

The Wrestling Observer Newsletter Awards Are Out

And....yeah I can't say I'm surprised.

It's that time of year again. The Wrestling Observer Newsletter Awards have been released and that means it is time to hear about how bad WWE is, how great AEW is and how no one really knows any other promotions aside from those two and New Japan. As usual, some of these are going to be good, some of these are going to be in the middle, and some of these are going to either make you laugh or need an aspirin. Let's get to it.

As usual, I'll be skipping the MMA awards because they're still not wrestling.

Wrestler Of The Year – Jon Moxley

I can get this, but the garbage brawls in the main events were starting to grate on me. It was almost always going to be him or Drew McIntyre though and that's fine. Roman Reigns was great, but he was gone for about half of the year so it's kind of hard to go with an amazing four months over a very good twelve months.

Most Outstanding Wrestler – Kenny Omega

Are you really surprised by this in any way, shape or form? It's pretty clear that Meltzer thinks Omega is the greatest thing ever so him winning this is hardly a shock whatsoever.

Tag Team Of The Year – Young Bucks

They don't hold the Tag Team Titles for most of the year but they've won the award five times before so....yeah of course they win here, despite maybe not being in the top three teams in AEW.

Best Interviews – Eddie Kingston

Yep.

Promotion Of The Year – All Elite Wrestling

Some of you may be noticing a pattern emerging here and while this is far from some ridiculous pick, I think you might be starting to see how these awards are going to go. If you're talking just WWE vs. AEW then yeah I can see it, but I'd take NXT overall if that's an option (and fair enough if it wasn't).

Best Weekly TV Series – AEW Dynamite

It's a toss up between this and NXT, though Ring of Honor's Pure Tournament stuff was quite good. Again though: with a six month hiatus, how much praise can you really give them? Same with NXT UK, though the hour being chopped off is a helpful tool.

Match Of The Year – Kenny Omega/Hangman Page vs. Young Bucks

That's what I had too.

MVP Awards

USA – Kenny Omega

Japan – Tetsuya Naito

Mexico – Rey Fenix

Europe – Walter

Non-Heavyweight – Hiromu Takahashi

Women's Wrestling – Bayley

These continue to be the most pointless awards of the year, but given that Fenix wrestled in Mexico FIVE TIMES in 2020 (and not at all from March 7 – December 12), I think there

might be some better candidates.

Box Office Draw Of The Year – Conor McGregor

The guy fought once for 40 seconds in January. This is a totally realistic comparison to wrestlers appearing for free on television 52 weeks a year.

Feud Of The Year – Jon Moxley vs. Eddie Kingston

I had it on my list of options but went with Bayley vs. Sasha Banks instead. Part of the problem is they only had two matches, one of which was thrown onto TV because of Lance Archer being held off the show. The promos were great, but I could go with a bit more than something that lasted about five weeks, started out of necessity more than a plan, and had some pretty obvious results.

By the way: that is now eight awards (not counting ones including MMA or the regional MVPs) and AEW has swept the year. WWE's lone win: their international developmental champion who didn't appear for six months and wrestles elsewhere.

Most Improved – Britt Baker

I could see this one, but I'm really not sure I can go with it. Bobby Lashley had a banner year and seemed primed to FINALLY move into the main event. Roman Reigns is the best heel in years (again: time issue). Bayley found every groove you could want as a heel. But then there's Main Event Jey Uso, who may I remind you is JEY USO IN THE MAIN EVENT. Baker was very good and I don't see it as some horrible choice, but Uso blows this away for me, just due to the surprise factor alone.

Most Charismatic – Maxwell Jacob Friedman

If you go with the stuff before the Inner Circle, it's hard to argue. Sidenote: Orange Cassidy got second place. Isn't his thing that he doesn't have charisma or energy or anything

close to it 90% of the time?

Best Technical Wrestler – Zach Sabre Jr.

That guy is so good with this stuff that he scares me, mainly because I don't know how he is doing what I'm watching. I'd say that qualifies (and it has for seven years in a row now).

Best Brawler – Jon Moxley

His brawls aren't even that great. I'm not sure who I would give this to, but I don't think it's Moxley. Lance Archer maybe? His are a bit more entertaining a good chunk of the time.

Best Flying Wrestler – Rey Fenix

I mean, he misses a lot of stuff but there are times where I can't believe what I'm seeing from him so yeah I'm good with this too.

Most Overrated – Bray Wyatt

One day I'm going to need to get a definition of overrated, because it seems to be a lot closer to overpushed than anything else. And hey: WWE won something! Sure it's a negative award but the streak is broken!

Most Underrated – Ricochet

Again: who thinks Ricochet is underrated? People are begging for him to be more regularly pushed. That's not what underrated means, at least anywhere else. By the way: this is now 24 years in a row (and 27/28) that a WWE wrestler has won this award.

Rookie Of The Year – Pat McAfee

I would have been actually mad if this had been ANYONE else.

Best Non-Wrestler – Taz

I had Pat McAfee as he barely wrestled, but Taz is a fine choice as he has revitalized his career.

Best Television Announcer – Excalibur

Not until he learns how to properly say “combination”. Excalibur isn’t the best commentator on either show he appears on, nor is he anywhere close to the best in the business today. That goes to the criminally underrated Ian Riccaboni, who makes wrestling sound like a sport, makes Nickelodeon and TGIF references and seems like the nicest guy in the world. This is the most wrong of all the choices, but I guess commentary stopped being about telling stories etc. and becoming more about knowing who invented an armbar in Japan thirty years ago while wearing a mask and insulting JR for suggesting that Mid-South was good.

Worst Television Announcer – Michael Cole

Is that who is under Excalibur’s mask?

Best Major Wrestling Show – Revolution

I didn’t even have to look it up. I’m going to assume that Takeovers don’t count as major shows because I need to keep my blood pressure low and move on.

Worst Major Wrestling Show – Super Showdown

It’s the only show where I felt guilty for watching it so I think that qualifies.

Best Wrestling Maneuver – One Winged Angel

You knew this was coming as that’s 4/5 years in a row. I can’t wait for someone to kick out of that thing so we can stop acting like it’s the legdrop or Stunner.

Most Disgusting Promotional Tactic – WWE Releases Wrestlers While Making Record Profits

And no. Back in April, WWE released a few dozen wrestlers. Some of the names included:

Eric Young

EC3

Mike/Maria Kanellis

Aiden English

Heath Slater

Curt Hawkins

Sarah Logan

Primo/Epico

No Way Jose

Curtis Axel

There were other names and yeah some of them (Rusev/Good Brothers) felt pretty ridiculous. But look at that list of 12 names and tell me who had any serious value in WWE. Not who COULD have had value, but which of them was more than house show filler at the time of/within let's say six months of their release.

Yeah it sounds harsh that they were released, but WWE isn't a charity and as William Regal once said, no one owes you a living. The same is true of the agents who were furloughed: there aren't as many shows taking place, so what are they supposed to get paid to do? I get the knee jerk reaction to this (and I had one as well because it was so shocking), but WWE has done this kind of spring cleaning for YEARS (not as much recently, but it's hardly some unheard of idea) and it wasn't a big deal. Low level wrestlers got released. That's not disgusting.

You know what is? Matt Hardy flying off of a lift, slamming his head onto the concrete and being cleared about three minutes later so he could climb the set to do a stunt to end a match with Sammy Guevara at All Out. What WWE did was business (not nice business, but business). What AEW did with Hardy was disgusting.

Worst Television Show – Raw

At least it didn't have Tommy Dreamer as a featured star, a still going feud over a wad of money, a portal to another dimension so the wrestlers could have a reality show, Eric Young as World Champion and a whodunit over a manager getting shot at a wedding by someone who was changed into another personality by cologne. Oh or another promotion coming in to constantly point out how pathetic the show is. I can't imagine how badly that show would be seen. The more I read these things, the more convince I am that I'm the only person who watches ROH and Impact.

Worst Match Of The Year – Bray Wyatt vs. Braun Strowman (Swamp Fight)

I went with that too, though if you want to go with an actual match, that time where Matt Hardy's head bounced off of some concrete and he continued the match in a few minutes because AEW's concussion protocol can be done faster than defrosting a frozen General Tso's chicken might qualify.

Worst Feud Of The Year – Braun Strowman vs. Bray Wyatt

That's kind of hard to argue.

Worst Promotion Of The Year – WWE

AEW'S OWNER IS COMING TO IMPACT WRESTLING EVERY WEEK TO TELL THEM HOW MUCH THEY SUCK AND IMPACT'S OWNERS ARE COMPLETELY OK WITH THIS!!! As usual, fans think that Raw is all WWE does and as usual, those people are wrong.

Also, the Most Disgusting Promotional Tactic Award was related to WWE's business practices. Those practices are making them millions upon millions upon millions of dollars a year, not counting the latest (yes latest) BILLION dollar deal that they announced early in 2021. Yeah they have one bad TV show, but they probably make more in a month than most promotions do in a year. Now what's worse: a bad TV show from a company making no money or a bad TV show from a company making more money than we could ever hope to spend in a lifetime?

Best Booker – Tony Khan (AEW)

You knew (wait for it)

Best Promoter – Tony Khan (AEW)

It was coming (there you go)

Best Gimmick – Orange Cassidy

When your gimmick is being lazy, I'm not sure how much praise it is worth. At least he's back down in the midcard where he belongs.

Worst Gimmick – The Fiend

It won Best Gimmick in the year of a DQ inside the Cell and wins Worst Gimmick here. What a fickle bunch. I'd probably go with Dexter Lumis, but I get that he has an audience.

Best Pro Wrestling Book – Killing The Business (The Young Bucks)

I have a wrestling bookshelf across the room from me, plus a pile next to me at the moment. Between those we have:

The Eighth Wonder Of The World (Bertrand Herbert/Pat Laparde)

Under The Black Hat (Jim Ross)

Rowdy (Ariel/Colton Tombs)

Master Of The Ring (Tim Hornbaker, which I don't own but want to pick up)

Take any 320 pages out of those (it can be from any book in any order) and I have a feeling it's going to be better written/more interesting than the Bucks' story.

Documentary Of The Year – Owen Hart (Dark Side Of The Ring)

That wasn't even the best episode of the season, but I can go with it for the emotional impact.

Final tally (ignoring awards for things other than wrestling/regional MVPs and one off wins from outside the big two):

AEW – 19

WWE – 10 (8 negative, with Underrated being kind of a negative as well)

I have no issue buying that AEW was better than Raw, Smackdown and NXT, but come on with some of these. Raw for Worst TV Show? Cole as Worst Announcer? Excalibur as Best Announcer? WWE as Worst Promotion (again: IMPACT IS HAPPY WITH AEW COMING OVER AND INSULTING THEM!)? The Bucks get book of the year?

I've said many times before that there is no such thing as being unbiased in reviewing (it's literally impossible). That's all well and good, but there is a difference between being somewhat biased and just picking what you like and going against what you don't like. These awards have felt like they are more the anti-WWE awards for years and if that's what the people voting think then rock on, but good grief with some of these.

WWE wasn't great in 2020, but it's not like AEW was that much better. These would have you believe that 2000 WCW was laughing at WWE and it just wasn't that bad. I'm not upset about any of them (save for the Promotional Tactic deal, which

was just dumb) but I'm also not surprised by some of the most ridiculous ones.

Smackdown – September 29, 2006: Cena Brought It

Smackdown

Date: September 29, 2006

Location: Convention Center, Tulsa, Oklahoma

Commentators: Michael Cole, John Bradshaw Layfield

We're less two weeks away from No Mercy and most of the card is set. That's a good situation to be in as it means the next two weeks can be spent firming everything up and adding something here and there. This week is about the guest star though, as John Cena is here for a six man main event. Let's get to it.

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

We open with a look at King Booker's Court invading Raw and making John Cena kiss Booker's foot. Of course you know this means match.

Here's Cena, with a banged up arm, to get things going. Before he gets into dealing with Booker and company, he is glad to be back on Smackdown because it's like hosting Saturday Night Live. He's the WWE Champion again and now he has a new movie coming out. Cena: "Go and see it a million times."

Cena is glad to have the big fist and Tony Chimmel as the ring announcer. Then there's JBL, who Cena remembers taking a beating the last time they saw him. Next to JBL is Michael

Cole, the Whitney Houston to his Bobby Brown, and Cena has a gift for him. After handing Cole some balls, Cena talks about King Booker's Court being here, but so are Batista and Bobby Lashley. Tonight, the odds are even.

Video on Vickie Guerrero joining forces with her nephew Chavo.

Rey Mysterio vs. Sylvester Terkay

Elijah Burke is here with Terkay...who tells Burke to take his place.

Rey Mysterio vs. Elijah Burke

Rey snaps off a headscissors to start as JBL goes into a rant about how Mysterio's success in Mexico means nothing in the USA. Burke knocks him into the corner as we see the Guerreros being rather pleased in the back. That's leg to in a hurry but Burke misses the top rope elbow. As JBL again called Terkay and Burke the best interracial team since the APA, Mysterio hits the spinning springboard crossbody to put Burke down. The 619 lets Rey Drop The Dime for the pin.

Rating: C-. Not much to this one other than Burke taking a loss that he probably didn't need to lose. Terkay continues to be the star of the team, but that doesn't mean his partner needs to be losing. Mysterio needed the boost on the way towards his match against Chavo at No Mercy, but I would think there is someone better to take the loss than Burke.

Post match Terkay jumps Mysterio from behind and lays him out with a Muscle Buster. We see the Guerreros seeming rather pleased in the back.

Ashley Massaro introduces a video on Brian Kendrick and Paul London.

Pit Bulls vs. KC James/Idol Stevens

The winners get a Tag Team Title shot at No Mercy and Michelle McCool is here with James and Stevens. Stevens gets pounded down to start so it's off to James to get taken into the wrong corner. A kick to the chest gets two on James as JBL gets on Cole for playing soccer. Everything breaks down in a hurry and Kash's moonsault press gets two on James. A small package has James in trouble but McCool turns it over to give James the

pin.

Rating: C. Again, not much time to go anywhere but it could have been a lot worse. The problem is we've already seen Kendrick and London beat both teams so there is only so much interest in watching either of them get another shot. The lack of time might be annoying, but it was the right move here.

Marine video. Just have the thing come out already.

Matt Hardy vs. Chavo Guerrero

They trade some standing switches to start until Hardy drops him with a right hand. Back up and Chavo pulls Matt off the middle rope for a crash and it's off to a seated armbar. That's broken up as well and Matt hits some clotheslines into a backdrop. The bulldog gets two and there's the middle rope legdrop. Vickie Guerrero gets on the apron for a distraction though, allowing Gregory Helms to come in for the real distraction. That's enough for Chavo to grab a tornado DDT into the frog splash for the pin.

Rating: C. Two talented guys getting to do their thing for a few minutes is almost always going to work and the interferences both made sense. Chavo is starting to feel like more of a player than Eddie's sidekick and while I'm not sure how far up the ladder he can go, it's nice to see someone as talented as he is finally getting a chance of his own outside of the Cruiserweight Title.

Post match, Helms hits Hardy with a Shining Wizard.

This Week In Wrestling History: Andre the Giant knocked out Gorilla Monsoon in a boxing match.

Here's Mr. Kennedy to bid farewell to Undertaker. There is a black wreath in the ring as Kennedy talks about how this is a tribute. Undertaker has taken on and beaten some of the all time greats and we see a video package on his career. All of those accolades leave him with nothing to prove though, which makes Kennedy feel bad about No Mercy. He doesn't want to end Undertaker's legacy, so he certainly doesn't want to face him

at Wrestlemania.

Therefore, as a man of good conscience, he cannot wrestle Undertaker at No Mercy. Cue Undertaker and, after about a five minute entrance, he promises to show no mercy and make Kennedy rest in peace. Then Kennedy goes to hit him with the microphone but it blows up in his hand to send him running.

King Booker's Court is ready to make John Cena, Batista and Bobby Lashley hail the king tonight.

Commercial for Eric Bischoff's Controversy Creates Cash book.

Miz vs. Tatanka

Miz sings his version of Sexy Back on the way to the ring. JBL: "I hate him." Tatanka whips him into the corner to start but Miz gets out to the apron. A slide between the legs lets Miz hit the warpath as JBL makes every Native American joke he can think of in the first minute. Miz's Russian legsweep gets two but Tatanka is back with his own for one. Now it's Tatanka going on the warpath but Miz rolls him up with trunks for the fast win.

Rating: D+. The best thing about the way they are pushing Miz is he is racking up wins while not overstaying his welcome. I don't think any of his matches have gone more than about five minutes or so and he is out there almost every week. Keep him warm, give him something to do and build him up a bit. This isn't rocket science and what they're doing is working well for an early stage.

Teddy Long is proud about last week's debut being the second highest viewed show among adults on Friday night. Next week, Bobby Lashley and King Booker will pick each other's poisons and you can find out their picks over the weekend on WWE.com.

Jimmy Wang Yang is a redneck and ready to face Sylvan.

Jimmy Wang Yang vs. Sylvan

Yang has the Confederate flag on his vest (JBL: "Who is he sponsored by?

George Wallace?") and comes out to I Might Have To Punch Someone Tonight. Sylvan hits him in the face to start but walks into a headscissors into a dropkick. A toss sends Sylvan out to the floor for a crash as Cole compares Yang to Dick Murdoch to needle JBL in a funny bit.

JBL: "I hate you. I hate everyone in the ring. The referee is Canadian so I hate him too." Yang jawbreaks his way out of a chinlock and hammers away, including a spinwheel kick. Sylvan catches a charge in the corner though and grabs a rollup with feet on the ropes for the pin.

Rating: C-. As has been the case tonight, not much in the way of a match but at least the JBL rants were funny. Yang losing doesn't matter in the slightest as he is nothing more than a goofy one note character who was never going to be a big star. Sylvan isn't either, but that reaction in Montreal last week probably earned him one more win, which is fine.

Vito says it's the man that makes the dress.

MVP has signed with Smackdown and we get clips from his signing press conference. He debuts at No Mercy.

No Mercy rundown.

King Booker/Finlay/William Regal vs. John Cena/Batista/Bobby Lashley

This does feel like a big match and we see a clip of Cena getting beaten down on Raw during the entrances. It's a big brawl in the aisle to start before the bell and we take a break. Joined in progress with Batista shouldering Regal in the corner and nailing the spinebuster, which draws Finlay in for an early save. Booker comes in to hammer away on Batista, who is right back with the Jackhammer.

It's off to Lashley, who gets kicked in the face by Booker. That's fine with Lashley as he counters a leapfrog into a powerslam to plant Booker for two. Finlay comes in and gets caught in a gorilla press gutbuster but Lashley misses a charge into the post. He's fine enough to make the tag to Cena and everything breaks down with Cena cleaning house. The STF to Booker is broken up and the Leprechaun slips Finlay the Shillelagh to hit Cena in the bad arm.

We take a break and come back with Regal working on the arm as only Regal can do. The villains take turns working on the arm until Cena suplexes Finlay away. Finlay pops back up with a clothesline though and the armbar goes on again. Another clothesline gives Finlay two and it's back to Booker, who (after a bit of mistiming) misses the side kick to hit the ropes. Lashley gets the hot tag to clean house as everything breaks down. Batista almost gets caught with the ax kick but Lashley spears Booker down for the pin.

Rating: B-. This was a pretty long match for a TV main event but it felt like it was something that mattered and that makes up for the problems. Above all else, the star power was here as you had this week's version of the Super Best Friends against the top Smackdown villains and his cronies. That sounds like an important match and it worked out rather well, even if it was that long.

Post match Edge runs in to spear Cena to end the show.

Overall Rating: C. Cena brought the star power to the main event and that's what mattered the most here, but the rest of the show was a bunch of quick matches (similar to this week's Raw but not that bad). That made it feel more like a show that wasn't designed to be a big deal on its own but rather a way to build towards the future. That's not a bad thing, but it doesn't make for the most thrilling show.

Remember to follow me on Twitter @kbreviews and head over to my Amazon author page with 30 different cheap wrestling books at:

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

AND

[Remember to check out Wrestlingrumors.net](http://Wrestlingrumors.net) for all of your [wrestling headline needs](http://Wrestlingrumors.net).

ECW On Sci Fi – September 26, 2006: That's Actually Extreme

ECW on Sci Fi

Date: September 26, 2006

Location: Convention Center, Tulsa, Oklahoma

Commentators: Tazz, Joey Styles

Things are starting to round into form around here, but the question is whether or not that is a good thing. There are some parts of the show that work well enough, but there are so many that don't and it is showing badly. As usual, this is likely going to depend on the guest star so let's get to it.

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

Opening sequence.

Here's Jim Ross as the special guest. JR is glad to be here and talks about how he got his start in this very building. He says ECW reminds him of Mid-South and here's Matt Striker to interrupt. Striker is out here on Paul Heyman's behalf because he knows JR is uneducated. JR is wearing a blue shirt because he is blue collar and probably enjoys drinking ALCOHOL! Just like Sandman! Striker criticizes the cowboy hat (fair) so here's Sandman to clean house, with JR getting a cane shot to Striker's back. JR toasts Sandman, who is getting a title shot against Big Show tonight.

Hardcore Holly is ready to show Rob Van Dam what extreme is.

Hardcore Holly vs. Rob Van Dam

Extreme Rules. Van Dam throws him hard into the corner for a running elbow and a superkick puts Holly on the floor. That

lets Rob hit the spinning kick to the back over the barricade and it's table time. As usual, that takes too long and Holly jumps him from behind and stomps away in the corner. We hit the reverse chinlock, with some EXTREME closeups of Van Dam's face.

Van Dam makes it to the ropes so Holly runs him over again. Holly goes out to the apron to suplex him through the table and we take a break. Back with Holly's back sliced to shreds with a HORRIBLE looking gash near his side. The fans even chant for him as he drops Van Dam's throat across an open chair. A middle rope legdrop onto a chair onto Van Dam's face has Holly writhing in pain as there is so much blood on Holly's back. Van Dam is back with a suplex onto the chair, making the blood flow even harder.

There's a monkey flip out of the corner as Holly is probably ready to kill Van Dam for every one of these moves. The chair is skateboarded into Holly's face but he counters another monkey flip into a powerbomb onto the chair for two. Van Dam kicks him down again and tries the Five Star, only to get the chair thrown into his face. The Alabama Slam is broken up so Holly punches him in the face but staggers a bit. Back up and the Van Daminator sets up the Five Star for a delayed pin, allowing Holly to head off for a transfusion.

Rating: B. Holly deserves all the credit in the world for this one as no one would have held it against him for stopping the match. That was one of the more gruesome injuries I have seen in a very long time and it was hard to watch this more than once. Heck of an effort, but it probably should have been stopped for his own good.

Medics are IMMEDIATELY in the ring to cover the wound and Holly gets a big and well deserved standing ovation.

CM Punk explains straightedge and wants tougher competition. Kelly Kelly comes in and mentions EXTREME Strip Poker in two

weeks. She swoons over his tattoos and mentions being 19 but here's Mike Knox to take her away. Threats are made and Punk says he's ready whenever.

John Cena has a wife in the Marine.

Ariel vs. Francine

Extreme Catfight. Before the match, Ariel talks about how horrible Francine's life is and how much she'll wish to be with Kevin Thorn. The fight is on with Ariel losing some clothes until Thorn comes in to pull Francine off. Balls Mahoney come sin for the save and we're done in about a minute.

Video on Sandman.

Paul Heyman and Big Show talk about the Singapore cane being legal in the main event.

Rene Dupree gets out of the show in an extreme manner.

ECW World Title: Big Show vs. Sandman

Sandman is challenging and the Singapore cane is legal. Joined in progress with Sandman caning away as we hear about Holly needing 24 stitches to sew up the gash (which went down to the fatty tissue). Show, bleeding, gets up from the cane shots and knocks Sandman around. A headbutt and heavy clothesline take Sandman down but he throws the left hands. Sandman counters the chokeslam into a DDT and more cane shots give Sandman two. Cue Matt Striker to take the cane away though and the cobra clutch backbreaker has Sandman mostly done. The big leg retains the title.

Rating: D. This was much more of a match than I would have expected but you're only going to get so much out of Sandman throwing punches and cane shots. Sandman was working harder than usual here and while he was trying, there is a pretty firm limit to what he can do. For a one off though, it was a

nice way to give Show someone else to beat up.

Overall Rating: C. That opener carried everything about the show and there wasn't much else they could have done on the show. Above all else, Holly vs. Van Dam felt extreme rather than just violent. We're long past the point of this show being like ECW, but it is nice to pay some lip service to that occasionally, even if it is just by mistake in one match. Not a very good show, but that wound on Holly has stayed in my head since I saw this show when it first aired for a reason.

Remember to follow me on Twitter @kbreviews and head over to my Amazon author page with 30 different cheap wrestling books at:

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

AND

[Remember to check out Wrestlingrumors.net](http://Wrestlingrumors.net) for all of your wrestling headline needs.

Smackdown – February 26, 2021: Nice And Easy

Smackdown

Date: February 26, 2021

Location: Tropicana Field, St. Petersburg, Florida

Commentators: Michael Cole, Corey Graves

We have a big announcement this week as women's Royal Rumble winner Bianca Belair is going to announce her opponent for

Wrestlemania XXXVII. Granted it should be pretty clear who she is going to face, but at least they are going to announce the match so we can start the proper build. Let's get to it.

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

Here are Roman Reigns, Jey Uso and Paul Heyman to get things going. After a long look at Reigns beating Daniel Bryan and then being attacked by Edge on Sunday night, Reigns says Smackdown needs him. He's so good at everything that it has to be perfect, but there is one person standing in his way. That's the guy who jumped him on Sunday and then pointed at the Wrestlemania sign. Edge has a beautiful family and is a father and husband. Reigns respects the comeback and everything Edge is about but he doesn't want to hurt him.

Cue Daniel Bryan to say that absolutely Sunday was perfect for Reigns. Why wouldn't it have been? All Reigns had to do was face Bryan just after the Elimination Chamber. That doesn't sound like a Head of the Table spot to Bryan, who thinks Reigns should have been in the main event slot. Reigns can silence the comparisons, and there have been a lot of them, by defending the title against him at Fastlane, with no conditions. Uso doesn't want to hear that because Bryan goes to the back of the line. Bryan asks again but Jey jumps him and the trio leaves. Everything here made sense.

Edge comes in to see Adam Pearce and Sonya Deville about Bryan possibly getting a title shot first. Post break, Pearce tries to calm Edge down and says tonight it's Bryan vs. Uso, with Bryan getting the Fastlane title match if he wins.

Alpha Academy vs. Rey Mysterio/Dominik Mysterio

Rematch from last week when Otis turned to the dark side and crushed Rey's ribs. Otis starts fast by throwing Rey into the corner and hitting a shoulder to the ribs. Rey gets away and brings in Dominick to pick up the pace against Gable. A headscissors sends Gable into the corner and a middle rope

diving tornado DDT gets two. Everything breaks down and a double 619 hits Gable and Rey hits the top rope splash. Otis breaks up the cover and it's a World's Strongest Slam into the middle rope splash to pin Rey at 3:39.

Rating: C-. I can go for these two doing something and again, it's kind of amazing how nicely Otis is sliding into this role. Gable not so much because he was great for years and was just stuck with a horrible character, but Otis is a rather nice surprise. It's going well enough and that splash looks good.

We look back at Apollo Crews destroying Big E. last week to put him on the shelf.

Here's Apollo Crews for a chat. Some people have not been happy with what he did but this is who he is. He is a real African American because he is from Nigeria. Crews comes from a lineage of Nigerian royalty and he wears the country's colors with pride and power. That's what Big E. learned last week when he was taught a lesson from his grandfather about showing power. Last week, Crews showed Big E. the steel and tonight, Shinsuke Nakamura will see the same thing.

Apollo Crews vs. Shinsuke Nakamura

Crews jumps him before the bell and we take a break. We come back joined in progress with Crews whipping Nakamura hard into the corner and running him over. Crews' release German suplex is countered though and Nakamura kicks away at the chest. The sliding knee gives Nakamura two and there's the sliding German suplex for the same. Crews heads to the floor and manages to sucker Nakamura in for a whip into the steps. Back in and Nakamura grabs a sleeper but gets sent into the buckle. An Angle Slam finishes for Crews at 4:37.

Rating: C. That's the best Crews has looked in a long time, if not ever (the new tights helped a lot), and that is a good sign. I was a bit worried about Crews' promo but it went in a

fine direction and this could work out well for him. Big E. vs. Crews should be a heck of a fight when we get there and this was a good way to debut Crews' new side.

Paul Heyman tells Roman Reigns about the Bryan vs. Uso match with the Fastlane implications. The "IF Bryan wins" part is emphasized.

Tamina vs. Liv Morgan

Natalya and Ruby Riott are here too as Tamina runs Liv over to start. Morgan gets sent into the corner as we hear about Natalya and Tamina's history and legacy in wrestling. Tamina even has a catchphrase: "From reliable to undeniable." I'd like to point out how many people Smackdown has sitting on the sidelines while TAMINA AND NATALYA are getting regular TV time. Morgan gets knocked down again but does manage an enziguri. A middle rope dropkick knocks Tamina down but she's right back with the Samoan drop. The swinging Rock Bottom (which was more laying her down than a slam) finishes Morgan at 3:57.

Rating: D. There's something about Tamina that just takes the life out of any match. That problem was on full display here as there is no reason to be interested in anything she or Natalya are doing. They've both been around for so long and having them as a ticked off team isn't going to get people interested. Well maybe in what is on another channel, but not in the two of them.

Adam Pearce and Sonya Deville are in the ring for Bianca Belair's pick. We see a video on Asuka and another on Sasha Banks and now Belair is ready to make her pick. Well actually she's ready to talk about making choices...but here is Reginald to interrupt. He wants her to know what a loser she will be if she picks Sasha, who is here to interrupt as well. She tells Reginald to never speak for her and tells Belair that if she wants to make a statement, her choice is clear. Banks is the

best, which makes Belair second best. Belair makes the pick and the match is set. At least they didn't drag it out, but drop Reginald already.

Sami Zayn's film crew gets some shots of King Corbin before their tag match tonight. Corbin doesn't like the attention but Sami thinks they could be the new Can-Am Connection. I don't think Corbin is convinced.

Sami Zayn/King Corbin vs. Street Profits

Corbin starts with Dawkins as Sami yells at the documentary crew. Dawkins gets punched down and sent into the corner but the crew is in the way of Corbin as he tries to slide underneath the bottom rope. That lets Ford dropkick him down and we take a break. Back with Ford in trouble as Corbin knees him into the corner. Ford fights over and brings in Dawkins to clean house. Corbin is knocked outside where the crew keeps filming him, much to Corbin's annoyance. Ford hits the big flip dive and it's a double underhook swinging neckbreaker to Sami. The frog splash finishes for Ford at 8:07.

Rating: C-. This was more about the antics with the film crew but it worked out well enough. I'm guessing we're going to be getting more with Zayn/Corbin, which isn't the worst idea in the world. Hopefully it gives us some more entertaining stuff like Corbin getting annoyed at the film crew and keeps Corbin from sniffing the main event scene because no one needs to see that.

Daniel Bryan is ready to move on to Wrestlemania but here's Edge to seem not so happy about the idea. If they were to meet at Wrestlemania, who wins that match? Bryan won't answer, but he seems to like the possibility.

Here's Seth Rollins to talk about the letter he sent to WWE last week...and here's Cesaro to cut him off. Rollins cuts him off and praises Cesaro's greatness, saying he has always been one of the best around. For some reason though, there has

always been something missing. Why hasn't Cesaro ever been the Universal Champion?

Rollins says he is missing that killer instinct and Rollins can teach him. Take a week or two to think about it and come back with a good answer. Cesaro grabs the legs (Rollins: "NO! PUT ME DOWN!") and swings him (out of his jacket), followed by a second for a bonus. The uppercut leaves Rollins laying.

Daniel Bryan vs. Jey Uso

If Bryan wins, he gets Reigns for the title at Fastlane. Bryan works on the wrist to start and moonsaults over Jey (with a quick touch to his banged up knee), setting up the running clothesline. A top rope hurricanrana gives Bryan two and Jey is sent outside, where he knocks a dive out of the air. The bad knee is dropped onto the announcers' table and then sent into the post as we take a break. Back with Uso still working on the knee before hitting a Samoan drop.

The Superfly Splash misses though and Bryan knocks him to the floor, setting up the running knee off the apron. Back in and Bryan comes off the top but bangs up the knee again, allowing Jey to kick it out. The half crab goes on but Bryan slips out and tries the running knee, only to get chop blocked down. A butterfly superplex brings Jey off the top though and the threat of the YES Lock sends him over to the rope. They roll outside to keep up the brawl with Bryan's knee going into the steps, setting up the double countout at 12:47.

Rating: B-. The ending was a surprise and that's a good thing. They have a few different ways to go for Fastlane now and the combination of possibilities have me rubbing my chin. I can't imagine Bryan doesn't get a straight shot at Reigns, but now they are going to have to go in a different direction to get there, which is not a bad thing.

Post match Bryan gets the YES Lock on Uso but Roman Reigns makes the save. Uso has to save Roman from the YES Lock and

it's a spear to Bryan. The guillotine choke knocks Bryan cold to end the show.

Overall Rating: C+. This show dragged a bit in the middle but aside from the book ends, I love that they move from story to story pretty fast. You have two hours of Smackdown a week and it's nice to see them using it to get a lot of things over. You don't have five segments or interviews from one story and it makes the show move around that much more smoothly. The show might not be that much better than some others, but it's a lot easier to watch and that's more important.

Results

Alpha Academy b. Rey Mysterio/Dominik Mysterio – Middle rope splash to Rey

Apollo Crews b. Shinsuke Nakamura – Angle Slam

Tamina b. Liv Morgan – Spinning Rock Bottom

Street Profits b. Sami Zayn/King Corbin – Frog splash to Zayn

Daniel Bryan vs. Jey Uso went to a double countout

Remember to follow me on Twitter @kbreviews and head over to my Amazon author page with 30 different cheap wrestling books at:

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

AND

[Remember to check out Wrestlingrumors.net](http://Wrestlingrumors.net) for all of your wrestling headline needs.

NXT UK – February 25, 2021: I Do Love Efficiency

NXT UK

Date: February 25, 2021

Location: BT Studios, London, England

Commentators: Nigel McGuinness, Andy Shepherd

It's title week around here as Gallus is defending the Tag Team Titles against Pretty Deadly in a match that has seemed set for a good while now. Gallus has held the titles since October 2019 and I'm not sure what else there is for them to do with them, but it's almost hard to imagine them losing. Let's get to it.

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

We open with a look at the title match, as expected.

Opening sequence.

Xia Brookside vs. Nina Samuels

The loser is the winner's servant for a month after Samuels cost her a few matches. As a preview, Samuels' bags are brought out to ringside by Henry (yeah Henry). Brookside jumps her to start and the fight is on in a hurry with Samuels being wrapped around the top rope. Samuels bails to the floor and kicks Brookside into her bags for a nine count. Back in and Samuels grabs a rear naked choke with a bodyscissors.

With that going nowhere, it's off to an armbar and then a surfboard but Brookside flips over into a cover for two. A neckbreaker gives Brookside the same and she knocks Samuels outside. Brookside isn't being all nice here and hammers away on the floor but a hurricanrana is easily blocked. Samuels isn't happy with Brookside beating the count so she goes to

grab the tablet from Henry. With Henry gone, Brookside kicks the tablet away and grabs a rollup for the pin at 5:26.

Rating: C. The end result is going to be the bigger deal here and Samuels losing will likely send her flying over the edge. Brookside getting a big win is a good idea and the more they push her, the better things can get for the division. I still think she would be perfect to take the title from Kay Lee Ray in a slightly more serious version of NXT Bayley, but we're a long way off from that.

Post match reality sets in for Samuels and panicking ensues.

Trent Seven is trying to get down to 205lbs but it's really hard. This includes running with dogs and snapping towels. Maybe he should drop the beard weight.

Ilja Dragunov isn't sure what he's been doing lately but Sam Gradwell comes up for the challenge. Game on next week.

Bailey Matthews vs. Tyler Bate

This is the 19 year old Bailey's debut. They fight over wrist control to start with Bailey taking him down into an armbar. Bate has to fight out of a headscissors but gets caught in it again for some hard cranking. A headlock gets Bate out of trouble but Matthews wristlocks him right back down. The cravate takes Bate down again and there's a backslide for two.

Back up and Bate unloads with uppercuts but gets dropped with an even bigger one. That's too far for Bate, who is right back with the t-bone suplex. The airplane spin is broken up and they trade rollups for two each. Bate nails a rolling kick to the head though and the Tyler Driver 97 finishes Matthews at 5:40.

Rating: C+. What the heck was that? Matthews got a heck of a rub here and that is a great thing to see. You can always go for some fresh talent around here and we might have seen

something good here. It was a heck of a debut and William Regal is likely going to be rather proud of his son.

We get a vignette for someone debuting from Berlin whose name isn't given. The words "devam edeck" come on screen, which apparently means "coming soon" in Turkish. More on this later, though you might already know him better as Lucky Kid.

Piper Niven jumps Joseph Connors but Jinny comes in for the save. Niven wants to face them in a handicap match but Sid Scala says no. With that not happening, Niven grabs Jack Starz and we seem to have a mixed tag.

Lana Austin vs. Aoife Valkyrie

They go with the exchange of wristlocks to start with Valkyrie spinning out and taking her down by the arm. Some kicks to the legs have Austin down but she trips Valkyrie down for a change. There's a running basement dropkick to give Austin two but Valkyrie pounds away again. A running neckbreaker gives Valkyrie two and Austin's small package gets the same. Valkyrie unloads in the corner and nails a spinning heel kick, followed by the top rope ax kick for the pin at 4:06.

Rating: C. It was short but they beat the heck out of each other. There was something entertaining about Austin getting in some offense but only angering Valkyrie enough to make her beat Austin down. The women's division continues to have some strong potential and that gives me some hope for the future.

Here's what's coming in two weeks.

Aoife Valkyrie is pleased with her win but here's Nina Samuels carrying the bags and looking like she is near a breakdown.

Kenny Williams and Ashton Smith need to train to get the Tag Team Titles.

Video on Kay Lee Ray vs. Meiko Satomura.

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.

Pretty Deadly celebrates to end the show.

Overall Rating: B. NXT UK might not be blowing the doors off the place these days but they are having some of the most consistently good television around. As usual, the best thing going on around here is how well they use the time they have. You have all kinds of stories and wrestlers being advanced with nothing feeling like filler. It is rare enough to hear that on any show, but having it week after week is rather impressive. Another good show here, and I'm not even surprised anymore.

Results

Xia Brookside b. Nina Samuels – Rollup

Tyler Bate b. Bailey Matthews – Tyler Driver 97

Aoife Valkyrie b. Lana Austin – Top rope ax kick

Pretty Deadly b. Gallus – Spilled Milk to Coffey

Remember to follow me on Twitter @kbreviews and head over to my Amazon author page with 30 different cheap wrestling books at:

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

AND

[Remember to check out Wrestlingrumors.net](http://Wrestlingrumors.net) for all of your [wrestling headline needs](http://Wrestlingrumors.net).

205 Live – February 19, 2021: Power And Glory Were Very Shiny

205 Live

Date: February 19, 2021

Location: Capitol Wrestling Center, Winter Park, Florida

Commentators: Vic Joseph, Nigel McGuinness

It's another week and I still have no idea what to say about this show. Odds are it's going to be Tony Nese and Ariya Daivari dealing with some other young whippersnappers because that's all they have done for months. Oh and some Ever Rise/Bollywood Boyz stuff because that's still going. Let's get to it.

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

Opening sequence.

Curt Stallion/Jake Atlas/Ashante Adonis/Mansoor vs. Bollywood Boyz/Ever-Rise

Well it's different enough. Mansoor and Martel get things going but it's off to Parker in a hurry for a double shoulder. Samir comes in and gets caught in an armbar so Ashante comes in, only to get elbowed down by the Boyz. That doesn't last long so it's off to Martel vs. Atlas, the latter of whom helps Stallion shoulder Martel down for two. Parker comes in and gets caught in Stallion's headlock as the rapid fire tagging continues.

Adonis comes back in and gets distracted by Martel, allowing

the Boyz to take him down. We finally slow down a bit with Adonis getting beaten up by the rotating villains. Sunil grabs a chinlock for all of ten seconds before Adonis is sent back into the corner for more stomping. A drop toehold into an elbow to the back gets two and a top rope back elbow is good for the same.

Martel can't slam Samir onto Adonis though and it's off to Atlas to clean house. Everything breaks down again and Adonis dropkicks Parker for two. Mansoor's Death Valley Driver gets the same but he gets taken down into the Power and the Glory (Did I miss Power and Glory becoming the most influential team ever???) for another two. A bit of miscommunication lets Mansoor grab a Falcon Arrow for two as everything breaks down again. Stallion comes in off the blind tag and headbutts Sunil for the pin at 9:59.

Rating: C+. It might not have been good, but it was absolutely energetic and that's a lot better than the usual around here. I'm still not interested in the Ever Rise/Bollywood Boyz deal, but some kind of continuing story is better than none. Just find something for all eight of these people to do and this show might be able to get somewhere, because the talent is there.

Earlier today, Ariya Daivari and Tony Nese jumped August Grey for stealing his chains.

We look at Santos Escobar backing out of his match with Karrion Kross on NXT. The match happens next week or Escobar loses the title.

Karrion Kross is ready to end Escobar.

Ariya Daivari vs. August Grey

Tony Nese is on commentary. Grey goes at Daivari to start but gets hit in the ribs. An early attempt to go after Grey's leg lets him kick Daivari to the floor, setting up a high

crossbody back inside. A belly to back suplex gives Grey two but Daivari is right back with a DDT for the same. We hit the neck crank on Grey but he slips out and grabs a sunset flip for two.

There's a neckbreaker to drop Daivari, who pops right back up with a sleeper. The Rock Bottom plants Grey for two more but Grey ducks the hammerlock lariat. A superkick connects to Daivari and they're both down again. Grey sends him out to the apron and then clotheslines him to the floor but stops to glare at Nese. Daivari is sent inside but Nese holds up Daivari's chains to distract Grey (they are rather shiny). The distraction lets Daivari get in a dropkick and the hammerlock lariat is good for the pin at 6:57.

Rating: C-. I'm not sure how many times this match has taken place, but the problem is that it feels like one we have seen a dozen or so times. As usual, that is one of the major problems around here: there is nothing to fight over and it becomes rather tiring in a hurry. The match was fine, but how interesting is Daivari vs. Grey really going to be able to be?

Overall Rating: C. And so ends another rather uninspiring edition of 205 Live. The opener was fun but that's a pretty rare situation around here. The show has a lot of problems, but the biggest is the lack of anything to fight over. Daivari won the main event this week. Is that going to change anything? Is Daivari ever going to be moved up to another level? Of course not, as the Cruiserweight Champions (yeah remember there are two of them) are never here, so what is the point of this show? Other than giving the wrestlers a short show to say they're still active, I'm missing the point, but when has that ever stopped them?

Remember to follow me on Twitter @kbreviews and head over to my Amazon author page with 30 different cheap wrestling books at:

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

AND

[Remember to check out Wrestlingrumors.net](http://Wrestlingrumors.net) for all of your wrestling headline needs.

Main Event – February 18, 2021: It's How To Make This Work

Main Event

Date: February 18, 2021

Location: Tropicana Field, St. Petersburg, Florida

Commentators: Tom Phillips, Samoa Joe

It's the go home show for Elimination Chamber and that isn't going to make the biggest difference around here. Every week I hope that we're going to get something a little different on Main Event but there is no reason to believe that is going to be the case most of the time. Let's get to it.

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

Opening sequence.

T-Bar vs. Drew Gulak

Gulak slips out of a fireman's carry to start and manages to drive T-Bar into the corner. A sunset flip doesn't work for Gulak so T-Bar blasts him with a clothesline for two. T-Bar hits a backbreaker into a middle rope splash for two more, followed by Eyes Wide Shut for the pin on Gulak at 3:56.

Rating: D+. This was a lot more squashish than most around here and that's kind of nice to see. I enjoy a lot of things about Gulak but he is the kind of person who should be getting squashed by T-Bar. Or by Donovan Dijak if WWE hadn't insisted on the stupid names for the members of the team.

From Smackdown.

Here are Roman Reigns, Jey Uso and Paul Heyman for a chat with Adam Pearce, who is already in the ring. Reigns tells Pearce that he isn't waiting on him so let's get on with this. Pearce doesn't call any shots around here and Reigns isn't waiting on Pearce or Edge. Reigns knows that Edge hasn't announced his Wrestlemania match because he knows Reigns will beat him all the way onto a Legends contract.

No one is taking the title from him so Edge is holding out hope that someone pulls a miracle before Wrestlemania. Speaking of contracts, Pearce has one in his hand and that is for Reigns' title defense inside the Elimination Chamber. Reigns hands Heyman the mic, who says Reigns' contract says he has to defend the title AT Elimination Chamber rather than INSIDE the Elimination Chamber. Instead, the winner can receive a title shot on the against Reigns, who won't be in the Chamber itself.

Pearce seems to laugh it off but Heyman asks what he's going to do about it. Fire Reigns this close to Wrestlemania? Last year's show didn't have Reigns and it was the lowest attended Wrestlemania of all time. Pearce says it's time to start the qualifying process, and there are going to be two names who don't need qualifying matches. Those would be Jey Uso and Kevin Owens, the latter of whom has Reigns outside the ring and in Pearce's face. Reigns doesn't think Pearce gets this but Heyman says it's going to be on Reigns' time.

We see King Corbin and Sami Zayn beating Rey and Dominik Mysterio to qualify for the Chamber.

From Smackdown.

Elimination Chamber Qualifying Match: Bobby Roode/Dolph Ziggler vs. Daniel Bryan/Cesaro

Non-title. Ziggler takes Bryan down for an early two but Cesaro comes in for a double slam. It's off to Roode, who has to avoid the YES Lock, and gets sent outside. Cesaro is right there and is whipped into the steps. Sami Zayn and King Corbin come out to watch and we take a break.

Back with Bryan in trouble as Roode snaps off a suplex for two and hands it back to Ziggler. Bryan takes Ziggler down but Roode decks Cesaro, allowing Bryan to grab a rollup for two. Roode's spinebuster gets two more on Bryan but Ziggler misses a charge in the corner, allowing the hot tag to Cesaro. Everything breaks down and Bryan hits Roode with the running knee. The Fameasser gets two on Cesaro but he's right back up with the Swing into the Sharpshooter to make Ziggler tap at 11:04.

Rating: C+. Another good match between talented teams, even if the Tag Team Titles get their annual smack in the face for the sake of some qualifying matches. In this case I'm not sure who else could have taken the loss, but I would have preferred it not to be the champs. Bryan and Cesaro winning was mostly but not entirely obvious and that's a nice feeling.

Post match Jey Uso, Sami Zayn and King Corbin all come in for the brawl. Everyone goes at it until Kevin Owens runs in for the Stunnerfest. Roman Reigns watches from the back as Owens sits down, saying that he's coming for Reigns to end the show.

From Raw.

Kofi Kingston vs. Miz

If Kofi wins, he's in the Chamber but if Miz wins, John Morrison is in (and yes they have a graphic for it, because

that's not the kind of thing you can remember without one). Miz shoulders him down to start but it's way too early for either to hit a finisher. Kofi gets in a shot to the ribs and goes up top for a chop to the head. That's enough to send Miz outside and Kofi hits a kick to the face from the apron.

The middle rope ax handle to the floor connects as well and a middle rope dropkick gets two back inside. A regular dropkick puts Miz on the apron but this time he catches Kofi with a knee. Miz's neckbreaker over the middle rope and another one to the floor has Kofi in trouble as we take a break. Back with Miz getting two off a DDT and throwing Kofi outside to keep up the beating. That sets up the top rope ax handle for two more and we hit the cravate.

Kofi rolls out and fights up, including the running stomp to the chest. The Boom Drop gets two but Trouble in Paradise misses, allowing Miz to get his own two. SOS gives Kofi two more but Miz gets smart and takes out the knee. The Figure Four goes on, with Kofi getting over to the rope without much trouble. The Skull Crushing Finale is countered into a rollup for two and now Trouble in Paradise connects to give Kofi the pin and the spot at 14:11.

Rating: B-. These two have always worked well together and that's what they did here. I was a bit surprised by Kingston winning as it would have made a bit more sense for Morrison to go forward. At the same time though, I can go with more of Kofi inside the Chamber, if nothing else for some history. Getting rid of Miz and Morrison makes me happier than anything else at the moment so I'll take what I can get.

Elimination Chamber rundown.

Humberto Carrillo vs. Jaxson Ryker

Elias is here with Ryker, who is now in trunks for a change. Ryker cranks on the arm to start but gets caught in a headlock for his efforts. A crossbody gives Carrillo two before running

the corner for the big armdrag. That means a big dive to the floor to take Ryker down and we take a break.

Back with Ryker hitting a spinebuster for two, followed by the side slam for the same. The chinlock goes on and, after a slingshot suplex, goes on again. Carrillo fights up and low bridges him to the floor, setting up the springboard elbow to the face. Ryker has had it with this though and hits Carrillo in the face, setting up a swinging Boss Man Slam for the pin at 9:10.

Rating: C. Just a standard power vs. speed match here though it's kind of interesting that Ryker and Elias have already been relegated to Main Event. I'm glad they got rid of the tension between them after about two weeks of being together, but at the same time, they aren't exactly the most interesting pair in the world. Hence the whole being on Main Event aspect.

From Raw.

Gauntlet Match

Non-title and the winner enters the Chamber last. AJ Styles is in at #1 and...we'll find out who is joining him after he talks about being sick of hearing about Kofimania II. His attorney (Joseph A. Parks of course) and Omos have gone over the odds and he can't lose on Sunday. Kofi Kingston is in at #2 and they have almost an hour for this. AJ whips Kofi into the corner to start but misses a charge, allowing Kofi to hammer away. A belly to back suplex puts Kofi down for a few seconds but he low bridges AJ out to the floor there's the Trust Fall to the floor.

With AJ down, Xavier Woods needs to give us a trombone concert on the announcers' table. That earns him a rather high one armed chokeslam from Omos (with the camera shooting from the ground for a great visual) over the barricade. That's enough for Omos to be ejected but AJ uses the distraction to take out Kofi's knee again.

We take a break and come back with AJ putting the bad knee in a half crab. Kofi gets out so AJ puts him on top, only to have Kofi shove him down and hit the middle rope splash to the back. The bad knee means it can only be a two count so AJ grabs a DDT on the leg. The Phenomenal Forearm finishes Kofi at 11:03 and it's Drew McIntyre in at #3.

A quick belly to belly suplex sends AJ flying and Drew drops him ribs first across the top rope. Drew gets in a big boot to leave AJ on the apron and we take a break. Back with AJ being whipped hard into the corner and then into the steps. Drew hits a Michinoku Driver for two but AJ goes to the throat for a breather. AJ gets caught in the reverse Alabama Slam out of the corner but the Claymore is cut off with a kick to the face. That sends Drew to the floor and AJ nails the slingshot forearm.

A knee to the face drops Drew again and a running forearm sends Drew into the post as we take a break. Back again with Drew tossing AJ again but diving off the top and right into an enziguri. The Styles Clash is countered with a backdrop but AJ takes out the knee and puts on the Calf Crusher. Drew headbutts his way to freedom though and sends AJ throat first into the middle rope. The Claymore gives Drew the pin at 29:49 total.

Jeff Hardy is in at #4 and, after an inset promo of Hardy talking about needing to get back to Wrestlemania, he forearms Drew down to start. Drew gets knocked to the floor and a dive off the apron takes him down as we go to a break. Back with Drew making another comeback and snapping off an overhead belly to bell, followed by an overhead belly to belly for good measure. A neckbreaker lets McIntyre nip up again and, after countering a quick Twist of Fate attempt, the Futureshock gets two.

Hardy falls out to the floor so McIntyre suplexes him out there as well, leaving them both down. Back in and Drew puts

him on top for a top rope superplex and another near fall. The Claymore misses though and Jeff grabs the Twist of Fate. The Swanton hits knees though and the Claymore gets rid of Hardy at 42:59 total. Randy Orton is in at #5 and McIntyre realizes he's in some trouble.

Back from another break with McIntyre sending Orton into the barricade...but the lights go out and Alexa Bliss takes over every screen in the arena, including the fans (ok that's creepy). Orton is counted out at 49:09, because THIS TIME WWE remembers how to count people out. That leaves Sheamus at #6 to complete the field and jumps Drew from behind. Drew is beaten up at ringside, followed by some stomping inside.

The referee asks Drew if he wants to do this and we start the match, despite there not being any bells or starts/stops between the previous falls. Sheamus sends Drew's bad back into the corner and drops a knee for two. Despite Drew clutching his back, Sheamus grabs an armbar, allowing Drew to fight back up.

Drew tries to jump over him out of the corner but gets powerslammed down for two more. The Glasgow Kiss gets Drew out of trouble and there's the Future Shock for a double knockdown. Drew is sent to the floor but gets in a quick shot to put Sheamus down. The Claymore misses though and the Brogue Kick finishes Drew at 58:46.

Rating: B. That was a rather long but still good match, with Drew putting on a heck of a showcase. Of course there is nothing wrong with having a World Champion lose to a former World Champion after being in the ring for the better part of forty minutes. McIntyre sold the heck out of his exhaustion at the end too and the sympathy was strong. Sheamus winning was the right call and I'm not sure who wins on Sunday so well done with the whole thing.

Post match Sheamus says that makes him the odds on favorite

and he promises to win the title because Drew can't beat him.

Overall Rating: C+. It helps when you have the gauntlet match eating up so much time (granted it was eight minutes of this show) and they had something to focus on with the two Chamber matches. As usual you could completely cut out the original stuff, but I did like that the opener was shorter than normal around here as there is no reason for T-Bar to have that much trouble in a spot like this. Better than average show, mainly because of better than average TV.

Remember to follow me on Twitter @kbreviews and head over to my Amazon author page with 30 different cheap wrestling books at:

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

AND

[Remember to check out Wrestlingrumors.net](http://Wrestlingrumors.net) for all of your wrestling headline needs.

NXT – February 24, 2021: The Best Thing Going In Wrestling Today

NXT

Date: February 24, 2021

Location: Capitol Wrestling Center, Winter Park, Florida

Commentators: Wade Barrett, Beth Phoenix, Vic Joseph

It's time for a night focusing on revenge, as Karrion Kross is going to get to destroy Santos Escobar for Escobar running his

mouth, plus the fallout from Adam Cole attacking Kyle O'Reilly last week. The latter is likely to be a much bigger story but both have my interest. Let's get to it.

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

The opening video looks at Karrion Kross being ready to destroy Santos Escobar.

Dexter Lumis vs. Johnny Gargano

Non-title. The Way fires up Gargano in the back before the match and Austin Theory doesn't quite get it. The rest of the team is here with Gargano so the numbers advantage is strong. Gargano bails straight to the floor to start and his slingshot back in is knocked out of the air without much effort. The rest of the Way accidentally distracts Gargano and it's a Thesz press into some right hands to give Lumis two. A rather delayed suplex drops Gargano again and he heads outside for a breather.

This time a shot to the ribs staggers Lumis and Gargano sends him head first onto the floor. That just earns Gargano a hot shot onto the apron as much like almost everyone else, Lumis is just too confusing. Theory and Indi Hartwell try to offer a distraction and get stared down, leaving Candice LeRae's hurricanrana off the apron to be blocked with ease. Gargano uses the distraction to nail a suicide dive though and we take a break.

Back with Lumis fighting out of a camel clutch and driving Gargano into the corner. Lumis punches him down a few times and nails a slingshot suplex. A belly to back into a nipup into a legdrop gets two on Gargano, who misses his rolling kick out of the corner. The Gargano Escape is countered into the Silence which is countered into a crucifix to give Gargano two.

They trade shots to the face and Lumis snaps off a spinebuster

for two more. The top rope double stomp misses so Gargano nails him with a superkick for two. Gargano orders Theory to send in a chair but Lumis steps on it to cut that off. A kick to the head knocks Lumis down and while he gets his leg checked out, Theory grabs the chair to hit Lumis...but gets stared down instead. Gargano is sent into Theory and the Silence knocks Gargano out at 13:36.

Rating: C+. And yes the story will continue as NXT pushes Lumis for whatever reason they have. With so many other talented people they have sitting around, this is the best that they can do? I'm not sure what to expect from the story going forward, but hopefully it doesn't wind up with Gargano dropping the title to him, because...just no.

William Regal looks for someone in the parking lot but no one is there.

Video on MSK, who started as opponents and then came together as a team and won the Dusty Classic. Nash Carter's dad passed away in high school and he wanted to make his dad proud, which is why he has "Legacy Lives On" tattooed across his chest. Now they won the Tag Team Titles.

MSK is ready for an interview but gets jumped by the Grizzled Young Veterans. Wes Lee's hand is crushed with a chair and referees come in to break it up.

Earlier today, Leon Ruff was cleared to wrestle when Malcolm Bivens popped up from his hiding place in the trainer's room. Bivens wants Ruff to face Tyler Rust tonight and you know Ruff is game.

Tyler Rust vs. Leon Ruff

Malcolm Bivens is here with Rust and says Ruff is in trouble. Ruff comes out but here's Isaiah Scott to jump him from behind. After ranting about how he is sick of people like Ruff getting a chance, Scott hits a nasty AA onto the apron, with

Ruff's back bending in a rather scary visual. Bivens declares Rust the winner despite the lack of a match.

Yesterday, William Regal offered Zoey Stark a non-title match with Io Shirai. Sure.

Stark is ready to....have her promo cut off by technical difficulties that leave us looking at Shirai.

Cameron Grimes watches clips of Ted DiBiase offering people money for various tasks. Grimes likes the idea and tries the same thing with a guy standing nearby....who does it just fine and gets \$1000. The guy says it was easy when Grimes didn't cheat like DiBiase. Grimes knew he should have watched the whole thing! This is as gold as you can get around here.

We see stills of Adam Cole attacking Kyle O'Reilly last week, which will put O'Reilly out of action with herniated discs. He should be out for 4-6 weeks at the moment.

Io Shirai vs. Zoey Stark

Non-title. They lock up to start with Shirai grabbing the arm with Stark flipping up, only to get armdragged back down. A kind of weird looking backdrop sets up a bit of miscommunication as they seem to be trying to figure out what to do. The Octopus has Stark in trouble and Shirai takes her down for the running basement dropkick. the 619 is blocked and Shirai is sent to the apron, where she blocks a charge with a kick to the face. One heck of a running kick to the head knocks Shirai off the top though and we take a break.

Back with Stark kicking the leg out to cut off a comeback and hitting a sliding kick to the head for two. Stark jumps to the top but misses a 450, meaning stereo crossbodies put them both down. A half and half suplex gives Stark two and we hit the chinlock. Shirai blocks a kick and nails a flapjack, followed by the 619 into the missile dropkick. There's a double underhook backbreaker for two and Shirai can't believe the

kickout. Stark is right back with a German suplex for her own two but Shirai sends her face first into the corner. The running knees set up the Over the Moonsault to finish Stark at 12:50.

Rating: B-. Stark has come off like a complete star in her two matches so far and I think NXT knows what they have with her. Having her in a non-title loss like this where she made the champ sweat is a good thing and more importantly it's a positive sign for her future. Hopefully we get to see more of her in the future because she has done rather well so far.

Respect is shown post match but here's Toni Storm to interrupt. She's no Zoey Stark because last week she kicked Shirai's head off and Shirai did nothing about it. Shirai had to pin Mercedes Martinez at Takeover because she can't beat Storm. Shirai says she'll fight Storm anywhere anytime but Storm says she's scared. Storm tells her to go find William Regal and get the match made, which seems to work for Shirai.

The Way is leaving before Dexter Lumis finds them. Johnny Gargano asks Austin Theory why he didn't hit Lumis with the chair. Theory says Lumis is just misunderstood, sending Gargano over the edge into a rant about how crazy Lumis is for kidnapping multiple people. Indi: "I think he's kind of hot." Candice: "WHAT THE...." Gargano has to cover her mouth and promises to fix this because Theory is going to therapy. Ok a Dr. Shelby cameo could help a lot.

Video on Xia Li marking Kacy Catanzaro.

Cameron Grimes has finished the Ted DiBiase video and now he's ready to try this again. He tries it with three people but one of the women (who seems to be former WNBA player Anriel Howard) accuses him of copying DiBiase. She stands up and is a good bit taller than him, which doesn't bother her. The dribbling begins but she dribbles between her legs at eight to win the money. Grimes: "TED DIBIASE! THIS AIN'T OVER!" These

things are gold.

Kacy Catanzaro vs. Xia Li

Kayden Carter is here with Catanzaro and Boa is here with Li, as Tian Sha watches from the stage. Catanzaro starts fast with a headscissors but gets dropped face first onto the turnbuckle. Li stomps her down in the corner and there's a snap suplex for two. The chinlock goes on but Catanzaro fights out and grabs a sunset flip for two. A kick to the ribs sets up another chinlock but Catanzaro fights out again.

The stomping in the corner has Li in trouble and there's a flipping kick to the back. They head to the floor with Catanzaro going into the barricade. Catanzaro's leg winds up on the steps and Li stomps down HARD on it, with the knee going in a VERY wrong direction. Screaming ensues but Li throws her back inside anyway, where the referee stops it at 4:41.

Rating: C. I know the story is completely over the top but it is also one of the more interesting things that NXT has done in a while. I'm curious to see where this is going to go and that is more than I can say about a lot of things that take place in NXT these days. Li is a completely different kind of star and I want to see how things continue. Nicely done, though hopefully Catanzaro isn't gone for a long time because she was getting better.

Post match referees check on Catanzaro as Carter goes up to yell at Sha. With Boa standing in the way, Sha signals to Li, who kicks Catanzaro in the head.

Regal is still waiting in the parking lot. It seems that he is waiting on Santos Escobar, which does make sense.

Video on Raquel Gonzalez/Dakota Kai vs. Nia Jax/Shayna Baszler for the Women's Tag Team Titles next week. Jax and Baszler don't seem intimidated.

Cameron Grimes finds someone else to try the basketball idea, which the guy thinks is like Ted DiBiase. After one dribble, Grimes punches him in the face and says DiBiase can kiss his grits. He throws the money around and leaves it on the ground because Grimes is a goof. An entertaining goof, but a goof.

Kacy Catanzaro might have a broken leg.

Grizzled Young Veterans vs. Killian Dain/Drake Maverick

For the sake of simplicity, I'll only refer to James Drake as Drake and Drake Maverick as Maverick. Before the match, the Veterans announce that Wes Lee has a broken hand and they have been fined, but it's cool because they know they're the better team. Dain dropkicks Drake into the corner to start and it's off to Maverick to work on the arm. Everything breaks down and Dain shoves both Veterans over the top and out to the floor. Then he throws Maverick onto both of them and we take a break.

Back with Maverick being thrown into the wrong corner to keep him from getting over to Dain. Maverick knees Drake in the back though and crawls between Gibson's legs for the hot tag. House is cleaned in a hurry with Dain getting annoyed at Drake for jumping on his back. That means a Samoan drop/fall away slam combination to the Veterans at the same time, setting up a backslash for two on Drake.

There's a double suplex to the Veterans again and it's off to Maverick for a high crossbody. Some dropkicks have the Veterans in trouble but a blind tag sets up a middle rope dropkick/Downward Spiral combination. Dain is taken to the floor and knocked down but Maverick hits Gibson with a bulldog. Gibson pulls him off the top though and Ticket To Mayhem finishes Maverick at 8:22.

Rating: C. Maverick and Dain are still a fun odd couple but you can only have them lose so many times. The good thing is that the Veterans won because I never get tired of those guys. They work so well together and it's great to see them doing

their thing and hopefully moving back up the ladder sooner rather than later.

Legado del Fantasma arrives.

Post break, Killian Dain carries Drake Maverick to the trainer's room but they run into Alexander Wolfe, who says Dain used to be a monster. Dain ignores him and gets help for Maverick. Was it that bad of a beating?

Karrion Kross vs. Santos Escobar

Non-title and no DQ but we cut to the parking lot where Kross attacks Raul Mendoza and Joaquin Wilde. That brings Escobar out of his car and the brawl is on. They fight over to a truck with Escobar managing to drop the door onto Kross' shoulder to make him scream. Kross fights back but the rest of Legado comes in to keep up the brawl. Escobar hides in the truck's cab so Kross fights off the goons and finds a pickaxe to swing at the door.

That's enough to bring Escobar out and the three on one beats Kross down again. The arm is sent into the truck and they head inside, with Escobar heading to ringside while Kross throws the other two through the Plexiglas. The staredown is on and Escobar realizes that he's in major trouble. They get inside with a big boot dropping Escobar for one but Kross has to deal with Wilde. That's enough for Escobar to get in a chair shot, followed by rams into the post and steps.

We take a break and come back with Escobar hitting a running basement dropkick in the corner as Scarlett is not pleased. The shoulder is wrapped inside of a chair and sent into the post to put Kross down again. A DDT onto the chair is good for two back inside and there's a dropkick to the arm. They're already back on the floor with Kross trying to fight back but getting knocked down by the arm again.

Back in and the armbar goes on before Escobar tries Three

Amigos. The first two connect but the third is countered into some suplexes from Kross. They're outside again but this time, Kross pulls him hard into the post. A suplex and a powerbomb get rid of Wilde and Mendoza, leaving Kross to Domsday Saito Escobar through the announcers' table. Another Domsday Saito sets up a running forearm to the back of the head to finish Escobar at 15:36.

Rating: B. This took a bit longer than it needed but Kross as the unstoppable monster was the right way to go. There's something interesting about him as the monster face rather than a villain and while that wasn't quite the case here, he was definitely feeling different than usual and I was digging where they were going. Throw in Escobar being treated like a star as well and this was a very different main event which worked rather well.

LA Knight says he'll debut on his time.

Here's Adam Cole to look at a clip of his attack on Kyle O'Reilly last week. Now that footage makes him sick to his stomach. At first he was mad at O'Reilly for getting title shot after title shot but now he is ashamed. He knows O'Reilly can't be here but he should be, and Cole promises to do everything he can to make it better. Cole sounds near tears but here is Roderick Strong to say Cole wrecked everything.

The Undisputed Era was based on trust and Cole broke it. Strong says O'Reilly is going to heal and Cole might not survive what is coming for him. Cue Finn Balor for the brawl with Cole but Strong tries to break it up, allowing Cole to hit a superkick. Strong and Cole head back inside, where Strong runs him over with a clothesline. Cole begs off and asks for mercy, with Strong dropping to his knees and saying he loves Cole too. They hug...and Cole hits him low. Cole calls Strong stupid to end the show. This was rather good and Cole sold the heck out of it.

Overall Rating: B+. This one was a bit of a different kind of show but I liked almost everything they did. Between Kross looking like a monster, the Veterans winning, the great closing segment and Grimes rapidly becoming the most entertaining thing in wrestling, I liked a lot more of this than I didn't. Awesome show this week and they have a lot of different ways to go on the way forward.

Results

Dexter Lumis b. Johnny Gargano – Silence

Io Shirai b. Zoey Stark – Over the Moonsault

Xia Li b. Kacy Catanzaro via referee stoppage

Grizzled Young Veterans b. Killian Dain/Drake Maverick –
Ticket to Mayhem to Maverick

Karrion Kross b. Santos Escobar – Running forearm to the back of the head

Remember to follow me on Twitter @kbreviews and head over to my Amazon author page with 30 different cheap wrestling books at:

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

AND

[Remember to check out Wrestlingrumors.net](http://Wrestlingrumors.net) for all of your wrestling headline needs.

New Column: The Champion We Need

This is the kind of column I like doing.

<https://wrestlingrumors.net/tommyhall/kbs-review-champion-need/>

Monday Night Raw – September 25, 2006: Kind Of Nice For A Change

Monday Night Raw

Date: September 25, 2006

Location: Ford Center, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

Attendance: 10,000

Commentators: Jim Ross, Jerry Lawler

We're still starting of the new John Cena Era and that seems to include one last gasp from Edge, but I can't imagine him sticking around in the main event scene that much longer. You also have to imagine that the McMahons are going to be back sooner rather than later, because that's how Raw works. Let's get to it.

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

Opening sequence.

And the power is out, meaning the commentary intro is in the dark.

Lilian Garcia's intro can't be heard and there is no video screen or graphics.

Women's Title Tournament First Round: Lita vs. Candice Michelle

Lilian's mic is back up to announce that we're having a Women's Title tournament. Lita's video is at least playing on the screen above the ring. Before the bell, Lita gets a mic and says that thanks to a private meeting with Jonathan Coachman, she gets to pick the guest referee for this match. It's Edge and, after a rather extensive weapons shirt, he spears Candice to give Lita the pin in about thirty seconds.

Post match (and actually mid match) John Cena runs in for the save as the lights start to come back up a bit.

Back from a break with the power on and Cena talking about Edge sabotaging the lights so he wouldn't have to face him. Edge and Lita come back out and say that there isn't going to be a title match tonight. They are going to celebrate, sending Cena into a few jokes about Lita being...yeah I think you get the joke. Cena suggests that various parts of her are as red as the Oklahoma University end zone and says that was for JR (who gives a thumbs up. Lita: "SCREW YOU!" Cena: "I don't have ten bucks!"

Lita is sick of Cena making fun of her when Cena is the real joke. Edge and Lita are both better wrestlers than him, which Cena says is proof that she has the testicles in the relationship. And yeah, she might be better...if he was blindfolded with one hand tied behind his back (uh oh) and wasn't afraid of a scorching case of herpes. Edge is ready to fight right now but it's for Lita, with Cena's arm tied behind his back.

Footage of the Mexico tour.

Intercontinental Title: Kane vs. Johnny Nitro

Nitro, with Melina, is defending. Kane jumps him during the rather long entrance and a side slam lets Nitro get the fur coat off. Melina's distraction lets Nitro hit a chop block but Kane boots him out of the air. Cue Umaga with a chair to Kane's back for the DQ barely a minute in.

Post match Umaga destroys Kane with the running hip attack and the steps to the head.

Shawn Michaels is readying the WWE Magazine but can't find any advertisements for DX gear. After the plug is done, Maria comes up to ask DX about their gauntlet match tonight. Maria thinks their catchphrase is NO WAY so HHH offers a demonstration, with Shawn pulling him away. Instead HHH whispers it in her ear before leaving, with Eugene replacing them. Maria whispers the same thing in Eugene's ear and he faints.

This Week In Wrestling History: Andre the Giant vs. Gorilla Monsoon in a boxing match in Puerto Rico in 1977. Monsoon's selling of the knockout is great.

Jonathan Coachman talks to Shelton Benjamin about his claims of being held down for being a black man last week. Vince McMahon's hero is Dr. Martin Luther King! Benjamin: "I'm kind of partial to Michael Jordan myself." Benjamin asks Coach what he knows about being a black man in this business and says Coach is "whitewashed."

Jeff Hardy comes up with some of the most stereotypical slang you'll ever hear (Cryme Tyme would think it was over the top) so Coach makes a match between them tonight. Benjamin: "Thanks, brother." The two of them leave so Edge and Lita come out of Coach's office and the Cena vs. Lita match is made. Coach even throws in a No Holds Barred stipulation, but if Edge touches Cena, he loses hit rematch. When did Coach grow a backbone?

Ric Flair vs. Mikey

The rest of the Spirit Squad is here too. Flair takes him down to start without much effort and unloads in the corner. Mikey snaps off a dropkick

and slaps Flair in the corner, earning himself various shots to the face and chest. A shot to the knee looks to set up the Figure Four but Flair has to throw Nicky onto the rest of the Squad. Flair punches Mikey down for the pin. Yeah off a right hand.

Rating: D+. This mini feud continues and I'm oddly fine with a right hand beating Mikey. No matter how you look at them, aside from Kenny, the entire Spirit Squad is a bunch of goons who only succeed at anything because they have a numbers advantage. Losing to a right hand might be a bit much, but I don't think Mikey getting pinned by Ric Flair is going to end him.

John Cena was on MadTV.

D-Generation X vs. ???/???/???

DX is running a three team gauntlet and dedicate it to Vince McMahon. He isn't here though, and they have a video on the Cell to explain his absence. The Highlanders are in first and lose in about fifteen seconds to a superkick. Robbie gets Pedigreed for a bonus and it's Charlie Haas/Viscera as the second team. HHH runs Haas over to start and Shawn comes in to chop away in the corner. It's off to Viscera, who gets crushed with a sidewalk slam and we take a break.

Back with Haas cranking on Shawn's arms but he fights up and sends the villains into each other. The hot tag brings in HHH to clean house and a double clothesline drops Viscera. The Pedigree to Haas lays him out and a superkick knocks Viscera onto him for the double pin. Lance Cade and Trevor Murdoch are in as the third team and a cheap shot to Michaels' back puts him in trouble, allowing Cade to blast him with a clothesline. Everything breaks down in a hurry with DX being sent into various hard objects. Cade grabs a chair to knock Shawn down for the DQ.

Rating: D+. The longest match we saw was the middle portion, which was cut in half by the break. I'm not sure how this was supposed to be anything more than a workout for DX, but at least they didn't treat it as anything else. This felt more like DX needing a reason to be on the show and until a new team is built up, that's about as all as you can do with them.

Post match HHH grabs his own chair to clear the ring.

In two weeks: Family Reunion, a three hour special. Oh...yay.

Cryme Tyme robs a guy near an ATM.

Jeff Hardy vs. Shelton Benjamin

Shelton knocks him down to start and then does it again for a bonus. A running forearm puts Shelton down for a change but he's back with right hands and a bit one knocks Hardy into the barricade. Back in the chinlock goes on until Hardy jawbreaks his way to freedom. The Whisper in the Wind connects but Shelton jumps up to the top, only to get shoved down for the Swanton. Shelton gets a boot on the rope and grabs the rope to block the Twist of Fate. That's fine with Jeff, who small packages him for the fast pin.

Rating: C-. I have no idea what WWE is doing with these two and the segment with Hardy earlier was a little more than uncomfortable. At the same time, Shelton finding another way to lose is never a good thing despite how many times WWE has done it. I've given up on the false hope of him doing anything important anytime soon, but the racial stuff could get rather bad in a hurry.

John Cena has a wife in the Marina.

Carlito/Super Crazy vs. Randy Orton/Chris Masters

Carlito takes Masters down for an early near fall and it's off to Crazy, who is powerbombed down in a hurry. Orton comes in and slaps on a chinlock, which is broken up in a hurry for the hot tag off to Carlito. House is cleaned and everything breaks down but Masters avoids Crazy's moonsault. With Crazy sent outside, Masters tries the Masterlock on Carlito but gets reversed into the Backstabber for the pin.

Rating: C-. Nothing much to this one but it gives Carlito a quick boost to help him up after the Unforgiven loss. There

are only so many things that you can do when the match was so definitive but at least they're trying. The Super Crazy push is still a little odd, though at least they're trying something new and that's not a terrible idea.

Post match Orton catches Carlito with the RK0 to leave him laying.

Here's Jonathan Coachman for a chat and he has a surprise: Eric Bischoff of all people, who has not been here since he was fired last year. Bischoff is happy to be back and while he isn't thrilled with being fired, he has written a book called Controversy Creates Cash. He's telling the truth in the book, including the fact that Raw would not exist in this form without him and there would be no DX without the NWO. And then the music plays him off because that's a little too far.

John Cena vs. Lita

Non-title, Cena's arm is tied behind his back and Edge is here but can't touch Cena. Lita pokes him in the eye and gets low blowed but the FU finishes her in less than a minute.

Post match here are King Booker, Finlay and William Regal from Smackdown (where Cena will be appearing in a six man tag later this week) for the big beatdown. Finlay gets in some Shillelagh shots and Booker takes off his boot because it's time for Cena kiss the feet. JR: "WHEN DID BOOKER GET AN ENGLISH ACCENT???" Booker sits on the ropes as the beatdown knocks Cena out and his face is put onto Booker's bare foot. Booker twirls in the robe before leaving, so Edge grabs a mic. The rematch for the title is next week and it's inside a cage.

Overall Rating: C-. This was a weird show as there was one match which broke five minutes and it was a three fall gauntlet match. I'm not sure if they were a little spent after the international tour or whatever else but I did like the show flew by with a lot of things getting some time. Granted not everything needed to get time (like that Hardy/Shelton

segment) but I did like the structure they were going with here. It wouldn't work every week, though it worked rather well for a one off change.

Remember to follow me on Twitter @kbreviews and head over to my Amazon author page with 30 different cheap wrestling books at:

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

AND

[Remember to check out Wrestlingrumors.net](http://Wrestlingrumors.net) for all of your [wrestling headline needs](http://Wrestlingrumors.net).