onto Coffey for two but Dragunov gets back up to lose a slugout. A big lariat drops Brown though and Dragunov gets all insane again. Dragunov knocks Brown into the corner but Coffey hits his running tackle to send Dragunov into him. Coffey hits a big dive to take both of them out on the floor but Dragunov wins a slugout back inside. A second slugout goes to a draw to put them both down but Dragunov is up....and charges into a discus lariat. Brown knocks Coffey outside in a big crash but it's Dragunov back up and striking away.

Some German suplexes rock Brown but he is fine enough to German suplex both Dragunov and the returning Coffey. An electric chair drop lets Coffey plant Brown and they all have to pull themselves up. They all collide for another knockdown but Brown is up first with a Doctor Bomb to Coffey. Dragunov makes the save and, after slipping out of another Doctor Bomb, hits a top rope Torpedo Moscow to finish Brown at 16:14.

Rating: B+. This was every single thing you would have expected from these three and that is a very good thing. They did nothing but hit each other really hard for a long time until one of them was left standing. Dragunov winning is the right call as he has the redemption story going so there isn't even a complaint about the result. They had a hoss fight here and it was a very, very good one.

Post match here is Walter to hold up the title at Dragunov and then slap him down. Walter chokes him out and poses with the title to end the show. If they have a Takeover coming at any point in the next few months, they have the headliner right in front of them.

Video on Ilja Dragunov winning the United Kingdom Title and fighting various challengers since. Jordan Devlin seems to be next.

Kenny Williams, Sha Samuels, Xia Brookside, Wolfgang, Eddie Dennis and Nina Samuels are looking forward to a better New Year.

Pretty Deadly wrap us up.

Overall Rating: B. Kind of a weird one here as they went with the #1 contenders match rather than the title match itself. Maybe it is because the title change took place in actual NXT, but since the title has never changed hands in NXT UK, they didn't have many options. At least it was great having Pretty Deadly get some focus, as those guys were an awesome addition all year long. Good show here because of the talent involved

and it's nice to see the titles get this much focus.

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Royal Rumble Count-Up – 1991 (2013 Redo): So Much For America

Royal Rumble 1991

Date: January 19, 1991

Location: Miami Arena, Miami, Florida

Attendance: 16,000

Commentators: Gorilla Monsoon, Roddy Piper

So it's 1991 now and the US is at war (kind of). Therefore, the main event here, other than the Rumble of course, is Warrior defending the world title against Slaughter. This is a major changeover from the old Rumble formula which was a bunch of nothing matches followed by the big battle royal to close

the show. Well at least on PPV that is. This would become the norm after this (other than in 1992) so let's get to it.

We open with the national anthem to really hammer home the AMERICA ROCKS theme.

We get the usual list of a bunch of people in the Rumble.

Piper goes on one his big America rants about how much he loves the troops.

Rockers vs. Orient Express

The Express are Kato and Tanaka. Kato is a white guy named Paul Diamond in a mask pretending to be a Japanese guy. Shawn gets jumped to start and hit with a big double backdrop. Marty dropkicks Kato to the floor and superkicks Tanaka down as the Rockers take over. The Rockers hit stereo suicide dives to take the Express (popular names for tag teams no?) down on the floor.

The crowd is LOVING the Rockers here because they're AMERICAN! Jannetty and Kato start things off with Kato getting caught in a headlock. Things speed up already and Marty controls with a headscissors on the mat. That gets turned into a backslide for two for Jannetty and we have a standoff. Marty makes the Express collide with each other before working on Tanaka's arm.

Shawn comes in off the top with another shot to the arm but Tanaka comes back with a kick to the face and a chinlock. We get an overly complicated running the ropes spot which results in the Express having their heads rammed together. It's still Tanaka vs. Shawn here and we go from a chinlock to a sleeper by Shawn. Marty tries to come in for no apparent reason, allowing Kato to blast Michaels in the back to give the Express control for the first time.

Everything breaks down and we get multiple do-see-do

sequences, finally resulting in the Express being rammed into each other and being sent to the floor. Shawn busts out a kind of prototype 619 before the Rockers dive on both members of the Express in a cool spot. Back to Kato vs. Marty and we hit another chinlock. Shawn comes back in for a vertical suplex but Tanaka breaks up a monkey flip by guillotining Shawn from the apron.

Tanaka comes in and we get the World's Greatest Tag Team spot of Tanaka jumping over Kato's back to land on Shawn's back as Shawn is draped over the ropes. A shot to Shawn's throat keeps him down and it's off to the nerve hold. Things slow down a lot as Kato comes in to chop away. A superkick puts Shawn down again (how appropriate) but he comes back by slamming Tanaka's face down into the mat.

The place is really getting into the Rockers here as Kato takes his belt off. The Express tries to clothesline him with it but Shawn dives onto the belt to ran both Express members into each other. Hot tag brings in Marty to clean house and a powerslam gets two on Kato. Tanaka breaks up a backslide attempt so Shawn trips up Kato to retaliate. Everything breaks down again and Tanaka breaks up the Rocket Launcher. Kato slingshots Marty into a Tanaka chop and Jannetty is in trouble. They load it up again, but Shawn blasts Tanaka, allowing Marty to counter the slingshot into a sunset flip on Tanaka for the pin out of nowhere.

Rating: B+. This would have been a masterpiece if they had cut out a minute or two of the chinlocks. Still though, this follows the Nitro formula to the letter: take four small guys, give them a long time, get an exciting match. That's the perfect choice for an opener and it worked well here. The Rockers would continue to be awesome for the rest of the year until splitting in December in the famous Barber Shop incident.

Macho Man wants a shot at the winner of the title match.

Slaughter has agreed to this idea for some reason, and Sherri is on her way to the arena to get Warrior to agree to the same.

Here's Sherri on the platform (yeah back then they had an interview platform along with the one in the back) to call out Warrior. Savage is watching in the back and Sherri takes forever to get Warrior to come out. She begs the patriotic Warrior and tries to seduce him (oh dear that's a terrifying thought) and gets on her knees, only to have Warrior shout NO. Savage LOSES IT in the back over this. Somehow these segments took like seven minutes.

Big Bossman vs. Barbarian

This is part of a storyline that worked quite well until the ending. Rick Rude had insulted Boss Man's mother, but Boss Man was told he had to beat every member of the Heenan Family before he got a match with Rude. Unfortunately Rude left the company before Boss Man got to him so Boss Man got Mr. Perfect at Mania...but he didn't win Perfect's IC title and that basically ended the storyline. Still though, the build was good and it gave Boss Man something to do for months. The eventual payoff was him literally dropping a big metal ball on Heenan's ribs.

Anyway Barbarian pounds away to start but gets kicked in the head and elbowed down. They head to the floor for Boss Man to send Barbarian into the post before heading back inside. Barbarian goes up but jumps into a punch, sending him right back to the floor. Barbie suplexes him down and punches Boss Man in the face, knocking him into the ropes where his feet get tied up.

Barbarian pounds away a bit before ramming Boss Man back first into the post. Off to a bearhug by Barbarian followed by an elbow for two. Back to the bearhug for a little bit longer until Boss Man headbutts (bad stereotypes!) his way out. A

splash in the corner misses and Barbarian gets two off a rollup, only to have Boss Man get the same off a clothesline. They hit head to head and both guys go down.

Barbarian is on his feet first and goes up and hits his top rope clothesline for two. There's the Boss Man Slam but Boss Man walks around before covering, allowing Barbie to grab a rope. An awkward looking piledriver puts Boss Man down for no cover again. Barbarian goes up for a cross body of all things but Boss Man rolls through it for the pin.

Rating: C. This was a fine match but the ending is kind of weird. I have no idea why they didn't have the Slam end the match here but for some reason it kept going for another minute or two afterwards. Still though, decent enough match and Boss Man was just CRAZY over at this point. The hot crowd helped a lot here.

Slaughter and General Adnan rant for a bit and say Slaughter is winning the title tonight. For some reason while Slaughter is talking they shift to another camera so he has to turn ninety degrees.

The Warrior isn't worried about Slaughter and says he'll give the orders tonight.

Quick recap on the world title match: Slaughter is a former American patriot and is now changing over to Iraq because he's that kind of a villain. Warrior is defending and that's about all there is to it.

WWF World Title: Sgt. Slaughter vs. Ultimate Warrior

Gorilla gives a disclaimer, saying that Slaughter and Adnan's views don't represent those of the WWF or most of America. If that was anyone other than Gorilla Monsoon, I'd say he wasn't allowed to speak for America, but Gorilla Monsoon speaks for me. There's a t-shirt idea in there somewhere. The belt is purple tonight in case you're wondering. Yeah Warrior went a

bit nuts (shocking I know) with having multiple belt colors for some reason. The heels try to attack him with the Iraqi Flag but Warrior will have nothing of it and clotheslines them both down.

Slaughter gets the flag shoved into his mouth and Warrior pounds away. He chokes Slaughter with said flag and chops away in the corner as Slaughter is in trouble. Warrior sends Slaughter into the corner for his over the buckle bump to the floor. Here's Sherri to trip up Warrior and draw him back up towards the entrance. Savage is waiting on Warrior and beats the tar out of the champion with light fixtures as Slaughter gets a breather.

The Sarge wisely stops the count a few times, allowing Warrior to get back in. Slaughter pounds away in the corner as he starts softening up the back for the Camel Clutch. Apparently the middle eastern moveset comes with becoming an Iraqi sympathizer. The crowd absolutely HATES Slaughter here and boos anything he does. Warrior gets sent into the buckle but they clothesline each other down. Naturally a single clothesline is enough to counteract that long run of offense by Slaughter and get us back to even.

Slaughter gets up first and puts on a bearhug for a LONG time. Warrior breaks it up but walks right into a backbreaker for two. There's the Camel Clutch but Warrior's legs are under the ropes. Warrior Warriors Up and beats Slaughter down but here's Sherri again to frenzy up the crowd. Warrior loads her up in the gorilla press and throws her onto a charging Savage in the aisle. Savage pops up again and blasts Warrior in the face with his scepter, allowing Slaughter to drop an elbow for the pin and the title, STUNNING the crowd.

Rating: D+. The match was dull for the most part but the heat was insane. The crowd audibly calls this BS and you can't really argue that point. Aside from that, this sets up Wrestlemania really well, as we need a REAL AMERICAN to take

the title back. Pay no attention to the fact that the war had already been over by Wrestlemania.

Gorilla LOSES IT when the title change is announced.

Koko B. Ware vs. The Mountie

The crowd is still in shock at this point so here's a match to pass some time. Mountie has Jimmy Hart with him here and is doing the shock stick gimmick still. A lot of stalling to start things off here until Koko hits that dropkick of his. Ware cranks on the arm after Mountie hides on the floor for a bit. Mountie backdrops him to the floor in a big bump and takes over. Hart gets in a shouting match with Frankie the parrot as this match drags on and on. Koko gets a quick two on a sunset flip as Jimmy argues with Frankie some more.

A piledriver is broken up by Ware but Mountie pounds away even more to stop the comeback. Koko grabs a neckbreaker and hits a few headbutts to put Mountie down. The missile dropkick (Koko hits the kick and lands on his feet. That's AWESOME) drops Mountie again and a cross body gets two. Koko hits the ropes a few times but charges into a....into a.....I think it was a choke takedown or something like that. Whatever it was it gets the pin for Mountie.

Rating: D. This match sucked but it was the only thing they could have done here. They had to do something to give the fans a chance to breathe after that previous title match and while it didn't really work, they made the right move here. Mountie would be IC Champion the next year while Koko would be in a tag team I believe.

Savage says he's the next WWF Champion and runs away with Sherri as he can hear Warrior pounding on the door.

Gorilla and Piper lament Warrior's loss.

Slaughter says he told us all he'd win.

Gorilla and Piper rants some more.

Some fans get to send messages to some American troops in the middle east.

We hear about Hogan going to various American armed forces bases because he's not allowed to go to Saudi Arabia at the moment. Thankfully Piper mentions that he and Hogan don't agree on everything.

We hear from some Rumble participants: Roberts, Earthquake, Valentine, Tornado, the LOD, Undertaker (still with Brother Love), Duggan, Martel, British Bulldog, Perfect (IC Champion here) and Tugboat.

Piper talks about having lunch with Virgil today. Remember that.

DiBiase and Virgil are ready to face Dustin and Dusty. Ted talks about having bought and paid for Virgil, who glares as DiBiase talks.

Ted Dibiase/Virgil vs. Dustin Rhodes/Dusty Rhodes

Dustin is BRAND new here as this is his first WWF match. It's also Dusty's last in the WWF/E for over fifteen years. This is the blowoff to DiBiase vs. Dusty which started at Summerslam with Ted buying Sapphire and taking her from Dusty. Sapphire left soon afterwards because she didn't want to be away from Dusty. Anyway the Rhodes Family takes over to start with elbows a go-go, sending the heels to a huddle on the floor.

Dustin, only 21 here, starts with Virgil who barely ever wrestled at this point. I mean it was like once every year or two. Dustin hits a clothesline and a dropkick to send Virgil (the real name of Dusty for you trivia geeks) to the floor as DiBiase is getting frustrated. Another clothesline puts Virgil on the floor again and Ted yells a lot. Off to DiBiase to backdrop the young gun but a second attempt results in a face

jam.

The Rhodes dudes hammer DiBiase back and forth with elbows to send him to the floor as well. Here's Big Dust who puts on a sleeper but Virgil breaks it up. Back to Dustin for a dropkick for two, but a charging knee at Virgil misses to put Dustin down. Virgil stays on the knee and wraps it around the post, as does his boss. The heels try some double teaming, but Virgil accidentally clotheslines DiBiase. Ted beats the tar out of him, allowing Dustin to tag his dad. Said dad is rolled up for the pin almost immediately by DiBiase.

Rating: D+. Another dull match here but it was almost all for the ending and post match stuff. Like I said, the Rhodes guys were on their way out so they didn't have a chance at all in this one. Dusty stopped meaning anything months before this and it was the right move to go back to WCW for him where he could do what he wanted and book as well.

Post match we get the important part of the match. DiBiase yells at Virgil and says he's tired of having to save his worker. He tells Virgil to get the belt and wrap it around his boss' waist, but Virgil is mad. DiBiase keeps running his mouth, talking about how Virgil needs this job. DiBiase turns his back on Virgil and turns into a belt shot to the head, drawing one of the handful of pops in Virgil's entire career.

Hogan is ready for the Rumble and wants the title from the un-American too. Gene tells Hogan that Slaughter might have just defaced the American Flag. Oh you know it's on now. Hulk goes into such a rant that he forgets the name of the guy America is at war with (Sadaam Hussein) in a semi-famous bit.

Royal Rumble

Bret gets #1 for the second time in four years. He and Neidhart are tag champions here and he gets to face Dino Bravo at #2. Feeling out process to start until Bret clotheslines Bravo to the apron. Bravo comes back but misses an elbow. We

go to an annoying wide shot as Greg Valentine is #3. I think he's a face here but it was such an unmemorable turn that I can't remember if it had happened yet or not. Well he's fighting Bravo so I'd assume so. Actually he does a bit better than that by eliminating Bravo quickly.

Bret atomic drops Greg down and adds a clothesline for good measure but he can't get the elimination. Here's Paul Roma of Power and Glory at #4. Actually the team might have broken up by this point. Again they weren't that memorable, just like most of this time period aside from the top stars. Bret rams their heads together, causing Roma and Valentine to fight for a bit.

Here's Kerry Von Erich to give us I think three faces and one heel, or at least two faces a heel and a tweener. Bret misses an elbow drop off the middle rope and everyone pounds away on various people until Rick Martel is #6. Bret almost puts Martel out but Roma makes a save. Well no one ever accused him of being all that bright. Saba Simba (Tony Atlas as a tribal guy. It didn't last long) is #7 as things continue to go slowly. Von Erich puts the Claw on Martel and that's about the extent of the highlights.

To really liven things up, Butch is #8. That's actually not sarcastic as the fans do the Bushwhacker arm swing. Martel puts Simba out to keep us at an equal number of average guys and Bret. Don't get me wrong: these guys are talented, but other than Bret, most of them never got above the midcard. Jake Roberts is #9 to go immediately after Martel and give us an actual feud (Martel blinded him, leading to an AWFUL blowoff match at Mania).

Martel bails under the bottom rope and Jake goes right after him through the ropes. Martel gets put on the apron and punched in the face as everyone else just punches people. Hercules is #10 to give us Power and Glory in the ring. Why would I have thought they were broken up? They had a match at

Mania. Bret gets double teamed in the corner but nothing comes of it.

There are too many people in the ring at the moment at I think eight. Tito Santana is #11 as Roma misses a cross body to eliminate himself. FINALLY we get someone to clear some of these guys out with Undertaker coming in at #12. He's still this unknown monster at this point and would be that for years. Taker puts out Bret as soon as he gets there and beats up Von Erich for fun. That could have been a solid house show feud.

Jimmy Snuka is #13 as Taker throws out Butch. There are still way too many people in the ring, as we currently have Valentine, Tornado, Martel, Roberts, Hercules, Santana, Snuka and Undertaker. Taker chokes on Von Erich a bit in the corner before shifting over to Valentine. The freshly returned British Bulldog is #14 and guess what happens. The correct answer would be nothing, so here's Smash at #15. No one cares as Demolition would be done at Wrestlemania, so he's another nobody for all intents and purposes.

Good grief there are ten people in there now. Martel gets knocked to the apron and FINALLY puts Jake out to get us down a little bit. Superfly headbutts Martel and Hercules for a reaction from the crowd and Hawk is #16. STILL nothing of note happens and it's Shane freaking Douglas at #17. Taker FINALLY puts out Tornado and Hawk puts out Snuka to get the numbers down a bit.

No one is #18, which would later be revealed as Randy Savage, who isn't in the match because he's running from Warrior. This is called continuity, which you don't get enough of in wrestling today. Animal is #19, allowing the LOD to double clothesline Taker out. Martel uses the distraction to knock Hawk out and we've got eight in there again: Santana, Martel, Smith, Smash, Animal, Hercules, Valentine and Douglas.

The ninth person in the ring and #20 overall is Crush, Ax's replacement in Demolition. Jim Duggan is #21. I'm not saying much between the entrances because there's nothing to talk about. Literally it's people pushing others on the ropes and a lot of punching. WAY too many people in the ring again and the match is really dull so far. Martel gets caught by Animal but gets out via a thumb to the eye. That's an exciting moment at this point.

Earthquake is #22, giving us an insane eleven people in the match at once. Animal staggers Quake with some clotheslines but a third misses, resulting in Animal getting dumped. Perfect is #23 to get us back to eleven in the ring at once. The first person he sells like a crazy man for: Duggan, but Jim gets eliminated by Perfect pretty quickly. I'm not going to bother listing everyone in there for awhile due to it being nearly impossible to tell. Seriously, that's how full the ring is.

FINALLY Hogan comes in at #24 and you know some people are going out now. It's Smash thrown out first and Hogan goes straight for Earthquake, who he was technically still feuding with at this point. Bulldog and Perfect have a very energetic slugout as Haku is #25. Hogan dumps Valentine after a near record breaking 44 minutes. Hogan finally gets his own shirt off as Martel and Haku fight.

Jim Neidhart is #26 as Earthquake dumps an exhausted Santana after thirty minutes. A bunch of heels work over Hogan in the corner but Shane Douglas breaks it up. In a semi-famous moment, Luke is in at #27 and is immediately dumped out by Quake after about four seconds. He immediately marches back to the locker room. Brian Knobs of the freshly debuted Nasty Boys is #28 and after doing nothing for awhile, he dumps Hercules.

Warlord is #29 and he goes straight for Davey Boy. Crush goes up on the corner to punch Hogan and deserves the elimination he gets for trying. Hogan clotheslines Warlord out as the ring

is FINALLY emptying out a bit. Tugboat is #30, giving us a final group of Perfect, Tugboat, Knobs, Douglas, Neidhart, Martel, Smith, Haku, Earthquake and Hogan. Quake and Tugboat go at it as Knobs dumps Douglas. Brian Knobs gets to eliminate two people? Really?

Tugboat goes after Hogan but only gets him to the apron. Hogan gets back in and clotheslines him out to get us to eight. Bulldog dropkicks Hennig off the ropes to the floor and Martel, who has been in there over 50 minutes, shattering the record, puts Neidhart out. Bulldog dumps Haku and we're down to five. Martel goes up top but gets crotched and clotheslined out by Smith. That puts us at a final four but Smith is put out before I can type out said four. We've got Knobs, Earthquake and Hogan. That's a step below Rude, Hennig and Hogan last year I'd think.

The heels double team Hogan of course and Quake splashes him down. The Earthquake hits Hogan but it's no sold as you would expect. Big boot puts Knobs out but Hogan can't slam the fat man. Quake hits an elbow drop and a second one as Hogan goes into his spasms. There's the powerslam, there's the Hulk Up, there's the big boot, there's the slam, there's the winning clothesline for Hogan.

Rating: D. This is one, if not the worst Rumble I've ever seen. It's just boring all around and there's no other word to describe it. There were at least three moments where there were TEN people in the ring at once. The prime option for the Rumble is about six to seven at most at a time, not freaking TEN. There was never a moment where this got exciting and it was really boring at times too. Not good at all here.

Hogan poses a lot and waves an American flag to end the show.

Overall Rating: D+. The opener is really good but the rest of the show is mostly boring stuff. 1991 was a really boring time for the company and things wouldn't pick up until the end of

the year when Flair and Undertaker gave some jolts of life into things. This didn't work for the most part though and it was a chore to sit through. Nothing to see here other than a really awesome tag match to open the show.

Ratings Comparison

The Rockers vs. The Orient Express

Original: A

Redo: B+

Big Boss Man vs. Barbarian

Original: B

Redo: C

Sgt. Slaughter vs. Ultimate Warrior

Original: D

Redo: D+

The Mountie vs. Koko B. Ware

Original: D

Redo: D

Ted DiBiase/Virgil vs. Dustin Rhodes/Dusty Rhodes

Original: B

Redo: D+

Royal Rumble

Original: D+

Redo: D

Overall Rating

Original: C-

Redo: D+

What was I thinking on that DiBiase match? I must have REALLY liked the angle, but it happened after the match.

Here's the original review if you're interested:

[Royal Rumble Count Up: 1991](#)

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