

Daily News Update – November 26, 2021

Run It Back: AEW Planning Huge Title Rematch.

<https://wrestlingrumors.net/tommyhall/aew-planning-huge-title-rematch/>

You Might Not Be Seeing Jim Ross On AEW TV For A Little While.

<https://wrestlingrumors.net/tommyhall/might-not-seeing-jim-ross-aew-tv-little/>

SmackDown Star Has Some Great News To Share.

<https://wrestlingrumors.net/tommyhall/smackdown-star-great-news-share/>

WWE Losing Another Major Television Deal.

<https://wrestlingrumors.net/tommyhall/wwe-losing-another-major-television-deal/>

LOOK: Former WWE Star Sports Striking New Look.

<https://wrestlingrumors.net/tommyhall/look-former-wwe-star-sports-striking-new-look/>

WATCH: The Rock Makes A Fan's Day (In A Huge Way).

<https://wrestlingrumors.net/tommyhall/watch-rock-makes-fans-day-huge-way/>

Two Top AEW Stars Will Be Sticking Around For A Bit.

<https://wrestlingrumors.net/tommyhall/two-top-aew-stars-will-sticking-around-bit/>

As always, please check out all of the videos if you can, hit up the comments section and [get on the Wrestling Rumors Facebook page.](#)

Daily News Update – November 25, 2021 (Happy Thanksgiving Edition)

Make sure you check out some recent reviews:

[Monday Night Raw – June 25, 2007 \(Chris Benoit Memorial Show\)](#)

[Monday Night Raw – June 25, 2007 \(International Version\)](#)

[Ring of Honor TV – November 17, 2021](#)

[Dynamite – November 24, 2021](#)

WWE Makes Odd Decision On Some Of Its Content.

<https://wrestlingrumors.net/tommyhall/ww-makes-odd-decision-content/>

There Is Another McMahon Getting Into Wrestling.

<https://wrestlingrumors.net/tommyhall/another-mcmahon-getting-wrestling/>

WWE Legend Lists His Problems With Today's Product, Cites Changing Fans.

<https://wrestlingrumors.net/tommyhall/current-wwf-legend-lists-problems-todays-product-cites-changing-fans/>

Say It Isn't So: Another NXT Star Out Of Action Due To Injury.

<https://wrestlingrumors.net/tommyhall/another-nxt-star-action-due-injury/>

AEW Confirms Rumors Of New Quarterly Special.

<https://wrestlingrumors.net/tommyhall/aew-confirms-rumors-new-quarterly-special/>

Get Ready To Jump? Jeff Hardy Teases Hardy Brothers Reunion.

<https://wrestlingrumors.net/tommyhall/longtime-wwf-star-teases-leaving-aew/>

Top NXT Star Signs Extension, But It's Not A Very Long One.

<https://wrestlingrumors.net/tommyhall/top-nxt-star-signs-extension-not-long-one/>

VIDEO: Major Tease Takes Place After AEW Dynamite.

<https://wrestlingrumors.net/tommyhall/video-major-tease-takes-place-aew-dynamite/>

As always, please check out all of the videos if you can, hit up the comments section and [get on the Wrestling Rumors Facebook page.](#)

Dynamite – November 24, 2021: Everything You Expected And More

Dynamite

Date: November 24, 2021

Location: Wintrust Arena, Chicago, Illinois

Commentators: Jim Ross, Tony Schiavone, Excalibur

We're back in Chicago, as AEW really likes coming here. It's also just before the start of Thanksgiving weekend, so this is going to have a bit of a special feeling. Bryan Danielson and CM Punk are both in action this week so it certainly feels like a big show. Now just make that work. Let's get to it.

[Here are last week's results if you need a recap.](#)

Opening sequence.

CM Punk comes out for his match (they know how to make a Chicago crowd feel welcome) but hold on though as here is MJF to interrupt. MJF says it doesn't feel so good to be interrupted and calls him Punky Brewster. Fans: "SHUT THE F*** UP!" MJF: "No." Last week was almost as bad as that time when Punk took his ball and went home. MJF brings up the Pipebomb, which was a great moment. The thing is though, every MJF moment is the best moment because he isn't a one trick pony.

MJF respects Punk for everything he does, including being straightedge, though he can't believe that a straightedge man could look so much like a meth addict. He says Punk has always been a big fish in a small pond on the mic, but now he's just a minnow. Now MJF is about to finish him faster than Punk's UFC career. Punk can drop all of the pipebombs he wants, because MJF is dropping nukes.

Punk gets the mic and says he's disappointed in MJF. He thanks MJF for introducing him last week, like a proper young man is supposed to do to his elders. Oh and he found out that his name is Maxwell, because Punk had thought it was My Jealous Fan. It seemed to get to MJF that Punk never brought him up when he was doing media. That was by design, because he didn't want to feed MJF's ego.

Then last week, he did the impossible by shutting up the great MJF by not saying a word. Now MJF comes out here with the lowest hanging fruit because he thinks he's somebody. Punk: "In reality, he's just a less famous Miz." MJF says that's almost what he wanted, which is how you describe Punk's entire AEW run so far. The fans chant for the Miz as MJF talks about how Punk is nothing but nostalgia, who hasn't done anything of note. He also mocks Punk's breath, which is probably because Punk has been kissing so much a**.

MJF would like to do a quick impression of Punk, which sees him being a robot who is very happy to be doing just about everything. Punk has gone soft, his hair is going gray and he looks like the one who needs to go to sleep. This isn't CM Punk, because it's PG Punk. What happened to the renegade that MJF crew up watching? This guy in front of him might as well be teaching hustle, loyalty and respect.

The only difference is that MJF can still see him, but why did Punk come back? Was it because Punk was too busy making comic books no one read or movies no one saw? In that other company, fans wanted to believe in Punk because he was being held down. Now he has the chance to be the #1 guy, but can he still do it? MJF is born for this and every wrestling promoter's dream. Punk always claimed that someone held him down, whether it was the You Can't See Me Man or the King of Kings, but MJF is better than him and Punk knows it.

Punk says there is some truth in what MJF said, because he was a bit scared when he got here. He isn't scared anymore though,

because he was selling out MSG when MJF was marking out for Rosie O'Donnell. MJF has talked his way into a college his parents can't afford. MJF is another guy who talks too much, just like Punk did, but Punk can back it up without his backup.

Punk came here and beat Darby Allin without the need of a ring while MJF brags about being one of the Four Pillars. The thing is, MJF has been talking so much that he doesn't realize he's been replaced by Britt Baker. MJF talks about being #2, but he isn't going to be #1 until Tony Khan has a daughter that he can marry. Punk is ready to fight but MJF takes his jacket off and bails.

Overall Rating: A. I...oh yeah. We have a show to go after that all timer.

CM Punk vs. QT Marshall

Punk starts with the slams and Marshall is in early trouble. Cue the Factory, who are ejected almost as fast. Marshall can't get very far in the corner so Punk whips him into said corner for an upside down crash. Back up and Marshall manages a shot to the face for two to take over for the first time. Punk comes back with a clothesline to the floor and another running clothesline, this time from the apron to send us to a break.

We come back with Marshall hitting a Spirit Bomb for two before shoving Punk in the face a few times. That's enough to get the fans right back behind Punk and he hits Marshall in the face. The swinging neckbreaker into the short arm clothesline sets up the top rope elbow. The GTS finishes Marshall at 10:49.

Rating: C. Marshall has this amazing ability to suck the fun out of almost anything he's doing and that was kind of the case here. He's such a generic heel and it's hard to find a reason to care about him. That being said, Marshall wasn't the

point here as Punk gets another win, albeit this time over someone with a bit less star power.

Christian Cage is excited that Jurassic Express are the #1 contenders to the Tag Team Titles. They've been here before, but never with Christian behind them. He's going to make sure that they win the titles.

Eddie Kingston is having some cake and talks about how he misses Jon Moxley. He wishes Moxley a Happy Thanksgiving but here are 2.0 and Daniel Garcia to break it up (Eddie: "Here we go."). They read the piece in the Players Tribune and it was awesome, but Eddie isn't hungry anymore. They bring up Eddie not being able to help Moxley and that's a step too far. Eddie is ready to fight but they throw coffee in his face, drawing in security to break it up.

Gunn Club vs. Bear Country

Gunn Club jumps them from behind before the bell and clears the ring before we're ready to get started. The bell rings anyway and the Bears are in early trouble. Boulder fights back and Billy is sent to the floor but Colton is right back with Colt 45 for the pin at 1:45.

Post match here is Sting so Billy sends Austin after him...but Darby Allin CHARGES out of the tunnel and hits him with a tackle that would make Monty Brown jealous. Sting and Darby clear the ring.

Bobby Fish and Adam Cole are ticked off about the Best Friends when said team shows up. A match seems to be set for later.

Team Taz is with Dante Martin and Taz wants his decision right now. He also wants to know why Lio Rush is here, with Rush saying any of Martin's business is his business too. Rush goes to take the pen away from him, but Martin signs anyway, officially joining Team Taz. He even takes some candy!

TBS Title Tournament Quarterfinals: Jamie Hayter vs. Thunder Rosa

During the entrance, Britt Baker says she can't wait to have Hayter as the other Women's Champion around here. Hayter chokes up against the ropes to start and Rosa looks fairly annoyed. Some of that annoyance is let out with a loud slap but Hayter sends her outside. Rosa gets sent into the barricade and it's some kicks to the back back inside. This time Rosa sends Hayter outside and into the barricade, setting up a snap suplex on the floor. Hayter posts her hard though and a slam makes things worse as we take a break.

Back with Rosa breaking up a superplex attempt and hitting a missile dropkick. Slingshot and running dropkicks in the corner rock Hayter but Rosa's back is too banged up for a suplex. Hayter grabs a backbreaker for two and we hit the chinlock with a knee in Rosa's back. That's broken up and Rosa grabs Hayter, drawing Rebel to the apron. Britt comes in for the save but superkicks Hayter by mistake, allowing Rosa to grab the rollup for the pin at 10:43.

Rating: C+. Pretty good match, as Rosa continues what should be her path to either the title or a huge rematch against Baker. You could go either way and get a good result and it's always nice to have some options. Hayter continues to be sharp in the ring and I could go for seeing more of her once she gets away from Baker.

Daniel Garcia and 2.0 interrupt Chris Jericho in the back so he threatens them with Eddie Kingston violence. If that (and some Spongebob Squarepants jokes) isn't enough, some Jericho knuckle sandwiches are promised as well. The villains bail as Jericho seems to have a new target.

Tony Schiavone is having Thanksgiving dinner with Britt Baker and Rebel. Britt is sorry Thunder Rosa advanced, but we can still be thankful that she is the Women's Champion. Tony loves

them both but has some bad news. We see a video of Riho not being eliminated from the Casino Battle Royal. Therefore, Tony Khan has signed Riho to a Black Friday Deal match with Baker. If Riho wins, she gets a future title shot. Baker says Rosa can go tot he mall if she wants a Black Friday deal and Tony is NOT invited to Christmas. Baker: "No we're not doing the DMD! YOU RUINED IT!"

Bryan Danielson vs. Colt Cabana

Danielson isn't waiting here and takes Cabana down into the cross armbreaker. That's broken up so Danielson gets in a kick to the back of the tights and stares at him a bit. Cabana cranks on both arms but Daniels slips out and kicks away at the leg. Chops and kicks take Cabana down but the fans are right behind him.

Cabana is back up with the Flip Flop and Fly but the Flying Apple misses. Instead Danielson hits the running corner dropkick but Cabana breaks up the belly to back superplex. Cabana hits a moonsault for two but Danielson takes him down again. A bunch of stomps set up a LeBell Lock (with a double bicep pose) to finish Cabana at 5:04.

Rating: C+. They hit each other really hard and Cabana worked well as the hometown boy who went down swinging. Cabana has a reputation as nothing but a comedy guy but he can wrestle an above average match when he gets the chance. I could go for more of Cabana in the ring as he's better than a good portion of the roster, but this was going to be the Danielson show, as it should have been.

Post match/break, Danielson calls the fans FICKLE for booing him. Danielson has heard that some of the Dark Order is from Atlanta and he'd love to kick their heads in next week. This is all leading up to the ultimate head kicking in...and here is Hangman Page to interrupt. Page is ready to defend the title right now, which Danielson says is coward s*** because he just

had a match. Page isn't leaving Chicago without a fight and offers Danielson the first shot. Danielson considers that an insult and the fight is on but he bails before the Buckshot Lariat can connect.

Video on Ruby Soho vs. Kris Statlander, who meet in the TBS Title Tournament next week.

Malakai Black/FTR/Andrade El Idolo vs. Cody Rhodes/Death Triangle

Dax Harwood drives Cody into the corner to start and then goes to a headlock. Cody shoulders him down and throws the weightlifting belt into the crowd. The fans want it thrown back....and there it is, flying right back into the ring. Pac comes in as Andrade throws the belt underneath the ring, much to the fans' delight. Pac works on Cash Wheeler's arm as someone throws the belt back to Cody, who has to put it back on to a chorus of boos.

Pac kicks Wheeler in the face and Penta adds the top rope double stomp (ala What's Up) for two more. It's off to Andrade, who gets small packaged for two but all of Death Triangle comes in to kick him down. Cody comes in and gets stomped down in the wrong corner, earning quite the positive reaction. That doesn't last long either as Cody gets over for the hot tag to Fenix in a hurry.

A double springboard cutter drops FTR and Andrade is sent outside. Fenix kicks Black in the head but gets sent into the corner as we take a break. Back with Fenix kicking Wheeler in the face, setting up the hot tag to Penta. Everything breaks down and Pac gets to kick a bunch of people in the face. Wheeler breaks that up with a backbreaker though and it's time for the parade of secondary finishers.

Cody Final Cuts Black and throws the belt down again, only to kick Pac in the face by mistake. Andrade lays out Cody but charges into a heck of an overhead belly to belly suplex in

the corner. Arn Anderson and Tully Blanchard get in the ring for the legends showdown but Jose breaks that up and gets double punched. FTR gets in to chase Anderson but Fenix makes the save. Penta hits some Sling Blades on FTR and the Lucha Bros hit big dives to take them down on the floor. Back in and Black mists Pac and kicks Cody down, leaving Andrade to hit El Idolo for the pin on Pac at 16:12.

Rating: B+. This was a blast and felt like one of those insane Ring of Honor eight man tags that you would see from time to time. They started off well and had the big deal with the battle of the weightlifting belt before getting down to everything serious. It was a heck of a match and a blast throughout, though the focus continues to be on Cody's obsession with not turning heel. It's a borderline parody at this point and I have no idea how they're going to manage it if he insists on not turning.

Overall Rating: A-. The opener and closer make up for anything that took place in the middle of the show, as that was a heck of a main event to go with an absolute masterpiece of a promo battle. It takes a lot to make me gasp at a promo exchange and they did it more than once here. Great show, with Punk vs. MJF being more than worth your time to see, as opposed to the main event, which was merely great.

Results

CM Punk b. QT Marshall – GTS

Gunn Club b. Bear Country – Colt 45 to Boulder

Thunder Rosa b. Jamie Hayter – Rollup

Bryan Danielson b. Colt Cabana – LeBell Lock

Andrade El Idolo/FTR/Malakai Black b. Cody Rhodes/Death Triangle – El Idolo to Pac

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New Column: The Egg Theory

I liked it.

<https://wrestlingrumors.net/tommyhall/kbs-review-egg-theory/>

Ring Of Honor TV – November 17, 2021: Righteous Brother

Ring of Honor

Date: November 17, 2021

Location: 2300 Arena, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Commentators: Ian Riccaboni, Silas Young

The long march to Final Battle continues as we are still in the post-Death Before Dishonor TV tapings. In other words, these are still matches from before all of the company's future went away, so there might still

be a little something here. Then again, I'm not sure how much hope that really is. Let's get to it.

[Here are last week's results if you need a recap.](#)

Opening sequence.

Quinn McKay welcomes us to the show and gives us the rundown.

Caprice Coleman vs. Beer City Bruiser

This is Coleman's first singles match in a long time and Bruiser has Brian Milonas and Ken Dixon with him. Before the match, Bruiser says Coleman wasn't an official entrant in the Honor Rumble so he was never eliminated and should be #1 contender. Coleman comes to the ring and Bruiser laughs at the idea of Coleman getting back in the ring...so he can face Dixon instead.

Caprice Coleman vs. Ken Dixon

Dixon is in jeans and the Bouncers are at ringside. Feeling out process to start as they go to the mat with Dixon not being able to get very far. We take a break and come back with Coleman hitting a basement shoulder, setting up a legdrop for two. Milonas offers a distraction so Bruiser can add a clothesline to give Dixon control for a change.

A fall away slam gives Dixon two and we hit the chinlock. Backup and the clothesline comeback is on but Father Time (cobra clutch Russian legsweep) is broken up. Dixon sends him outside but Coleman flips backwards into a headscissors to drop Dixon on the floor. Back in and Father Time sets up the cobra clutch but the Bruiser comes in for the DQ at 8:01.

Rating: C. Coleman getting back in the ring is somewhat interesting, but it's not like he was the biggest star in Ring of Honor history. The good thing is that he can still get in the ring and look just fine, which was the case here. Odds are he can get in a big match with Bruiser down the line, which should work well for a TV main event.

We recap Flip Gordon losing his memory and taking potions to get his memory back. If ANY of this has been mentioned on TV since it happened, I haven't been paying close enough attention.

PJ Black is taking care of Gordon's memory troubles.

PJ Black/Flip Gordon vs. OGK

Taven and Gordon start things off as Gordon doesn't seem impressed. Gordon grabs a headlock but Taven talks his way out of it, allowing the tag to Black. OGK gets together for a double dropkick but Black grabs a wristlock. A tag (with the foot) brings in Gordon, who has to be told to come in off the top to work on the arm. Back from a break with Gordon and Bennett trading chops but Black breaks up a spike piledriver attempt. Black comes back in for a springboard moonsault into a double reverse layout DDT.

Bennett's spear gives Taven two and a running kick to the face gives Bennett two of his own. A backbreaker/top rope elbow combination gives Taven two more and Bennett's brainbuster gets the same. Black is fine enough to roll over for the hot tag off to Gordon, who springboards in to take OGK down. House is cleaned but Gordon has to bail out of the 450. Instead, he puts Taven on his shoulders for a Doomsday Canadian Destroyer but Bennett makes the save. Black gets sent outside though and it's a spike piledriver to finish Gordon at 9:43.

Rating: C+. The match was good, though this Gordon thing is straight out of nowhere, at least on this show. It's also not exactly like Ring of Honor, which rarely does the wacky stipulations like this one. OGK continues their roll though and it's great to see a good team like them getting their chance to shine.

Honor For All rundown.

Righteous vs. Foundation

Vincent/Bateman/Dutch vs. Jonathan Gresham/Tracy Williams/Rhett Titus. Vincent and Titus start but Gresham comes in before anything happens. Hold on though as Vincent grabs the mic and tells Jay Lethal, on the floor, to come stand in the right corner. That's a no, so Vincent shows a clip of Lethal saying he doesn't even like the Foundation.

Tracy walks Lethal to the back as Lethal protests, allowing the Righteous to jump the other two. The beating takes us to a break and we come back with Gresham being sent into the corner for a stomping, followed by some choking to make it worse. Gresham rolls over and brings in Williams to clean house, including a discus lariat to Vincent, who isn't legal. Dutch comes in and cleans house, allowing Vincent to hit some running forearms in the corner. Redrum gets two, with Gresham needing a double save.

We take a break and come back with Vincent hitting a basement Downward Spiral for two on Gresham, including another save. The hot tag brings in Titus for a half crab on Bateman but Dutch drives Gresham into them for the save. Dutch Jackhammers Titus and Bateman adds Orange Sunshine. A ripcord Boss Man Slam finishes Titus at 12:25.

Rating: B-. Pretty good stuff here, with the Righteous being the latest group to get a bunch of TV time. That's not a bad thing either as the team is just off enough that it makes you want to see more of them. I liked the match a good bit, as the Foundation continues to be the kind of team that does not have a bad match no matter what happens.

Overall Rating: C+. Pretty nice hour of TV here, but the lack of a future is really dragging it down. It's hard to get excited about much of this, even if this is still the television taping from before the big news broke. I'm not sure how long the next cycle is going to go on for, but it could make for a pretty lifeless time if everything is just a bunch of cold matches.

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Monday Night Raw – June 25, 2007 (International Version): And Now, The Other One

Monday Night Raw

Date: June 25, 2007

Host: Todd Grisham

This week, the Chris Benoit Tribute Show aired, but then the details started to come out, meaning Benoit's place in wrestling was completely changed. When Raw aired later in other markets, a Best Of show was shown instead. For the sake of completion, I'll be looking at it to, so let's get to it.

And now, the other version.

Todd Grisham is in the WWE Studios and welcomes us to the show, which will be a look back at the best championships match from the last year.

From Wrestlemania XXIII.

We recap Undertaker vs. Batista for the Smackdown World Title. Undertaker won the Royal Rumble to earn the shot and Batista is all BRING IT ON as we have the monster fight for the title. This feels like a Wrestlemania World Title match and that's kind of a hard trick to pull off.

Smackdown World Title: Batista vs. Undertaker

Undertaker is challenging and Teddy Long handles the introductions for a bit of a weird moment. We get the full druid entrance for Undertaker, which will never stop being awesome. Batista spears him down at the bell and it's time to trade right hands in the corner. It's actually Batista getting the better of things and the fans are not too thrilled with that. Undertaker pulls him outside for a ram into the apron but Batista is right back for a hard whip into the steps.

Back in and Batista nails a top rope shoulder (dang) for two and a heck of a clothesline cuts Undertaker off again. Undertaker slugs back from his knees and punches Batista into the corner for the running clotheslines. Snake Eyes into the big boot sets up the legdrop for two as we're back to mostly even. Old School looks to set up the chokeslam but Batista powers out and knocks Undertaker down.

Undertaker doesn't seem to mind as he sends Batista to the apron for the legdrop. There's the Taker Dive and they're both down on the floor. Back up and Batista drives him HARD through the barricade and hammers away as things have cranked up in a hurry. The announcers' table is loaded up and a running powerslam drives Undertaker through it for the big crash. That's only good for two back inside so Batista punches away even more.

The Batista Bomb is broken up with a drive into the corner but Batista is right back...with right hands from the middle rope. I guess HHH didn't teach him that one and it's the Last Ride for two. The frustrated Undertaker gets caught in a

spinebuster but pops back up with a chokeslam for two. Batista slips out of the chokeslam and hits the spear into the Batista Bomb for two as the fans are WAY into these near falls. Undertaker backdrops his way out of another Batista Bomb and sends Batista into the corner. The Tombstone is enough to give Undertaker the pin and the title.

Rating: A-. This felt like a Wrestlemania level title match between two monsters. These two beat the fire out of each other and didn't bother with anything other than the big power moves. They were trading bombs throughout the whole match and it was a question of who would survive, which made the whole thing world. It helps when Undertaker was motivated by being put in the middle of the card and cranked it up a notch, as both guys felt like they were on another level here.

From No Way Out.

Cruiserweight Title: Cruiserweight Open

Gregory Helms is defending in a gauntlet match. Scotty 2 Hotty is in at #1 and Daivari is in at #2. Daivari sends him into the corner for some right hands but Scotty comes back with the bulldog. There's the Worm and Daivari is done in a hurry. Gregory Helms is in at #1 and hammers on Scotty, including a catapult to send him throat first into the middle rope. Scotty is back with a belly to back suplex but the Worm is broken up. What would become known as the Codebreaker gets rid of Scotty so it's Funaki in at #4.

Helms small packages him for the pin in about five seconds and it's Shannon Moore in at #5. A spinning backbreaker gives Helms a fast two and a belly to belly superplex drops Moore again. Another Codebreaker gets rid of Moore and it's Jimmy Wang Yang in at #6. Yang goes right after him and hits a standing moonsault for two. A Russian legsweep sets up some weird arm hold on the mat but Helms is back up in a hurry with a hard right hand. Yang grabs a quick hurricanrana for the pin

out of nowhere, guaranteeing a new champion.

Jamie Noble is in at #7 as JBL demands more time to talk about Helms losing the title. A hard shot to the face sets up a chinlock on Yang and Noble sends him hard into the post for two. Yang fights back with a few clotheslines and the spinwheel kick for two of his own. The moonsault press gets rid of Noble and Yang thinks he has won...but it's Chavo Guerrero in at #8 to complete the field.

Chavo uppercuts him down a few times and kicks Yang in the back to take over in a hurry. A spinwheel kick gives Yang a breather and the big dive to the floor drops Chavo again. Back in and Chavo hits Three Amigos, which Cole calls disrespectful for some reason. Yang gets in another shot to the face and goes up, only to miss the twisting moonsault. The frog splash gives Chavo the pin and the title.

Rating: D+. I'm really not a fan of this style as it's a bunch of mini matches rather than anything getting time. Chavo winning the title is fine, but the rapid fire falls brings up the same thing I always wonder with this format: why is it so much easier to get a fall in this one than in any given match? Either way, at least the title is off of Helms, who was getting hammered with losses that WWE didn't seem to think counted because he was still champion.

From December To Dismember.

ECW Title: Big Show vs. Hardcore Holly vs. CM Punk vs. Bobby Lashley vs. Rob Van Dam vs. Test

Show is defending in the Extreme Elimination Chamber, meaning there is a weapon in each pod. Hardcore Holly is in at #1 and Rob Van Dam is in at #2 and there are five minute intervals. Holly takes him into the corner and starts kicking away but Rob pops up and gets sent into the cage...but holds onto the side because he can. The spinning high crossbody only hits the rope though and Van Dam crashes down again. Van Dam gets sent

into the cage again but manages to get a boot up to cut off a diving Holly.

Rolling Thunder over the top rope hits Holly but he suplexes Van Dam back inside. There's the dropkick and it's CM Punk with his chair in at #3. A monkey flip sends Holly onto the chair and Punk kicks Van Dam down. The chair is wedged in the corner and Van Dam, who has been busted open somewhere in there, is sent hard into it. Punk kicks him again but Holly is back up with a side slam. Holly drops Punk onto the top rope and there's a top rope superplex to take him down again.

Test, with his crowbar, is in at #4 and hits Punk in the ribs before clawing at Van Dam's cut. Punk grabs a Stunner on Test of the top rope and the bloody Van Dam kicks Holly in the face. Van Dam skateboards the chair into Punk in the corner and hits the Five Star for the pin and the elimination for Punk's first pinfall in WWE. Test kicks Holly in the face for an elimination, even if the count didn't seem to go down properly. Van Dam goes up top but Test chairs him in the knee and pulls him right back down in a crash.

An elbow off the top of the pod onto the chair onto Van Dam is good for the elimination, meaning that the countdown to Lashley is official. It also means that the ring is clear, save for Test, for about a minute and a half because this match can't time things either. Bobby Lashley with his table is...not allowed to get in because test and the security guards block the door. That's fine with Lashley, who uses the table to break the roof open and climbs through the top. Eh points for a cool entrance.

Lashley unloads for a bit until Test gets him into the corner for some choking. Lashley suplexes him down, hits him with the crowbar, and nails a spear for the pin. Therefore, let's wait a minute and a half before Big Show with his barbed wire baseball bat can come in at #6 to give us the showdown. Lashley has to use the chair to shield himself with the bat

but manages to knock Show outside anyway. Show is sent through the pod to bust him open but he knocks Lashley down again. Back in and the chokeslam is countered into a DDT, followed by a spear for the pin and the title.

Rating: D. And that's probably high. This was a really dull Chamber with the two badly times falls that left them sitting around with nothing to do for a few minutes. The match is less than twenty five minutes and you knew that Lashley had the title won with about ten minutes to go.

Look at the participants here. Van Dam, Show and Lashley are fine, but that leaves you with three pretty weak choices. Punk would go on to become a huge star, but at this point he had been around for a few months with his career consisting of feuds with Shannon Moore and Mike Knox. That is kind of lacking in any kind of meaningful wins in WWE and it showed badly. The other two are Test and Hardcore Holly as a replacement. That leaves you with three options, but Test dominated a good portion of the middle. That's the best they could put together and that should tell you a whole lot.

The show was long past the point of saving by the time we got to the match, but then they had this boring mess to make it even worse. There was no drama, the popular guys were done in less than fifteen minutes and the weapons managed to make it less violent than the previous Elimination Chambers. Not the worst match of all time, but pretty horrible and probably the worst Chamber match to date, if nothing else for the star power included and the lack of drama near the end.

Video on Bobby Lashley.

From Raw, April 2.

Tag Team Titles: Battle Royal

John Cena/Shawn Michaels, Hardys, Paul London/Brian Kendrick, William Regal/Dave Taylor, Kevin Thorn/Marcus Cor Von, Gregory

Helms/Chavo Guerrero, Sandman/Tommy Dreamer, Lance Cade/Trevor Murdoch, Val Venis/Viscera, Johnny Nitro/The Miz,

Cena and Michaels are defending and either Guerrero/Helms are working a double or Lawler got confused when he mentioned them being in the first battle royal and there were only nine teams. Anyway, it's a big brawl to start and the mob can't get rid of Viscera. Growing brains at the same time though, they toss Venis in a hurry and we're down to nine. Regal and Taylor are gone and Dreamer/Sandman join them as we take a break.

Back with JR's voice going in a hurry and the champs getting rid of Miz and Nitro (in their first time teaming together for some trivia)...and then Shawn dumps Cena. Well that's a curve ball. It's smart, but it's a curve ball. Kendrick and Chavo eliminate each other (with no mention of London and Kendrick possibly becoming double champions) so we're down to the Hardys vs. Cade/Murdoch.

Jeff goes stupid (shocking I know) by hammering away with right hands in the corner on Murdoch but manages to get back down. An atomic drop/big boot combination knocks Jeff silly but Matt cuts off the toss attempt. The Hardys hit stereo middle rope legdrops, setting up Poetry In Motion to get rid of Murdoch for the win and the titles.

Rating: C-. The Hardys winning is completely fine as they are the veteran teams who can get the titles back and then drop them to someone in a bigger match. There is some value in one more run with the Hardys as champions so this is about as safe of a way to go for the titles as you can have. Cena and Michaels didn't need the titles to continue their story so letting them go and be built back up again is the right move.

From Backlash.

Women's Title: Melina vs. Mickie James

Mickie is challenging and wastes no time armdragging her down

into an armbar. The grappling on the mat gives us a quick standoff until Mickie headscissors her back down. That's broken up as Melina is sent into the corner, where she seems to be favoring her eye. Tis but a ruse though as she charges at Mickie, who hammers away to keep the champ in trouble. Mickie takes too long going up top though and gets shoved off into a heap on the floor.

Back in and Melina grabs a full nelson with her legs and even puts her hand on the rope for leverage (It's interesting that just putting your hand there wouldn't do much. The thing is though that fans understand it's cheating so it can go a long way with almost no effort. Learn that kind of thing.). A choke in the corner has Mickie in more trouble and a middle rope Thesz press drops her again.

The chinlock doesn't last long as Mickie drops down into the splits....and pulls Melina down into them with her. They slug it out from there until Mickie kicks her away. Some clotheslines and a hair toss have Melina in more trouble, with a high crossbody getting two. That's enough for Melina, who goes to the eyes and drops her with a reverse DDT to retain.

Rating: C. They were working hard here but there is only so much that you can do when they are in the lowest level match on the card and the ending comes out of nowhere. Melina needs to be built up with wins like this so they did things as well as they could have. Not a terrible match, but it could have been on any given Raw.

Video on Jeff Hardy.

From Judgment Day 2006.

Smackdown World Title: Rey Mysterio vs. John Bradshaw Layfield

Only Rey is defending as I had completely forgotten JBL was US Champion. The EDDIE chants begin and Rey slugs away, with JBL looking a little surprised. Some strikes to the leg set up a

quickly broken headlock so Rey slaps him in the face. The threat of the 619 sends JBL outside and it's a seated senton off the apron to take him down again. Back in and a basement dropkick gives Rey two and he hammers away in the corner.

The referee gets distracted for a second and Rey gets in a low blow, only to have JBL come back with a big boot. They head outside with Rey being whipped into the steps and it's already time to go back in. A right hand puts Rey on the floor again, with JBL sending him into the steps a second time. JBL hits Three Amigos before dropping him ribs first into the top rope as Rey is busted open.

That means another trip to the floor with JBL making Rey's wife look at the blood. Some short arm clotheslines put Rey down again and JBL gets two, with the kicking making him panic. We hit the chinlock to squeeze some blood out of the head but JBL lets him go at two arm drops to cover instead. Rey breaks up the belly to back superplex and gets his own two off a moonsault press, followed by a kick to the head for the same.

JBL is back up with a powerbomb attempt but it's a hurricanrana to set up the 619 instead. The referee gets pulled in the way of the West Coast Pop though, meaning the Clothesline From JBL gets a very delayed two. JBL grabs the chair but it gets kicked back into his face, setting up the frog splash to retain the title.

Rating: C+. This felt like it should have been for the Intercontinental Title in a featured match on Smackdown rather than headlining a pay per view. They have done a horrible job of devaluing the World Title in the last few weeks. Rey retaining here felt a bit like what would happen if MNM retaining in the opener. That's not exactly the best way to present the main event of a pay per view, but the match itself was fairly good.

From Survivor Series 2006.

We recap Batista vs. King Booker for the Smackdown World Title. Batista had to vacate the title earlier this year due to an injury in this very building. It is his missing to get it back but Booker isn't going it up so easily. If Batista loses, he can never challenge Booker for the title again.

Smackdown World Title: King Booker vs. Batista

Batista is challenging and starts fast by jumping him before the bell. They get inside to officially start the match with Batista hammering away in the corner. The threat of a Batista Bomb sends Booker bailing to the floor and the fans aren't pleased. Back in and Batista hammers away even more but a hot shot gets Booker out of trouble. A catapult sends Batista throat first into the bottom rope and Booker stomps away even more.

Booker pokes him in the eye but you don't need two eyes to hit a side slam for two. They head to the apron for a slugout with Batista knocking him back in. Sharmell grabs the leg though and Booker kicks him out to the floor again. Back in and Booker pounds him down into a chinlock as Cole asks JBL what it feels like to try and get the title back. JBL: "I'm not a loser Michael. Bring up something else."

Batista fights up and hits the clotheslines into a big boot to send Booker outside. That means a whip into the steps, followed by a top rope shoulder (dang) for two back inside. Booker is right back with a Bookend for two but Batista is up with the Batista Bomb. They're right next to the rope so Booker saves himself, allowing Sharmell to hand him the title. A Sharmell distraction doesn't work though as Batista ducks the shot and takes the belt away. Batista's belt shot is enough for the pin, the title, and the energized celebration.

Rating: D, This really didn't work and the ending was stupid. How much of a conqueror does this make Batista, when he needed

a belt shot to beat Booker? It's a reclaiming the glory story and that should work, but the lack of drama didn't help anything. Pretty awful main event with the main bright spot being the fact that they didn't go long here. It's the longest match of the show at less than fourteen minutes and it felt every one of them.

From One Night Stand.

Raw World Title: John Cena vs. Great Khali

Cena is defending in a falls count anywhere match. Cena goes right after him to start but is quickly knocked down, including a bunch of stomping in the corner. There's a slam to plant Cena but he gets in a shot of his own for a breather. Khali is right back up with a chop to the head to put Cena on the floor though and the foot on the chest gets two. A hard ram sends Cena head first through a monitor but another big chop is blocked.

Instead, Cena is tossed over the barricade but he manages a monitor shot of his own. The FU attempt is swatted away though and Khali punches him around. A missed charge (work with me here) misses for Khali and Cena hits him in the face with a boom camera for two. Cena gets him off the ground for the FU but some elbows to the face get Khali out of trouble again. They fight onto a crane, where Cena finally manages the FU off of said crane to retain the title.

Rating: C+. While certainly not a classic, they did this as well as they could have. What mattered here was they found the right way to hide Khali's limitations and let Cena do the rest. The idea of setting up the FU for the whole match and then blowing it off in the end was the right call too and it was a well set up match. I'm not sure how much better they could have done this and the stipulation made the match better rather than just being tacked on.

Todd wraps us up to end the show.

Overall Rating: C. Outside of the opener, this was kind of a weird collection of matches to air. Undertaker vs. Batista is great but other than that, you don't have a lot of great stuff. They aired something from most of the titles (if not all of them), but that only works so well when some of those titles are not exactly the top of the food chain. Still though, for a Best Of show, this worked out well enough.

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Monday Night Raw – June 25, 2007 (Chris Benoit Memorial Show): What Can You Say?

Monday Night Raw

Date: June 25, 2007

Location: American Bank Center, Corpus Christi, Texas

Commentators: Jim Ross, Jerry Lawler, John Bradshaw Layfield, Michael Cole, Joey Styles, Tazz

At some point over the last week, Chris Benoit murdered his wife and son before killing himself at his home. Their bodies were found on Monday, but the cause of death was not made clear by the time this show aired. As a result, there are no fans here and the original plans for the show, meaning Vince McMahon's memorial service, were wiped out. Instead it's a tribute to Benoit, as things had not yet changed for him. Let's get to it.

For the sake of simplicity, I'll be putting in the full versions of the matches rather than the clipped editions that aired.

In Memory of Chris Benoit.

Vince McMahon is in the ring to open the show and talks about how this week was supposed to be about the demise of the Mr. McMahon character. Earlier today, the bodies of Benoit, his son Daniel and his wife Nancy were found, so all they can do is offer condolences and pay tribute to one of the best wrestlers of all time.

We open with a music video on Benoit, set to One Thing by Finger Eleven.

We get a video on Benoit wanting to be a wrestler and coming back to home hometown as the World Champion, with his family talking about how great of a kid he was. I believe most of the footage on tonight's show will be from the Hard Knocks DVD.

Jim Ross and Jerry Lawler are at the commentary table and talk about everything that happened before throwing us to the first match (or at least the end of it).

From Royal Rumble 2004.

Royal Rumble

JR and Tazz are on commentary, thankfully giving us a standard booth instead of the usual mess that these things have become.

Tazz even has keys to victory: hide, stamina, get a high number. I've heard worse analysis so I'll take what I can get. Chris Benoit is in at #1 and Randy Orton is in at #2 and we have ninety second intervals. Benoit gets aggressive to start (ignoring key to victory #2) and scores with a suplex but gets uppercutted into the corner.

Mark Henry is in at #3 and shoves Benoit down so he can choke Orton in the corner. The clock seems to get a little faster as Tajiri is in at #4 and gets suplexed down for his efforts. Henry throws Orton ribs first onto the top rope and everyone pounds away as Bradshaw is in at #5. Clotheslines abound until Benoit pulls him into the Crossface and gets him out in less than a minute. Well at least they're keeping the ring at a manageable number. Rhyno is in at #6 and goes after Orton and Benoit as Tajiri kicks away at Henry.

Tajiri can't get the Tarantula so Rhyno Gores Henry, eliminating Tajiri in the process. Benoit dumps Henry and we're already down to three. They fight by the ropes and it's Matt Hardy in at #7. There's a Side Effect to Rhyno but Benoit knocks Matt to the apron. Matt gets back in and everyone pummels everyone until Scott Steiner is in at #8. Benoit rolls some German suplexes on Steiner as JR gives us the good stat of there being no former Rumble winners in this match.

Matt Morgan is in at #9 as the ring is starting to fill up. A helicopter bomb plants Benoit and there's a big boot to Hardy. It's back to the exchange of forearms around the ring with no one going for an elimination until Hurricane is in at #10. Before I can recap who is in the match, Morgan tosses Hurricane in short order, leaving us with Benoit, Orton, Rhyno, Hardy, Steiner and Morgan. Morgan throws Hardy to the apron but not out as Steiner lays on Orton in the middle of the ring.

Booker T. is in at #11 to a nice reaction but also to a really annoying song. An ax kick has Orton in trouble and Steiner is

thrown out off camera (in his last match with the company) as Kane is in at #12. Benoit and Morgan both get chokeslams and the Gore and RK0 are both blocked. Kane starts beating on Matt in the corner....and a gong strikes at #13. As expected, Kane freaks out and the distraction lets Booker throw him out. It's actually Spike Dudley in at #13 so Kane beats him up in the aisle, both for the gong and for Spike upsetting Kane on Monday. Things settle down and it's Rikishi in at #14.

Benoit dumps Rhyno and Orton gets a Stinkface as the fans aren't exactly interested, probably due to the gong taking some of their interest away. They're certainly not burning up the pace for eliminations here but that's not the worst thing in the world. Rene Dupree is in at #15 to get us to the halfway point. He dropkicks Hardy out but turns into a superkick from Rikishi to get eliminated as well.

A-Tran is in at #16 and goes after Rikishi as Benoit ducks Morgan's charge to get rid of him. Orton dumps out Rikishi and Booker in the span of a few seconds, leaving us with Benoit, Orton and A-Train. Benoit eliminates A-Train as Shelton Benjamin is in at #17. Benjamin slugs away as JR completely missed A-Train's elimination. How do you not notice the 6'8 350lb bald guy being gone? Orton dumps Shelton and we're down to two again. To be fair, other than Kane and maybe Booker, none of the other entrants are worth anything so far. Lamont runs out to introduce Ernest Miller at #18 and Tazz loves the song.

Benoit tosses Lamont and Orton does the same to Miller so these two can keep slugging it out. Kurt Angle is in at #19 and now things can pick up a bit. Benoit and Angle go at it (of course) while Orton is smart enough to just chill in the corner. Angle has Benoit in trouble on the ropes but Orton makes a rather questionable save. Rico is in at #20 and goes after Orton, who dropkicks him almost immediately. A kick to the head rocks Orton though, leaving Benoit to roll some German suplexes on Angle. Orton dumps Rico with ease and it's

Test....not in at #21.

We cut to the back where Test is unconscious. Austin sees who did it and makes that person #21 instead. In the arena, MICK FOLEY is #21 and Orton knows he's about to die. Foley slugs him down in the corner, throws up a BANG BANG and hits the running knee in the corner. The Cactus Clothesline gives us a double elimination and it's down to Benoit vs. Angle. Foley isn't done with Orton and sends him into the steps as Christian is in at #22.

Orton gets in a few wicked chair shots to Foley and punches him down before slamming Foley's head into the ramp. Some right hands get Foley out of trouble and it's Mr. Socko but Foley has to give it to Nunzio, who comes in at #23. The distraction lets Orton get in a low blow and run off after a great angle that makes me want to see these two have a heck of a fight. Back in the ring, Christian can't get rid of Angle or Benoit so Angle suplexes Benoit instead. Benoit is the only one standing as Big Show is in at #24.

Show starts fast with the overhand chops and throws some Canadians around until Chris Jericho is in at #25 to a very nice reaction. Jericho and Christian stomp on Angle in the corner until Show makes a save with a double noggin knocker. How old school of him. Everyone goes after Show so he shrugs them off and Charlie Haas is in at #26. Christian tries to turn on Jericho but gets dumped out instead, which just fits for Christian for some reason. Billy Gunn returns at #27 and hits some Fameassers but can't get rid of anyone.

John Cena is in at #28 to a very nice reaction and you can feel the star power growing every night. Cena catches Nunzio sitting on the floor and throws him inside as the ring is starting to get too full. For some reason Nunzio goes after Show, earning himself that hard shot to the back. Rob Van Dam is in at #29 and can't get rid of Show either. Cena gives Angle an FU and here's Goldberg in at #30 to complete the

field. I'm not going to bother saying who all is in there because we're about to lose a bunch of them.

Goldberg wrecks everyone and tosses Haas, Gunn and Nunzio (after an insane spear). That leaves us with Benoit, Angle, Show, Jericho, Cena, Van Dam and Goldberg for a heck of a final group. Goldberg loads up the Jackhammer on Show but here's Lesnar to jump him from behind, allowing Angle to dump Goldberg, who is busy seething at Lesnar. Show shrugs off the masses again but Angle chop blocks him, which isn't the brightest idea. That means a Lionsault, a Five Star, a Shuffle and a Swan Dive but Show is unconscious on the mat. Real smart guys.

Show fights up and dumps Cena, who lands VERY awkwardly on his knee. Van Dam is gone too and we're down to Jericho, Big Show, Angle and Benoit. Jericho goes after Show's knee and bulldogs Show now, which has done so well against him already. The Walls make Show tap but Jericho lets him go. That's not the brightest move in the world and Show makes him pay with a chokeslam over the top for an elimination. A regular chokeslam drops Benoit so Angle gets the Angle Slam on Show.

Benoit gets one as well and now it's the ankle lock to make Show tap again. Show gets up and muscles Angle out as well, leaving us with two. With Show hanging over the top rope, Benoit hits the Swan Dive to the back of his head, accidentally bringing Show back in. The chokeslam is countered into the Crossface to make Show tap for the third time.

A side slam gets Show out of trouble as we hear about Benoit getting close to Ric Flair's longevity record. Show loads up a gorilla press but Benoit pulls him down into a guillotine, even as Show puts him on the apron. Benoit pulls him down and slides back inside as Show goes out, giving Benoit the big win.

Rating: A. It's one of the best Rumbles ever, mainly due to

Benoit. There was some great storytelling near the end, with Jericho and Angle both making Show tap but then making some kind of a mistake to get eliminated while Benoit was smart/determined enough to make it work in the end. The same thing happens when the big groups try to get Show out and Benoit does it on his own, showing how technique and determination are better than brute strength. It kept you wondering if Benoit could finally win the big one and that's what they managed to pull off in a great story throughout the whole match.

Other than that, they did a great job of not letting the ring get too full save for near the end, which Goldberg took care of in short order. Pacing is often such a problem in these things and it's very nice to see them get it right. They had a big angle with Foley and Orton too, giving it something besides the winner to go off of from here. Finally, there were multiple possible winners, which always makes for a better match than having one or two people be the only ones who could win. Great Rumble, and one of the best of all time.

Steve Austin talks about how Benoit was one of the best he's ever been in the ring with and how Benoit worked so hard. One of his favorite matches of his career was against Benoit in Edmonton, Benoit's hometown and he wishes Benoit was still here.

Benoit talks about how he got into wrestling and the whole thing snowballed from there. He finally had to force himself to meet Dynamite Kid, which was the final step he needed.

Cole and JBL talk about how much Benoit loved his children and family. His kids were always in suits and respectful and Bradshaw sounds like he can barely keep it together.

John Cena says this is the most difficult thing he's ever had to do and says his first instinct is to celebrate Benoit's life. Benoit was the type of guy you would want to go to war

with and if you meant business, he would look out for you. Benoit did everything for the fans and he was a man who loved the business. Cena respects that and Benoit made it clear when he cared about you. He never got the chance to tell Benoit how much he meant but Cena loves him.

Benoit talks about his time in ECW.

Joey Styles and Tazz are upset as well but were honored to call Benoit's last match.

From ECW on Sci Fi, June 19, 2007.

Chris Benoit vs. Elijah Burke

The winner moves on to the ECW World Title match at Vengeance. Benoit takes him down by the arm to start but it's too early for the Crossface. They go to a standoff but Benoit slaps him in the face, setting up another failed Crossface attempt. A whip into the corner gives Burke two and he hammers away at the ribs, setting up a seated abdominal stretch.

Benoit suplexes his way to freedom and cuts off a charging Burke with a kick to the face in the corner. A snap northern lights suplex gives Benoit two and it's time to roll some German suplexes. There's the Swan Dive but Benoit can't follow up. Burke is back up with an STO but the Elijah Express hits the corner. The Sharpshooter sends Benoit to the title match.

Rating: C. Benoit was kind of the perfect choice to go to ECW as he was a veteran who could have a good match with anyone. At the same time, someone beating him would mean something as he had the resume to give a victory some impact. Burke's time already seems to have come and gone though and he never felt like a real threat here.

CM Punk talks about how disappointed he was to not get to face Benoit last night and now he feels incredibly guilty. Benoit taught him a lot and he wants to pass that on without ever

letting Benoit down.

We see Vince's opening statement again.

JR and King talk about what happened and throw us back to WCW, against one of Benoit's best friends.

From Hog Wild 1996.

Chris Benoit vs. Dean Malenko

Jimmy Hart tries to come out with Dean Malenko, who isn't interested. Benoit on the other hand has Woman and Elizabeth with him. They jaw with each other a bit to start until Malenko takes him down and hammers away. Benoit kicks him in the ribs to take over but Malenko gets in some boots of his own. A suplex gets two and we hit an early chinlock as Heenan goes into some weird analogy about birds. Benoit fights up and chokes on the rope as Tony has to bring commentary back to the match from their NWO discussion.

A back elbow gives Benoit a few near falls and they go to the pinfall reversal sequence. Malenko wins the battle over a backslide for two as Woman screams a lot. The short arm scissors has Benoit down but he muscles Malenko up and drops him down for the break. There's the snap suplex for two as the fans do not exactly seem thrilled. An abdominal stretch goes on but Malenko grabs the foot to escape and flips him over.

Commentary talks about how we are coming up on a new millennium and these two could be the future. Eh kind of with one of them. Back up and they hit stereo crossbodies for a double knockdown to get a breather. Malenko goes up but gets knocked out of the air, setting up another snap suplex. The Swan Dive gives Benoit a delayed two and it's time to fight over a Tombstone until Malenko plants him for a few near falls.

Benoit charges into a boot in the corner but is fine enough to counter a Texas Cloverleaf attempt into a small package for two. They fall out to the floor in a double heap with Malenko blocking a posting by hitting one of his own and it's time to go back inside. Benoit catches him on top with a heck of a superplex and they're both down again. Malenko hits a release German suplex for two more as the fans (or more like people who happen to be here) just do not care.

A hard clothesline gives Malenko two as Heenan tries to figure out how many holds Malenko knows (Chris Jericho can be seen in the background taking notes). Benoit slams him down and grabs the Liontamer (Chris Jericho can be seen in the background furiously taking notes) but Malenko makes the rope. A victory roll gives Malenko two and another backslide gets another two. Benoit runs him over for two more but Malenko catches him on top for a superplex. There's a powerbomb to Benoit but time expires at 20:00.

Actually hang on as we're going to get a five minute overtime, which the bikers DO NOT like. Benoit jumps Malenko at the start of overtime and grabs the Cloverleaf in the middle of the ring. After over a minute, Benoit lets it go, which seems rather unlike him. Malenko's leg is done so Benoit kicks away and cranks on said leg on the mat. Some Ric Flair Cannonballs onto the leg set up another hold but Malenko reverses into a cradle as overtime expires.

We get ANOTHER five minute overtime and the bikers boo this out the non-existent building. Malenko snaps off a dragon screw legwhip but Benoit is back up with the dragon suplex for two. Benoit misses a dropkick and gets Cloverleafed, with Malenko switching it into an STF. Woman tries to help Benoit make the rope so Malenko goes after her, allowing Benoit to grab a rollup for the pin at 28:13. The replay shows him grabbing the rope for a bonus, because he is in fact a Horseman.

Rating: B+. You can go a few different ways with the thinking here. On the one hand, it's a great match with two guys going at it for the better part of half an hour in a pretty bad spot. On the other hands, the fans didn't care and the wrestlers failed to get over. There might be something to the latter, but consider the situation these guys were in.

These bikers didn't pay to see a wrestling show. They're here to see Hulk Hogan and Randy Savage and people from the WWF ten years ago. Benoit and Malenko are small guys they've never seen before and don't care about having a pretty long match. You're supposed to make the fans happy, but I'm not sure if these people qualify as fans as much as they are just people watching the matches because they're there. This match was great though so I'll go with the "these bikers are pinheads" and move on.

Dean Malenko talks about his time knowing Benoit over the years, starting in Japan. They were always there for each other and supported each other. Benoit was always someone he could talk to, though Benoit would never open up. He was even nicknamed Houdini for his ability to sneak out of a conversation. As for working in the ring, Benoit knew how to help young talent and always made them better.

Malenko has now lost two of his best friends in two years and he is the last of the original Three Amigos. The greatest gift Malenko ever gave him was the Crippler Crossface and Benoit always thanked him for it. Malenko starts crying and talks about how his two best friends are together, and probably already arguing. This was a rough sit and you could feel how much Benoit meant to him.

JBL and Cole talk about how Benoit might not have been a great talker but it didn't matter when you're that good in the ring. Bradshaw even got the chance to have that big match with him.

From Smackdown, April 14, 2006. I'm a bit surprised that they

didn't go with the Wrestlemania match here but maybe this meant more to JBL.

US Title: Chris Benoit vs. John Bradshaw Layfield

JBL, with Jillian Hall, is defending in a match that was supposed to be a celebration. Before the match, cue Teddy Long to say we're having a change. The title is going to be on the line in a steel cage, which just happens to be above the ring and no one seemed to notice it yet, aside from all of the times that it was shown earlier in the night. JBL begs the referee to not make this happen so Benoit hammers away to start, sending JBL from one corner to another.

An early JBL escape attempt doesn't work as Benoit pulls him back down and onto the mat. JBL is back up with a belly to back superplex but Benoit chops him down without much trouble. It's too early for the Sharpshooter as JBL kicks him away and drops some elbows. Benoit is back up with some knees and chops in the corner before catching JBL on top again.

They both come crashing back down though and it's time for a quick breather. It's JBL up first with Two Amigos but Benoit pulls him into another failed Sharpshooter attempt. The Crossface doesn't work either so Benoit hits the full Three Amigos. The Swan Dive connects for no cover as Benoit would rather go up than cover or walk out the door. JBL is back up with a super Russian legsweep and we take a break.

Back with Benoit climbing the cage again and getting electric chaired back down for two. A sleeper has Benoit in more trouble but the arm stays up the third time. Another suplex drops JBL and it's time to roll the German suplexes. Benoit can only get two though and JBL boots him in the face. JBL goes for the door but the confused Jillian accidentally slams it on Benoit's head. The Crossface goes but there is no referee to see the tap. Instead JBL rolls him over for two before kicking Benoit low, which is enough to retain the

title.

Rating: B-. This was rolling until the messier than necessary ending. The Jillian stuff didn't need to be there and seemed to be more of an idea for the sake of having one. JBL shouldn't be dropping the title yet anyway, and especially not to Benoit after a long reign. The match was good, but having it in a cage didn't add much of a note.

Stephanie McMahon talks about how passionate of a wrestler that Benoit was, but people don't know how passionate he was about family. Benoit was so happy that she married HHH and so happy when they found out she was pregnant. She will always know him as her friend.

Chavo Guerrero talks about how Benoit was his best friend and the first person he called when he found out Eddie Guerrero died. That was almost harder than finding out about Eddie in the first place, because Benoit sobbed. Chavo was with Eddie on his last night and he was with Benoit on one of his last nights. They almost missed their flights the next morning but Benoit was calling him to check on him later that day.

It hurts so much to lose someone else and they always left with a hug and an I Love You. That's what he got with their final phone call and Benoit will always be part of their family. Benoit trusted him with his kids' lives and Chavo would do the same with Benoit and his kids. Thank you and he'll always miss Benoit.

We see the last few minutes of Benoit, as the Pegasus Kid, winning the IWGP Junior Heavyweight Title from Jushin Thunder Liger on August 19, 1990.

William Regal says he can tell us some great Benoit stories at a later date but for now he can say that Benoit was the best in the ring. Regal says that's all he has to say at the moment and leaves. Over the years, there has been some speculation that Regal might not have been sure about what happened in

Atlanta and he seemed very careful with his words here. It wouldn't shock me at all if he was thinking something was a lot worse than it seemed.

We see Vince's opening statement again.

JR and King talk about how Benoit idolized Dynamite Kid.

Benoit talks about finally getting to Stampede Wrestling and emulating Dynamite Kid as much as he could.

From Royal Rumble 2001.

Intercontinental Title: Chris Benoit vs. Chris Jericho

Benoit is defending in a ladder match and the fight is on in a hurry. The slugout leads to both guys trying their submission to no avail. Benoit sends him shoulder first into the post as Lawler picks Benoit to win in a blowout. A shoulder breaker stays on the shoulder and Jericho's springboard dropkick is knocked out to the floor. They're definitely going with the idea that Benoit knows Jericho very well to start.

The shoulder goes into the post and it's already ladder time. It's way too early to climb though as Jericho pulls him off in an electric chair. Jericho rams the ladder into Benoit's ribs and puts said ladder in the corner. Now you know what's going to happen and I know what's going to happen, but since Jericho is a face here, he's stupid enough to be whipped into the ladder and fall outside again.

Benoit's dive through the ropes is blocked with a chair to the head (egads that's tough to watch). A ladder shot to Benoit's back only hits barricade and now it's the ladder going off Jericho's head. Jericho sends him into the ladder back inside before tying Benoit's leg into the ladder. That means a super Russian legsweep to bring them both crashing down. Benoit goes into the ladder again and Jericho catapults the ladder into his face to make things even worse. These are some brutal,

brutal shots here and they keep getting harder and harder.

Jericho starts going up the ladder so Benoit belly to back suplexes him over the top in a heap. They both head up the ladder this time though and Jericho gets the Walls ON TOP OF THE LADDER for one of the coolest and most painful looking spots you'll ever see. Benoit falls off but manages to kick the ladder over, sending Jericho into the ropes. The Crossface makes Jericho tap (and goes back to the shoulder from earlier) but Jericho's other arm is still good enough to send Benoit into the ladder.

The ladder is set up in the corner but Benoit knocks him off, setting up a HUGE Swan Dive...which only hits mat. Jericho puts the ladder on top of Benoit for a climb but Benoit shoves it forward, sending Jericho crashing into the top rope. Benoit goes up but Jericho makes the save with a chair to knock Benoit to the floor. That's too much of a fall and Jericho wins the title.

Rating: A. This is one of my all time favorites as the match is nothing short of brutal and featured some unique spots in there. Sometimes you just need two people to beat the heck out of each other with reckless abandon and that's exactly what you got here. There's even some psychology with the arm work and that's all you could ask for. This isn't a match that needs a lot of analysis because you get everything you need out of just watching the thing.

JR and King talk about how great Benoit was.

Edge talks about how he had three people in this industry that he felt he could talk to and now two of them are gone. He was watching Stampede Wrestling when he was a kid and knew Benoit would be awesome. They fought a few times and it was like two Canadians fighting over the last beer. No one would ever have a bad thing to say about Benoit.

Two weeks ago, he got to face Benoit again and it was fun

getting kicked in the head that hard. Seeing Benoit smile after a match was the biggest compliment. Edge would call Benoit after his neck surgery to make sure things were right. He remembers seeing Benoit with his kids and starts crying again, which he knows would get him heat with Benoit but he can't help it.

JBL talks about Benoit throwing people out of the locker room because they didn't belong there.

Another Benoit music video, set to Remember (I.O.U.) by Big Dismal.

HHH tries to come up with one thing that defines Benoit and it would be respect. A few years ago, a young wrestler disrespected Shawn Michaels so Benoit made him do 1000 squats. The next day, the wrestler couldn't bend his legs so Benoit made him do 500 more. He will always remember Wrestlemania XX and the image of Benoit FINALLY winning the World Title. HHH will always respect Benoit because he earned it.

JR and King introduce the only thing that could wrap this up.

From Wrestlemania XX.

Raw World Title: HHH vs. Chris Benoit vs. Shawn Michaels

HHH is defending and wearing white boots for a really weird look. We don't get Big Match Intros but we do have a weapons check. The fans are behind Benoit here, to the surprise of no one paying attention. Benoit goes after both of them to start but Shawn wants to beat on HHH. A way too early Crossface attempt doesn't work on Shawn, who is sent into HHH to knock the champ outside. The second Crossface attempt is countered into a rollup for two but HHH is back in to clothesline Michaels.

Now it's Benoit being sent outside so Shawn and HHH can have their big showdown. That doesn't last long (you save the big

stuff for later) as HHH goes outside to drive Benoit into the barricade. Shawn is right up with a moonsault onto the two of them for a big crash. Back in and HHH hits the facebuster on Shawn but Benoit breaks up the Pedigree. Shawn goes shoulder first into the post, again leaving us with two instead of the three.

Benoit can't get a belly to back superplex as HHH pulls him down into the Tree of Woe and whips Shawn into him for a near fall of his own. HHH gets sent into him as well for the same two but Benoit gets free for the rolling German suplexes. Michaels is right there to break up the Swan dive though, only to eat a DDT from HHH. With Shawn on the floor, HHH pulls Benoit off the top and hammers away.

That's reversed into a Crossface with Shawn diving in for a save. Shawn tries his own rolling German suplexes on Benoit and I'll let you guess how that goes. After Shawn bounces off the mat from Benoit's third straight German suplex, the Swan Dive connects for two. Shawn forearms Benoit to the floor and nips up for the fight against HHH. The champ gets knocked down for the top rope elbow and Sweet Chin Music connects.

Benoit is right there to pull HHH to the floor of course and he sends Shawn into the post. The busted open Shawn (it wouldn't feel right otherwise) gets caught in the Crossface so HHH grabs his hand to prevent the tap out. Benoit beats up HHH on the floor but gets sent into the steps. HHH loads up the announcers' table and Shawn joins him to double suplex Benoit through the table. NOW we get the big Shawn vs. HHH showdown and it lasts all of fifteen seconds with Shawn whipping HHH over the corner and back outside.

Back in and HHH (also bleeding) hits a quick Pedigree but can't cover. Benoit dives in for a last second save and all three are down. A Pedigree to Benoit is reversed into a Sharpshooter in the middle of the ring so it's Shawn coming back in with more Sweet Chin Music. That's only good for two

so Shawn tries it again, only to be sent to the floor. The Pedigree is countered into the Crossface and Benoit rolls him into the middle for the tap and the title.

Rating: A+. I never realized how much the Wrestlemania XXX match copied this one, down to the big double team through the table, the technical star who had worked forever to get here and winning with a very similar hold, plus other things I'm probably overlooking. Anyway, there isn't much to say here as the match speaks for itself. It's long in the right way, the near falls were great, the work and visuals were incredible and the right guy won. I'm sure you've seen this one at least once and if you haven't, find the time to sit down and watch Benoit's crowning achievement.

Benoit is in tears as Eddie comes out for the big celebration. Confetti falls (another Wrestlemania XXX scene) and JR has almost lost his voice shouting about how amazing this was. The ending is a spectacular visual and what should have been one of the most memorable moments ever.

One more Benoit graphic wraps us up.

Overall Rating: N/A. What else is there to say? Benoit is someone who is going to be remembered in two very distinct ways and this show was about the first one. No one really knew what had happened yet and it made sense for them to pay tribute to Benoit. This was an amazing tribute and set of matches to one of the most successful wrestlers ever. Benoit had an incredible career and while I can't say it's a shame that it won't be featured ever again, there is so much greatness in there that it can be rather hard to ignore. This was the right show for the time, but it isn't likely to see the light of day again.

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NXT – November 23, 2021: A Glimmer Of Something

NXT

Date: November 23, 2021

Location: Capitol Wrestling Center, Orlando, Florida

Commentators: Beth Phoenix, Vic Joseph, Wade Barrett

It's title time as we have a pretty big main event with North American Champion Carmelo Hayes defending against Johnny Gargano and Pete Dunne. NXT has a good history of setting up these title matches and then making them work, so hopefully they remember how to make it work. Let's get to it.

[Here are last week's results if you need a recap.](#)

We open with Grayson Waller in the ring, talking about how great of an NXT Champion Tommaso Ciampa really is. Waller goes on about the fans booing everyone, including John Cena and Roman Reigns, but those two are at the top of the game. It's like people with 80,000 tweets and 3 followers don't matter! Cue Ciampa to cut Waller off and we're ready to go.

Tommaso Ciampa vs. Grayson Waller

Non-title. Ciampa isn't having this and stomps away in the corner. A running knee puts Waller on the floor but he comes back in with a jumping neckbreaker. Now it's Waller stomping away in the corner until Ciampa is back up with a boot out of the corner. Waller grabs a spinebuster into a modified People's Elbow, which only hits mat. A clothesline puts Waller on the floor and there's the throw over the announcers' table so Ciampa can applaud himself.

We take a break and come back with Ciampa kneeing Waller out of the air, followed by a DDT for two. Waller grabs a spinebuster for two but Ciampa catches him on top. A super Air

Raid Crash gets two but Waller catches him with a spinebuster for two. Ciampa is sent outside for the big flip dive but he catches Waller with the Willow's Bell on the way back in. The Fairy Tale Ending finishes Waller at 13:37.

Rating: C+. This was a good showing from both guys and Ciampa still feels like he's a few miles ahead of just about everyone else in NXT. He comes off as polished and knowing what he's doing, while so many others seem to be figuring it out as they go. Speaking of figuring it out, it would be nice if NXT could figure out what Waller is supposed to be and stick with it for more than two weeks at a time.

LA Knight doesn't think much of Grayson Waller, because the fans were chanting WALLER SUCKS. That's not an insult, but just a fact of life. Joe Gacy comes in to talk about how bad that is so they agree to meet in the safe space. Knight: "You make it sound like such a perverted thing, you freak." The match is on for later.

We recap last week's poker showdown.

Toxic Attraction isn't looking forward to having to face Cora Jade. Dakota Kai comes up next to them and seems to be a bit crazy. Mandy Rose: "At least she's on our team." They find a bunch of destroyed stuff but keep walking, with Kai breaking another glass. Kay Lee Ray pops up with a baseball bat, apparently having smashed everything.

Here is a depressed Cameron Grimes, still with the shorter hair. Grimes talks about growing up in a very small town in North Carolina. Every day, he would have people push him down and tell him he wasn't good enough. Grimes kept fighting and coming up because he would never quit and now he has made it. The entire time, he kept his hair and beard to remind himself of what he went through. Duke Hudson took all of that away last week and embarrassed him.

Hudson messed up though because he made Grimes angry. He wants

Hudson down here right now because the talking is done. Hudson, in a barber's chair, pops up on screen to ask why Grimes should be mad at him. Last week, Grimes took a lot of money from him and got a free haircut. All Hudson is trying to do is make Grimes a decent human being, so Grimes says come down here and let's finish this. That's not happening, so Grimes makes a better offer: let's go all in, with hair vs. hair at WarGames. Hudson is in, and holds up Grimes' hair in a bag.

This was a wrestling promo and a classic wrestling setup. Ignoring the poker nonsense, this was someone who has been wronged giving a serious speech about wanting revenge and setting up a big match with some high stakes. That's how this stuff can work and this was good stuff.

Pete Dunne is ready to win the North American Title tonight.

Indi Hartwell says Dexter Lumis has a broken hand and is out for a month. He can't even draw, but she's still ready to have her tag match tonight. This one is for Dexter, but Persia Pirotta pulls her to the ring.

Tiffany Stratton, a rich blonde girl who plays tennis, is coming. I saw her on 205 Live and that's not a great thing.

Persia Pirotta/Indi Hartwell vs. Kayden Carter/Kacy Catanzaro

Carter and Catanzaro come through the crowd for their energized entrance. Persia shrugs Carter off to start and hands it off to Hartwell, who seems a little distracted. Hartwell shoves her way out of the corner but gets taken down by Carter in a hurry. Catanzaro comes in off a blind tag and is suplexed into a moonsault for two on Hartwell.

It's back to Pirotta to drop Catanzaro face first on the top, setting up a tilt-a-whirl backbreaker. Hartwell stops to look at her ring finger before hitting Carter with a side slam. That means another look at the ring finger, allowing Carter to

grab a crucifix for two of her own. Carter splashes the distracted Hartwell for the fast pin at 3:35.

Rating: C. Hartwell being distracted because of Dexter is a way to go for her, as the team with Pirotta seems ready to split. To be fair, they have been a team for all of a few months now and that is a long shelf life around here. Carter and Catanzaro seem primed for a Women's Tag Team Title match and that should be a good thing whenever we get there.

Andre Chase gives his students a tour of Chase University facilities when they run into Cameron Grimes. Chase calls him a teachable moment and Grimes doesn't seem pleased.

Malik Blade vs. Santos Escobar

Escobar takes him to the mat to start but Blade slips out of a suplex. Blade grabs a sunset flip for two, earning himself a forearm to the face. Back up and Escobar sends him into the corner, setting up the Phantom Driver for the pin at 2:27.

Post match Legado del Fantasma gets in the ring, where Elektra Lopez says Xyon Quinn turned them down. They never needed him anyway, but here are Von Wagner and Kyle O'Reilly to interrupt. They're here for the same reason: they want the Tag Team Titles (which Legado never mentioned) and Wagner's foot was on the rope in their match. Imperium pops up to shout about how the little children are fighting among themselves. Imperium announces a #1 contenders match and the winners can get a shot at WarGames.

Raquel Gonzalez barges into the women's locker room and nearly gets in a fight. Cora Jade tells them to get it together for WarGames, but they need a fourth to go along with Io Shirai. They can figure that out while she goes to fight Mandy Rose.

Tony D'Angelo's money is on Carmelo Hayes tonight and suggests putting some bets on the match.

Mandy Rose vs. Cora Jade

Non-title. They fight over a lockup to start with Jade grabbing a quick rollup for two. A running knee in the corner is countered into a spinebuster to give Rose her own two though and she plants Jade again for a bonus. Back up and Jade snaps off a running hurricanrana for two, only to miss a middle rope dropkick. Cue Kay Lee Ray with her baseball bat, which is smashed into a variety of things. The distraction lets Jade grab a rollup for the pin at 4:02.

Rating: D+. As soon as Rose told Toxic Attraction to stay in the back and this was non-title, Rose was in big trouble. Those are some nearly guaranteed signs that the champ is in trouble, though what might be a bigger problem is how obvious those signs were. Work on those things a bit, because it makes your booking pretty easy to guess.

Carmelo Hayes and Trick Williams are ready for the triple threat. Johnny Gargano and Pete Dunne are chasing him and he won't miss.

Joe Gacy is ready to make the ring a safe space. Harland puts his hand on Gacy's shoulder.

Kay Lee Ray comes up to Cora Jade, Raquel Gonzalez and Io Shirai. Ray will be their fourth member at WarGames, and she'll be in the advantage ladder match next week too. It has been a full month since a ladder match so at least they're not wasting any more time.

Joe Gacy vs. LA Knight

Cue Grayson Waller to jump Knight from behind and they fight to the back. No match.

Gacy talks about anger management but here is the Diamond Mine to interrupt. That sends Gacy into a rant about weight shaming with the Cruiserweight Title but Roderick Strong says he'll

face Gacy anyway. Malcolm Bivens says the match will be made, but here is Harland to scare Diamond Mine off. Well at least...actually no, as I can't think of anything positive in this segment.

MSK continues on their quest but get pulled over for driving seven miles an hour. They're worried about the contents of their bag but are allowed to go.

Ivy Nile vs. Yulisa Leon

Nile takes her down and does pushups on Leon's back. Leon fights up and works on the arm but Nile is back with a heck of a clothesline. A triangle choke is eventually broken up so Leon tries a rollup, only to get reversed into a dragon sleeper for the tap at 2:44.

Solo Sikoa talks about everything he has done to get here and he has done it on his own.

The Grizzled Young Veterans are planning something but get broken up by an LA Knight/Grayson Waller brawl.

Boa can't control his evil but once he does, you will fear him.

Josh Briggs/Brooks Jensen vs. Grizzled Young Veterans

Drake gets sent throat first into the middle rope for a pair of right hands to start. There's a big left hand to put him down again but Zack Gibson asks for some time before a right hand. A blind tag brings in Gibson to jump Jensen from behind and we hit the chinlock. We cut to LA Knight and Grayson Waller STILL fighting in the back as Gibson cuts off Jensen's tag attempt.

That lasts all of a few seconds as it's off to Briggs to clean house in a hurry. Drake gets backdropped and claims a knee injury but Briggs has to go after Gibson. Drake's knee is fine enough to try a kick to the ribs, which is easily caught.

Briggs and Jensen go high/low to finish Drake at 4:26.

Rating: C. Briggs and Jensen get to pick up a win and that's a good thing for them. They have the potential to be a nice tag team but you're only going to get so far without ever beating anyone. Granted you could say the same thing about the Veterans and in a much bigger way, but the solution for them is to be goofy con artists for some reason.

WarGames rundown.

North American Title: Johnny Gargano vs. Pete Dunne vs. Carmelo Hayes

Hayes is defending. Dunne gets dropkicked to the floor start, leaving Gargano to dropkicks Hayes. Back in and Dunne runs Hayes over, with Gargano taking Dunne's place. Everyone is back inside so Dunne can half crab them both. That's broken up as well so Hayes springboard body blocks Dunne for two before hammering on Gargano. Johnny fights out of the corner and this a bulldog/running clothesline combination to take both of them down. Gargano hits a dive each onto Dunne and Hayes, setting up a running hurricane to Dunne.

We take a break and come back with a circle slugout until Hayes gets knocked into the corner. Hayes gets the better of things and sends Gargano to the apron, where scores with the slingshot spear. The Patter End is countered into a DDT for two on Dunne. Stereo kicks to the head rock Hayes but he's back up to suplex Dunne onto Gargano. Back up and Gargano runs both of them over, setting up the Lawn Dart to Hayes. Dunne comes back in and hits the Bitter End, but here Tony D'Angelo to break up the cover. D'Angelo sends Dunne into the steps and the top rope ax kick gives Hayes the retaining pin at 11:23.

Rating: B-. They had me wondering who was leaving with the title here and Hayes continues to look like a star, so they're certainly doing something well. Hayes is one of the brighter young stars around and the other two have been made men for a

longtime. I liked the match and the ending probably sets up something for WarGames, so they took care of a few things at once.

Post match the big beatdown is on with LA Knight and Grayson Waller joining in. The villains get the better of things and Gargano's hand is loaded up for the Pillmanization. Cue Tommaso Ciampa with the chair to break everything up. The fans want the DIY reunion and the fans chant for WarGames....but here is Bron Breaker to join the villains. Breaker: "WARGAMES!!!" The brawl is on again as the sirens go off to end the show. I'm really not sure if this should be a WarGames match, but the more appropriate Survivor Series has already passed so this is as good as we're getting.

Overall Rating: C+. The wrestling wasn't great here, but this felt like a show where they had a plan and were starting to execute it. A lot of the random, throwing stuff at the wall feeling was gone and a lot of that probably has to do with having a shot to build towards. This was a glimmer of hope and if NXT is more like this going forward, they have a chance. There is still a lot of fine tuning to go, but at least they got it a lot closer to right this week.

Results

Tommaso Ciampa b. Grayson Waller – Fairy Tale Ending

Kacy Catanzaro/Kayden Carter b. Indi Hartwell/Persia Pirotta – Splash to Hartwell

Santos Escobar b. Malik Blade – Phantom Driver

Cora Jade b. Mandy Rose – Rollup

Ivy Nile b. Yulisa Leon – Dragon sleeper

Josh Briggs/Brooks Jensen b. Grizzled Young Veterans – High/Low to Drake

Carmelo Hayes b. Pete Dunne and Johnny Gargano – Top rope ax kick to Dunne

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205 Live – November 19, 2021: Soulless

205 Live

Date: November 19, 2021

Location: Capitol Wrestling Center, Orlando, Florida

Commentators: Nigel McGuinness, Vic Joseph

It's the go home show for Survivor Series, which has nothing to do with anything going on with this show. Instead, we'll be getting more of the NXT B lineup, plus a battle of the midcarders. That doesn't sound too bad, so maybe they can make it work out well enough again. Let's get to it.

[Here are last week's results if you need a recap.](#)

Malik Blade vs. Edris Enofe

This is Enofe's debut. They go technical to start with Blade snapmaring him down for an early two, sending us into a

standoff. Enofe rolls him up for two and that's good for another standoff as they seem to respect each other. An exchange of rollups give them two each and it's another standoff. Blade goes more traditional with a headlock on the mat but Enofe gives him a headlock takeover of his own. Back up and Blade hits a dropkick for one and the armbar goes on. Some armdrags have Enofe down again and a missile dropkick sets up...a missed frog splash. Enofe hits a spinebuster and a standing moonsault for the pin at 6:07.

Rating: C-. So that's the first we've seen of Enofe and he's an athletic guy with a good look. Really that's about all there is to say about him, as he's someone who feels like a prospect they signed, taught a basic match and then threw him out there. Certainly not bad, but he feels like a bunch of modern NXT wrestlers and that's not a great sign.

Tiffany Stratton vs. Amari Miller

Stratton, debuting as well, is billed as Daddy's Little Rich Girl and the Buff Barbie Doll. Before the match, she lets us know how beautiful she is, meaning she is the opposite of all of us. Miller grabs a headlock to start and grinds away but Stratton, a gymnast, flips up without much trouble. Back up and Miller hits a spinwheel kick, with Nigel saying Miller is inspired by "WWE Legend Alicia Fox." I'll let that one sink in for a minute as Miller tries a rollup, only to be countered into a sunset flip, with Stratton bridging up for more leverage and the pin at 3:21.

Rating: D+. Stratton is a new name and much like Tony D'Angelo, feels straight out of central casting. She's the kind of person you would see in roughly 573 mediocre high school movies. What else are you expecting from someone who wears pink, brought a bag to the ring, and bragged about how good looking she is? It's just such a basic idea and that is going to give her a pretty firm ceiling, but WWE has decided she's worth a look and that's all that matters.

Video on Kacy Catanzaro/Kayden Carter, the same one which aired on NXT.

Kayden Carter/Kacy Catanzaro vs. Yulisa Leon/Valentina Feroz

Carter and Catanzaro do have an energetic entrance. Yulisa and Carter roll around for a bit as commentary tries to figure out what kind of music Carter and Catanzaro like. Catanzaro comes in to take Yulisa down but it's right back to Carter to kick her out of the corner. We'll try Catanzaro again and she gets to flip Feroz around a bit, setting up a double kick to the face.

Feroz manages to get in a shot to Carter's arm though and twists her down for a crash. A cross armbreaker doesn't do much for Yulisa so she goes with a gutwrench suplex for two instead. Carter fights up and it's back to Catanzaro in a hurry. A fall away slam gives Feroz two but Carter gets the blind tag, setting up the neckbreaker/450 (KC Squared) to finish Feroz at 7:42.

Rating: C-. This was just a step above a long squash for Carter and Catanzaro, which is what it should have been. Carter and Catanzaro seem to be rising up the ranks fairly quickly in NXT and it would be nice to see how far they can go. Feroz and Leon were fine in their roles here, though it wasn't exactly a great match.

Overall Rating: D+. Over the last few months, NXT feels like it has lost its soul. Anything energetic, fun, engaging or anything else has been completely stripped away and you're left with very basic wrestling, almost giving it a low level independent feeling. That's what I got here too, with wrestlers that don't seem to have much potential (Carter and Catanzaro have more than anyone and even then it's not great) and characters who are either non-existent or one note. NXT, and 205 Live as a result, is rapidly becoming a wasteland and this show made it seem like that is exactly what WWE wants.

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