

Please Bear With Me

The laptop crashed today so things might be a bit slow. I'm currently resetting it and using an older one but I'm backed up due to losing the entire day. I've got a lot of stuff I'm working on and hopefully I should have some of them up in the next day or two. I'm sorry about the lack of content today though and I'll be back up asap.

KB

Paige and Mark Henry Retire

Paige and Mark Henry have both retired, with the former due to injury and the latter seemingly just because he's old enough to.

<https://411mania.com/wrestling/paige-wrestling-ww-e-ending/>

<https://411mania.com/wrestling/mark-henry-considered-retired-ww-e-without-fanfare/>

Henry leaving isn't a big surprise as he hasn't wrestled since Wrestlemania XXXIII and honestly, it's not that big of a loss at this point. He was awesome in 2011 but aside from that, it was a lot of the same old stuff from him. He was a heck of a mainstay though, especially given how one note his character was for a long time.

Paige...egads. She's 25, has a long resume and just came back after a long hiatus due to injury. I was really interested in seeing what was going to happen with the Absolution stable but now, I can't imagine things going well for the other members. This is quite the shame and I'd have loved to see Paige against the newer women.

2017 Awards: Worst Show of the Year

This is one of the more fun ones.

For some reason, this one always seems like it should have a lot of nominees. The thing is though, most WWE pay per views aren't all that bad. Sure some of them might seem like they don't need to exist (because they don't), but at the same time most of them give you at least something worth checking out. That wasn't the case with all of them though.

I'll be leaving Survivor Series off as I thought it was actually a rather good show held down by some HORRIBLE booking and execution of the show's namesake matches. Throw those out and make it a regular pay per view and it's a near classic with Shield vs. New Day and Brock vs. Styles. I don't get the hatred for that one outside of the terrible main event.

We'll start things off with a show that didn't seem to get the point that it was going for. Clash of Champions, in theory at least, should be a show focused on champions. That made it a little weird when the show was almost entirely built around a non-title match between Randy Orton/Shinsuke Nakamura vs. Kevin Owens/Sami Zayn. The show was main evented by a title match but that was the token main event at best. This show

didn't need to exist and with a total of six matches including one that was less than two minutes long, it was a mess.

If that show didn't need to exist, then Payback didn't need to even less. The problem here was the Superstar Shakeup, which was scheduled to start immediately after the pay per view. Therefore, none of the matches mattered and what we got (the House of Horrors) was a huge mess. This was a major scheduling conflict but it's not like the was going to be any good no matter what they did.

I'd feel weird if I didn't include a TNA show in here so we'll go with Bound For Glory. The show was basically headlined by the return of Alberto El Patron and that meant we were stuck hearing the word perro a lot. The wrestling wasn't great with the MMA vs. wrestlers match being a disaster and almost nothing positive standing out. As usual, this didn't need to be a pay per view but I do understand that they need something to build towards. This just wasn't the best choice.

Then you have the easy winner with Battleground and it's not one but TWO potential worst matches of the year. This show was HORRIBLE aside from AJ vs. Owens and New Day vs. the Usos but the two really bad matches more than drag those down. This was an easy pick for me and a hands down winner, mainly due to that main event. Just...egads.

Impact Wrestling – January 11, 2018: Let Me Talk To Ya

About Getting Someone New

Impact Wrestling

Date: January 11, 2018

Location: Aberdeen Pavilion, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada

Commentators: Josh Matthews, Jeremy Borash

After last week's stacked card containing four title matches and a loser leaves town match, it should be interesting to see what the company has for a follow up. There's a good chance that they won't have nearly as much to offer tonight and you really can't blame them on that front. Let's get to it.

We open with a recap of last week's major events, including the two title changes and James Storm's career ending. Thankfully they ignore that stupid World Title clip fest.

Opening sequence.

Here are Bobby Lashley and Dan Lambert to get things going. Impact has surprised Lambert as he never thought it would be this resilient. Lambert is here for two reasons. First is to have a moment of silence for James Storm's career. Since he's unemployed, maybe the fans can put together a collection and get him some beer money (good line, as Lambert is still one of the best promos in this company).

Lambert is also here to bring out the newest member of American Top Team. This man could do what Lashley couldn't do when he put Storm down. Lashley isn't happy and it's even worse when the new member is revealed to be KM. We get the shirt presentation before KM says he's proven himself by taking out everyone in front of him, capped off by helping Lambert to get rid of Storm. KM mentions getting rid of Moose, who comes out way faster than he should. The fight doesn't last long as Moose gets beaten down until Eddie Edwards makes the save. Lashley has to pull Lambert from the ring.

Like I said, Lambert is a great promo but this story has long passed its expiration date. It's been going for several months now and there's no

real reason to keep it going at this point. They've covered the MMA vs. wrestlers thing (with the MMA guys dominating) and now they're just regular heels. That's all well and good and Lambert shifting towards being a regular manager is better, but this is living on borrowed time to put it mildly.

Post break, the obvious tag match is made.

The announcers recap last week's show again.

Here's Grand Champion Ethan Carter III to issue an open challenge for the title. First though, Carter needs to mock Matt Sydal for choking over and over again every time he has a chance to win the big one. Sydal chokes so much he might as well play forward for the Ottawa Senators. That gets the expected heat from the crowd and now the open challenge is on.

Grand Championship: Ethan Carter III vs. Petey Williams

Carter is defending of course...and there are no judges or any mention of the round system. Could it be true? Did my New Year's wish come true? Well at least the one regarding the Grand Championship? The fans are way into Petey and a headscissors makes those cheers even louder. He ties Carter in the Tree of Woe as we hear, for the second time in the match, about what a great comeback story Williams was in 2017.

Carter sends him into the corner and chokes on the rope, followed by a knee to the ribs. A waistlock keeps Petey down for a bit but he reverses into a side roll for two. The Canadian Destroyer is countered into a TK3 for two and Petey is sent outside. As Petey holds his knee, Sydal runs in for the DQ at 4:49. There was no mention made of the round system and judges being dropped.

Rating: D. This was too short to mean much but I'm more interested in this seemingly turning back into the TV Title. I'm guessing Sydal's promo last week where he suggested a regular match for the title is all we're getting and I'm really fine with that. The round system was a bad idea from the first day and the thing should have just been a regular midcard title. This is the right move and gets rid of a problem that doesn't need to exist.

Allie isn't happy with Laurel Van Ness attacking her last week. She's not the weak little Allie anymore and she's ready to play if Laurel wants to. Much more serious here, but still with a hint of the old Allie in there, as there should be.

Alberto El Patron isn't happy.

Sydal says Carter can't call him out and not expect to pay the consequences. He wants a title shot with a sixty minute time limit and no rounds ("That's out") and no judges ("They're gone"). If Carter can beat him there, then he'll get a handshake and a hug. The challenge makes sense, and PLEASE let that be a permanent change.

We see James Storm winning the World Title from Kurt Angle in less than two minutes on October 20, 2011.

KC Spinelli vs. Laurel Van Ness

Non-title. Laurel takes her straight into the corner and knees her in the ribs before yelling at Spinelli for touching her fur coat. Spinelli slaps her right back but gets kicked in the face for her disrespect. A bridging vertical suplex (that's a new one for some reason) gets two on Laurel and they kick each other in the face at the same time. Laurel is up first and a curb stomp into the Unprettier is good for the pin on Spinelli at 5:22.

Rating: D+. This was fine as a way to get Laurel a win under her belt and that's always a good idea. Of course it would have been a good idea to have Spinelli work a match on Impact before they showed her in the Canadian promotion but that's another problem for later. If nothing else, Laurel's gimmick is really starting to work for her. She looks outstanding in her gear but the shots of her face are nothing short of unnerving.

Post match Allie comes in and beats on Laurel before holding up the title.

Here are Eli Drake and Chris Adonis for a championship address. Adonis channels a little Rick Rude with a "what we'd like to have right now" to

introduce for the champ. Drake calls anyone who lives in this horrible weather year round a dummy before holding up the title. He shifts his attention to Alberto, who came back all upset but then thought he could swim with the big fish.

Drake is standing here with the title and Alberto should have stayed at the bar. He'll defend the title again next week in Detroit but here's Alberto to interrupt. Alberto, now a full on face again, says he'd love to beat Drake around the ring next week. He wants to fight now but here's Johnny Impact to interrupt. Johnny has heard about both of them being in Detroit so he'll have to join the party. The brawl is on with Johnny getting the better of it. Drake has already beaten both of these guys and I'm really not sure why we need to see these three fight any more, save for the company has nothing else to do at this point.

We look at Raven having his head shaved back in 2003.

Recap of the opening segment.

American Top Team (now just Lambert, Lashley and KM) are in the back and Lambert gives KM all of the credit for getting rid of Storm. Lashley isn't happy.

Chandler and Joseph Park are glad about Chandler's win last week. Jimmy Jacobs comes up to ask what happened to Abyss. Jacobs: "You used to be the guy that put people into ambulance and now you're the guy chasing ambulances." Chandler, in a nasal voice, stands up to Jacobs because Joseph is family. Jacobs steps aside so Kongo Kong, who Jimmy says is family to him can come in. Chandler: "So scary!" I like the Parks but I could go without seeing Jacobs or Kong ever again, especially the latter.

OVE wrecks LAX's clubhouse. Good grief ENOUGH BETWEEN THESE TEAMS ALREADY! Post break LAX finds the wrecked clubhouse and says it's time to go back to their roots. Barbed wire is mentioned.

Cult of Lee/Hakim Zane vs. Dezmond Xavier/Garza Jr./Sonjay Dutt

Garza headbutts Zane around to start and brings in Xavier to trip him up a few times. A dropkick to the back of the head sends Zane outside as

everything breaks down. Back from a break with Zane charging into Dutt's boot in the corner as Lee poses in the corner. Zane actually gets in a few shots to the back and hands it off to Konley for a double arm crank. Lee kicks at the chest as we hear about Ishimori defending the title in Japan.

Even Zane gets to come in for a chinlock until Dutt dropkicks him down. The hot tag brings in Garza to clean house but hang on because IT'S TIME FOR GARZA TO TAKE OFF HIS PANTS! It's so distracting that Konley and Lee don't notice Zane's missile dropkick which hits them by mistake. Dezmond comes in and hits the Final Flash for the pin on Zane at 10:27.

Rating: C-. This was your run of the mill X-Division match and that's the big problem: even when you get someone like Xavier or Ishimori, they're stuck with these generic heels who don't do anything to set themselves apart. Why should I be interested in seeing people defeat weak talents and not get to show off what they can do? It's a big reason why the division is boring and I don't see that changing anytime soon.

Post match Ishimori comes out and holds up the title in front of Xavier. They shake hands before their title match next week.

Also next week: Kongo Kong vs. Chandler Park and clips of the triple threat match from Detroit. You know, a match we can't have HERE. Also, a barbed wire match with OVE vs. LAX.

Moose/Eddie Edwards vs. KM/Bobby Lashley

It's a brawl to start until we settle down to KM vs. Moose. Some chops in the corner have KM in trouble but he avoids Edwards' elbow, allowing the beatdown to begin. Back from an early break with Lashley slamming Eddie for two but missing a charge to fall outside. Moose comes in for a double elbow to KM, followed by Eddie jumping on Moose's back for a double backplash. Edwards gets posted though and the heels take over again.

Lashley's neckbreaker doesn't even get one as Moose is in there IMMEDIATELY for the save. Eddie reverses a suplex to put KM down but Lashley breaks up the tag attempt. Lashley charges into a knee though and a middle rope dropkick puts him down. A crawl through the legs is enough

to bring in KM and Moose's middle rope chokebomb gets two. KM gets low bridged to the floor and Eddie follows him out with the suicide dive. Lambert gets in a cheap shot though and KM's powerbomb into a Backstabber is enough to pin Eddie at 14:46.

Rating: D+. This was a way to establish KM as a member of the team but it should also help further the wedge between Lambert and Lashley, likely leading to Lashley turning face. I'm not sure why this is considered a big deal when people turn around here so frequently (including Lashley) but that's certainly better for a conclusion to the story than anything else I've seen so far.

A preview of OVE vs. LAX wraps us up.

Overall Rating: C. Not a bad show this week as they were advancing a lot of stuff while getting ready for some of the bigger matches down the line. You need that kind of show, especially coming off of a bigger episode like last week. That being said, I have no idea why we can't have a World Title match in the arena the show is airing from. It doesn't feel right and comes off like it's less important than everything else. Fix that up and the title seems more important. Other than that, they've got some good stuff going here and it's not a huge falloff coming out of last week. Not a good show, but it did its job well enough.

Results

Ethan Carter III b. Petey Williams via DQ when Matt Sydal interfered

Laurel Van Ness b. KC Spinelli – Unprettier

Dezmond Xavier/Sonjay Dutt/Garza Jr. b. Cult of Lee/Hakim Zane – Final Flash to Zane

KM/Lashley b. Moose/Eddie Edwards – Powerbomb into a Backstabber to Edwards

Remember to follow me on Twitter @kbreviews and pick up the Monday Nitro and Thunder Reviews Volume VI: July – December 1999 in e-book or paperback. Check out the information here:

<http://kbwrestlingreviews.com/2017/11/22/new-book-kbs-monday-nitro-and-thunder-reviews-volume-vi/>

And check out my Amazon author page with cheap wrestling books at:

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

Happy Birthday

To Monday Night Raw, which debuted 25 years ago today. I still haven't missed a show and I don't see that changing anytime soon.

2017 Awards: Worst Wrestler of the Year

What a group of nominees to pick from.

Now this one almost completely depends on your definition of bad. There are some people who don't belong in a ring no matter what they do and there are some people who just don't ever change and serve very little purpose other than being a warm body. At the same time, there are people who I just don't like who will be on here as well. It'll be a mix of all three as this is really hard to define.

Before we get into this, I'm going to leave Shane McMahon off because I consider him to be someone who wrestles on occasion rather than a wrestler.

We'll start with Tamina, who has been around forever and yet still has almost no reason to be there. Considering she debuted at the same time as the Usos, you really would expect her to have gotten at least somewhat better now. Her Superfly Splash isn't terrible but there's a gaping hole of charisma whenever she's in the ring and I often forget she's out there.

Sticking with the women there's Lana, who is managing to set new standards for bad wrestling. At the end of the day though, I really can't blame her for this one. She's been wrestling less than two years now and hasn't even had 75 matches yet with her first singles match coming about thirteen months ago. I have no idea what WWE was expecting when they threw her in the ring other than hoping people would swoon over her in the outfits (fair enough) but it's not fair to put her out there like that. Just let her be a full time manager or go train for a LONG time before getting back in the ring because this isn't fair.

I wouldn't feel right without including the Young Bucks in here. Yes they're athletic freaks and can be entertaining a lot of the time, but the superkick parties and almost never selling enough and the lack of any form of psychology to most of their matches puts them near the top. Though they did block me on Twitter so I must be doing something right.

A name that you'll probably see on a lot of these lists is Jinder Mahal and while I couldn't stand him for most of the year, there's a huge difference between someone who is boring, repetitive and in way over his head than someone who is worthless. There's value in Mahal, but he was being put in a spot he wasn't ready for. Those are two different things and I'm not going to fault Mahal for the bad booking. I'll fault him for being a boring promo and a repetitive wrestler though,

which is quite bad on its own at such a high level.

Now someone on the other end of the spectrum is Dolph Ziggler, who is more than capable of having a good match but hasn't changed his style in what feels like years. His meta stuff with the entrances isn't doing anything for me and I really could go with him being away for a very long time, hopefully to recharge his batteries and change things up a bit as his style got old a long, long time ago.

That brings us to the winner and, in what shouldn't be a surprise, I'm going with Enzo Amore. I've made no secret of the fact that I can't stand him more than once for a variety of reasons, including he doesn't change anything. It's been the same "how you doin" promo and never shutting up, while almost never actually wrestling. When he does it's not any good and we're stuck with Enzo as champion while 205 Live dies because he gets so much attention. It's a bad way to run things and the division has died even more with him on top. Get him out of here already so the division can actually have a chance.

New Column: I Like It From Raw

A look back at a great moment from every year of Raw, including some you might not have thought of in a good while.

<https://wrestlingrumors.net/kbs-review-like-raw/>

Ring of Honor TV – January 10, 2018: It's a Shame to Waste a Perfectly Good ROH

Ring of Honor

Date: January 10, 2018

Location: 2300 Arena, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Commentators: Colt Cabana, Ian Riccaboni

We're FINALLY at the post Final Battle tapings and that means it's time to get on with the stories. There are some big issues coming out of the pay per view with Dalton Castle winning the World Title at the top of the list. It should be interesting to see where the fallout goes, including perhaps a new challenger for Castle. Let's get to it.

We look at some clips from Final Battle, naturally focusing on the title change more than anything else.

Opening sequence with Castle more prominently featured.

Here are Castle and the Boys to get things open, as is tradition around here. The fans chant for the Boys until Castle, now with a rather white microphone cube, talks about making mistakes in the past. Like investing money in the sparkling water business. People kept telling him he would never be World Champion but it turns out that there's a long time between now and ever.

Now he's the World Champion and as long as he holds the title, the world is going to know that he's not just a big fish in a little pond. This brings out Jay Lethal, who would be a logical first challenger (though I would have bet on Punishment Martinez). Castle: "THIS IS SHOCKING!". In the years that Castle has been here, Lethal has never even given him the time of day. Lethal hasn't even sent him a friend request on Facebook! Dalton isn't sure what Jay could possibly want from him now Castle: "I'm puzzled. It seems there could be so many things you could want.".

Jay does want to congratulate him on his accomplishments and that title makes him the best in the world right now. To get to the point though, Jay wants his shot. That's not what Castle was expecting and sits down on one of the Boys to think it over. The other Boy offers Jay a seat which he accepts, after wiping the Boy's back down first. Jay can't do it so the fans tell Jay to try it again. Castle: "It's a shame to waste a perfectly good Boy."

Dalton throws his feet on the other Boy's back but Jay gets to the point, saying he wants to be at the top of Castle's list. The champ agrees and Jay bails in a hurry. With the ring to himself, Dalton says this title is for the Boys. With Castle ready to leave, Punishment Martinez, who is owed a title shot due to winning the Survival of the Fittest, comes in for a chokeslam to lay Dalton out.

More often than not, a new champion will start their reign off by saying it's a new era or something like that. For once, Castle's actually does feel different. The stuff with the Boys is something we've seen before, but Castle was in regular street clothes here and having the Boys being used as chairs by a guy you might see anywhere was quite the odd visual. I buy him as champion and it feels different enough that I care, which is a great sign for him going forward.

The Kingdom says they're coming for all the titles. My goodness shut up with this same stuff already. It's been the same promo for WAY too long now and Taven not being a great talker doesn't help either.

TV Title: Silas Young vs. Simon Grimm

Young is defending after winning the title at Final Battle. Grimm comes out in a mask for a rather different look, which might actually work. They hit the mat to start with Grimm getting the better of a wristlock. Young flips out of a snapmare as they seem to be trying to do a fast paced cruiserweight sequence but are a bit too big. It doesn't look bad and it's a well done change of pace, but it does look a bit awkward.

They fight over a pinfall reversal sequence until Grimm powers him up, only to get hurricanranaed right back down. A clothesline puts Grimm on the floor and we take a break. Back with Young still in control as the

camera makes sure to look at Beer City Bruiser. Grimm gets in some uppercuts (because that's what so many wrestlers use these days) and a bridging suplex gets two. Not that it matters as Misery retains the title at 7:31.

Rating: C-. Simple title defense for Young here to get him off on the right foot while we wait on the real challenger. They took their sweet time on giving Young a run with anything so it's nice to finally see this pay off in any way. Young could make for a good TV Champion, even if he doesn't hold the title all that long. Grimm is better than he was given credit for in WWE but I'm not seeing any great potential that the company missed.

Post match Kenny King with a beer bottle, just like the one that Silas had to use to take the title from him. Sure Silas beat Martinez on his own but it took a beer bottle to beat King. He's already signed up for his rematch but thanks to the eight beers he's had tonight, he's ready to fight Young right now. Referees are right there but this was fine to set up the obvious rematch.

Stills package of Bully Ray/Tommy Dreamer vs. the Briscoe Brothers. Bully left his boots in the ring after the loss.

Clip of the Women of Honor Title tournament being announced.

Briscoes vs. Ryan Nova/Eli Isom

New music for Mark and Jay. The Briscoes jump the jobbers during the video package and Jay takes Isom's head off with a clothesline. Mark does the same and the Froggy Bow ends Isom at 1:34. These guys are awesome heels, partially because they look like they could snap your neck at a moment's notice.

Post match the Briscoes brag about ending Bully's career. They want the Tag Team Titles back because no one is on their level right now. The Briscoes destroying the Guns would be as appropriate as anything else at the moment.

Silas, with his hair looking cleaner than it has in years, isn't happy

with what King did. The Beer City Bruiser wants to win the Tag Team Titles and even has a partner in mind. Silas gives him his blessing. This would have been more effective if the Briscoes hadn't just squashed a team and challenged for the titles as well.

The Young Bucks and Adam Page aren't happy with the Addiction and Scorpio Sky (now known as SoCal Uncensored). They can have a shot at the titles if that's what they really want. Another year, another team crammed together for the sake of creating challengers for the titles.

Flip Gordon vs. Marty Scurll

Scurll's IWGP Junior Heavyweight Title isn't on the line. During the entrances, Scurll says he wants a shot at Castle too because he helped Lethal reach his inner villain. I completely support this. The fans are almost entirely behind Scurll as they fight over a wristlock to start. Gordon flips him down to start and Marty isn't sure what to make of it. The handstand walk turns into Flip's dance, followed by the multiple nip ups to avoid a clothesline.

It's Flip getting in the first hard shot to send Marty outside, allowing Flip to stand on the top on one foot just because he can. Back from a break with Flip keeping the pace fast (Colt: "Fast and furious. Too fast and too furious!" Get your movies straight dude. It was Fast and THE Furious first. Fast and Furious was the fourth.) until Marty gets in a dropkick to take over. It's already off to the cross arm choke and a Backstabber gives Marty two.

The near fall leads to a shoving match with the referee where the ref shoves him down (it worked for HHH back in the 90s and it would work here too). The referee gets BOOED for defending himself but the fans are distracted by a superkick to Gordon, despite him doing a handstand at the time. They rock each other with forearms until an enziguri gives Gordon his first offense in a good while.

A 619 around the corner has Scurll in trouble and a springboard Sling Blade is good for two. The standing shooting star gets the same and we take an abrupt break. Back again with Marty hitting the apron superkick and giving a rather evil sneer. Some spinning kicks are countered into a

rollup, followed by some exchanged superkicks. Scurll's Ghostbuster (Adam Cole's Last Shot) gets two but Gordon sends him outside for a very big flip dive. A 450 gives Gordon two more and a Falcon Arrow gets the same. Scurll is done with this though and hits a second Ghostbuster for the pin at 13:40.

Rating: C+. Gordon is someone who interests and frustrates me at the same time. The athleticism is great but there comes a point where there's just too much of it. Unfortunately Gordon hits that point about five minutes into his matches and it gets silly in a hurry. The last few minutes of this one showed that he can do more things than just flips and that would make the athletics look that much better. Mix is up a bit and learn to make those spots mean more and he could get a lot further.

Overall Rating: B. Now that's how you do a first shot back. Three titles get challengers set up and there's a good opening sequence plus a strong squash. The wrestling wasn't bad either and there's a lot of stuff to pick from around here. This is a lot better than the normal stuff you get around here and Marty going towards the World Title makes me rather smiley indeed.

Remember to follow me on Twitter @kbreviews and pick up the Monday Nitro and Thunder Reviews Volume VI: July – December 1999 in e-book or paperback. Check out the information here:

<http://kbwrestlingreviews.com/2017/11/22/new-book-kbs-monday-nitro-and-thunder-reviews-volume-vi/>

And check out my Amazon author page with cheap wrestling books at:

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

NXT – January 10, 2018: This Doesn't Feel Right

NXT

Date: January 10, 2018

Location: Center Stage Theater, Atlanta, Georgia

Commentators: Mauro Ranallo, Nigel McGuinness, Percy Watson

We're on some hallowed ground tonight as NXT heads to the former home of WCW Saturday Night. The next three shows will be all about setting up Takeover: Philadelphia, which means we need some more matches announced. A good chunk of the card is already set but NXT somehow manages to make the shows building to the big show entertaining as well. Let's get to it.

The Undisputed Era is ready to start their year of dominance by taking out Sanity once and for all tonight. Adam Cole is ready to start becoming the next NXT Champion. Simple and to the point here with something that you would expect them to say. Just ignore the whole "the beginning of the era of undisputed" making O'Reilly sound like Yoda.

Opening sequence.

The ring is turned to the side here, meaning wrestlers come to a corner when they come down the aisle. It's an awesome visual and feels different, which is where NXT excels.

Shayna Baszler vs. Dakota Kai

This is both of their NXT in-ring debuts. Before the match we see a clip of Baszler randomly attacking Performance Center trainees for fun because that's the kind of villain she is. Baszler drives her into the corner to start and takes Kai down into an armbar. A stomp bends Kai's arm at a NASTY angle and that's a referee stoppage at 1:23. Total squash and Baszler looked awesome here.

Post match Baszler stays on her until Ember Moon makes the save.

The Authors of Pain are ready to take care of the Street Profits. Since

when can the Authors speak English?

General Manager William Regal talks to Baszler, saying that's not going to get her a title shot. Baszler: "We done here?"

Kassius Ohno vs. Raul Mendoza

They even shake hands to start in a really old school move. Ohno grabs some rollups for a few early near falls but Mendoza is too fast. Mendoza hurricanranas him into a side roll but gets his head elbowed off without too much effort. An inverted Gory Special has Mendoza in more trouble until he reverses into a victory roll.

Back up and Ohno charges into a forearm in the corner, followed by a springboard spinning armdrag to drop Kassius again. Mendoza is showing off some very nice high flying here, which is exactly what he should be doing in a match like this. Ohno shrugs him off though and the High Tension Elbow Strike (running jumping elbow to the back of the head) ends Mendoza at 4:26.

Rating: C. This is the kind of thing that both guys needed. Ohno isn't exactly a star in NXT but he's great for a role like this: making people look good and using his experience to put together some better matches. Mendoza on the other hand is a rather good high flier and can showcase himself well around here. Mentioning that he's been in so many matches against top quality talent shows that they're likely to give him a win soon, which could lead somewhere for him.

Zelina Vega held a mini press conference saying she and Andrade Cien Almas aren't worried about Johnny Gargano after beating him twice. That's a fairy tale and Almas is reality. Vega is amazing at this condescending heel stuff and she's made Almas that much better.

Johnny Gargano is thrilled to be #1 contender but here's Velveteen Dream to interrupt. Dream wants a thank you for allowing Gargano to get his spot in the competition because Dream would have won it with ease. Gargano needs to thank him because Dream deserves his spot.

The Street Profits loudly come into Regal's office and think they deserve

a Tag Team Title shot. Regal seems to agree so next week it's the Street Profits vs. the Authors of Pain in a #1 contenders match. More loudness ensues and Regal smiles.

Lio Rush vs. Lars Sullivan

This could hurt a lot. Rush dodges to start and even slaps Lars in the face. A kick to the jaw staggers Sullivan for a bit but he pulls Rush into the ropes to take over. Rush gets whipped hard into the corner but Lars misses a charge. That's about it for Rush though as one heck of a clothesline turns him inside out, followed by the Freak Accident for the pin at 1:54.

Post match Sullivan talks about destroying everyone until he ran into a different kind of force. That was Killian Dain and Sullivan wants to see him again. For now though, Rush takes a super Freak Accident to really hammer home the punishment.

The Undisputed Era has attacked Sanity in the back. The Era says that's it for the title shot.

Here's the Undisputed Era in the arena for a chat. Cole thinks they're missing something and Kyle asks where Sanity is. Maybe they forgot about their title shot tonight. Cole says they kicked the chaos out of Sanity but here's a livid Nikki Cross trying to get at the Era. Referees hold her back but so Regal comes out to cut the Era off again. The boss says the titles are on the line tonight and here's Roderick Strong to say he'll fight right now. Strong offers to go find a partner but someone interrupts to say he'll do it.

Tag Team Titles: Undisputed Era vs. Roderick Strong/Aleister Black

The teams are at different corners than the usual WWE formula with the champs on the left side closer to the hard camera. I don't remember the last time I've seen the corners changed in WWE. Fish and O'Reilly are defending and get cleared to the floor, sending us to a break before the bell.

Back with the bell ringing and Black kicking away at both champs. A knee

to Kyle's head gets two and Strong adds a dive to the floor. Back in and Black's Oklahoma roll gets two on Kyle, followed by an armbar to keep him in trouble. Strong comes in for a chinlock as the champs are still looking for their first offense. Fish finally takes Black's knee out and we take a break.

Back with Kyle holding the knee and Fish adding a slingshot hilo for two. An exploder suplex gives Fish two but Black kicks O'Reilly away. There's the double tag to bring in Strong and Fish as everything breaks down. The champs' Ax and Smash is broken up with a jumping knee to the face and everyone is down. Cue Cole to go after Black, who stalks him into the crowd. Back inside, the champs go High/Low to retain at 11:50.

Rating: C+. This didn't feel like the standard NXT main event but maybe they're saving the Sanity match for another time. It was entertaining for what it was though and thankfully NXT is smart enough to not put the titles on a thrown together team like you would see so often on the main shows. Fine main event, but it felt more like a big time house show.

Post match Black comes in for the brawl but gets taken out. An AA onto an open chair knocks Black cold. The Era poses but here's Regal to talk about Philadelphia's extreme history. At Takeover: Philadelphia, Cole vs. Black will be an Extreme Rules match. Cole and Regal stare each other down to end the show.

Overall Rating: C+. This show felt a little off from the norm for NXT but it still did everything it needed to do. The big story here was the arrival of Baszler (nailed it) and some more matches being teased for Takeover. NXT can fill in the gaps over the next few weeks and that's where they shine. Good enough show, but it didn't feel like it had the same flow that most of their episode do.

Results

Shayna Baszler b. Dakota Kai via referee stoppage

Kassius Ohno b. Raul Mendoza – High Tension Elbow Strike

Lars Sullivan b. Lio Rush – Freak Accident

Undisputed Era b. Roderick Strong/Aleister Black – High/Low to Strong

Remember to follow me on Twitter @kbreviews and pick up the Monday Nitro and Thunder Reviews Volume VI: July – December 1999 in e-book or paperback. Check out the information here:

<http://kbwrestlingreviews.com/2017/11/22/new-book-kbs-monday-nitro-and-thunder-reviews-volume-vi/>

And check out my Amazon author page with cheap wrestling books at:

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

Monday Night Raw – August 11, 2003: This Show Cascades To and Fro And Is Still Bad

Monday Night Raw

Date: August 11, 2003

Location: Mark of the Quad, Moline, Illinois

Commentators: Jonathan Coachman, Jerry Lawler

The slow crawl towards Summerslam continues and now we have an Elimination Chamber match for the Raw main event. Why anyone would want that is beyond me, but we also have Shane McMahon as the big hero of the show, fighting off the evil monster known as Kane. Other than that though, the show is looking pretty rough. Let's get to it.

On a side note, the show is now officially airing on SpikeTV instead of TNN.

Opening sequence.

Some pyro goes off signaling the network now being called SpikeTV. It's a better name and at least they don't waste any time on it.

Here's Eric Bischoff to brag about beating Shane last week, even having Lillian Garcia announce him as the winner again. After looking at a clip of the ending, Eric sucks up to the McMahon Family, calling Linda a "big breasted mature woman". The only member he doesn't respect is Shane, who is only here because of his last name. Shane is the Frank Sinatra Jr. of WWE (I'm hoping that's a topical joke because otherwise it's really just bad).

Instead here's the perfectly fine looking (save for a limp) JR to interrupt and mock Bischoff for throwing his weight around. He understands how important Kane is to this company though, which is why he's only going to sue Bischoff. Eric immediately fires Coach from his commentary spot so JR can have his spot back but here's Austin with a clipboard to interrupt.

After shaking JR's hand, Austin says he has a contract drawn up to help settle some differences. Austin whispers something to JR and then gets to the point: JR won't sue if Bischoff has a match tonight. Bischoff turns down a match with Shane so JR tells him to call a lawyer. That's enough to convince Eric to sign....a contract to face Kane tonight. Read the contract buddy.

So yeah, after watching last week's show focusing on Bischoff wrestling, the next week's show is the exact same thing. Let me guess: Lawler is going to be elated over this all night long. Also, Kane unmasked on June 23, took out Rob Van Dam, lit JR on fire, tombstoned Linda, and this is going to be his first actual match. After all that work building him up, they haven't actually done anything with him aside from using him as a chess piece in a story involving Bischoff.

The problem right now is between Austin, Bischoff, JR, Kane, Shane and Van Dam, I'm not sure what the big story is. In theory it's Kane vs. Shane down the line, but first we have to get through Kane vs. Van Dam. Rob would have been a good first victim a few weeks back, but that never

even started.

Then there's the Bischoff part, which doesn't really have an interesting payoff other than Shane beating him up. Kane has been a monster for over a month now and we're STILL waiting on him to have anything to do in the ring. Oh but Kevin Nash, who was feuding with Test for a little while, is getting a World Title match. Makes perfect sense.

Stacy Keibler/Scott Steiner vs. Rico/Miss Jackie

...what? If this is the option that made it to TV, what in the world was considered too bad to make it onto the show? Jackie watches Rico as he gets in ala Scott watching Stacy. Rico poses to start so Steiner forearmms him in the head, followed by the spinning belly to belly. The pushup elbow gets two and it's off to Jackie for the...showdown? Actually Stacy has to come in and egads this could be a nightmare.

They trade slaps until it's the pinfall reversal sequence for exactly the reason you would expect. Stacy gets two off a spinning kick to the face but Rico knees her in the back. A double clothesline puts both of them down but here's Test to jump Steiner. Rico snaps Stacy's throat over the top, leaving Jackie to drop a leg for the pin.

Rating: F. Well of course it was to set up more Steiner vs. Test. Rico and Jackie were somehow the better option here with Stacy not being anything resembling a wrestler and Jackie looking at least somewhat improved from last year (hard not to be but indeed better). The problem here of course is still Steiner vs. Test, which has been going on for over three months now and hasn't yet begun to be anything interesting. It needs to be dropped and both of them need to move on (perhaps to the unemployment line), though I'm kind of scared to know what could replace them.

Post match Test says this needs to end and wants to fight Steiner next week with Stacy on the line again. Stacy accepts in a hurry.

Flair doesn't want to face Goldberg tonight because he's out there all alone due to Evolution being barred from ringside. HHH basically ignores the whole thing and talks about the Elimination Chamber. Orton promises

that he'll retain because it's the two of them against four guys.

Kane arrives in the police van.

Dudley Boyz vs. La Resistance

Non-title. Brawl to start until Dupree hits D-Von with the American flag for the DQ in about thirty seconds.

Post match the American flag is broken and La Resistance drinks French wine.

Goldust comes up to Molly Holly (such a random pairing) in the back to say she likes gold too. Therefore, he has someone he'd like her to meet. Someone who is truly NOT boring. This brings in Lance Storm in Goldust paint and wig. Storm pulls out cue card, complete with the Tourette's Syndrome jokes. Molly leaves and Storm says this isn't working. Not to worry Goldust says, because they have sausages and midgets waiting on them. That's the second or third midgets joke in a week.

Shawn Michaels and Kevin Nash get in a not very heated argument over who is winning the title. Goldberg comes in and sets them straight but the two of them make threats. It's cute when Nash and Michaels pretend they're anything more than filler in that match.

Here's Intercontinental Champion Christian for a chat. That's not an error as Christian, who comes out to Booker T.'s entrance, won the title from Booker last night at a house show. Somehow that would be Booker's only title reign. You really would expect him to pick up the title again at some point but it was just the one time. As for tonight, Christian has found the perfect opponent for his first title defense, especially since we're now on SpikeTV.

Intercontinental Title: Christian vs. Spike Dudley

Spike is challenging in case you're a bit slow. Christian drops him ribs first across the top rope, followed by a gutbuster to continue the squashification. We hit an abdominal stretch with Christian having to lean down because Spike is so short. The hold is broken without much drama and Spike comes back with a bulldog for two. The running headbutt

to the ribs gets two and a top rope double stomp gets the same, this time with Christian needing the ropes to escape. Back up and an Unprettier plants Spike for the pin to retain.

Rating: D+. For a match based around the challenger's first name and nothing else, this could have been a lot worse. Spike can have a good enough match, even if there's no doubt that he's losing every single one of them. Christian getting the title back at a house show is still kind of odd but maybe Booker really was hurt. Or they just wanted to throw in a surprise, which works quite well in the right way, especially if it might help drive up house show attendance.

Bischoff tries to suck up to Kane and offers to lay down for him. Kane says they're doing this his way. Again, this is the best followup they have for Kane's huge push over the last few weeks.

JR replaces Coach on commentary.

Eric Bischoff vs. Kane

Bischoff lays down and JR is aghast. So now the announcers don't see what happens in the back? Kane grabs the chokeslam and JR is thrilled but Bischoff is sat back down and Kane walks out for the countout.

Post "match", Kane asks the fans if they want to see him destroy Bischoff. That seems to be what they want, but Kane is tired of doing what everyone else wants. Cue Rob Van Dam to go after Kane...and dive onto the barricade instead. Rob sends him into a chair but the Five Star only hits chair. Kane chairs him down and laughs. Well so much for Van Dam, but now we get to wait a few more weeks before he gets squashed at Summerslam.

Gail Kim says she turned on Trish because no one talked to her when she was champion and she wanted some attention. Fair enough actually.

Women's Title: Trish Stratus vs. Gail Kim vs. Molly Holly

Molly is defending. Trish goes to fight Gail on the floor, followed by a Chick Kick to Molly. A Thesz press drops Gail but Molly pulls Trish face first into the apron. The villains double suplex Trish as JR is sounding

just like his old self, despite being on commentary against doctors' orders. Trish gets tied in the Tree of Woe with Molly telling Gail to hit her, only to have Molly ax handle her down and get the pin to retain in a clever finish.

Flair is worried about facing Goldberg with no one helping him tonight. HHH has been talking to Bischoff though and Orton is guest referee. Wouldn't that likely mean the match, and therefore the beating, is going to go on longer?

Earlier today a little old lady was trying to get across a busy street when Rosey showed up to help her. He explains his name to her and gets hit in the ribs with a grocery bag. Hurricane comes in to say no good deed goes unpunished.

Austin comes in to toast Bischoff's victory and has a little fine print for him: the winner of Kane vs. Bischoff will face Shane McMahon at some point in the future. That might seem a little convenient, but Austin was in a win/win situation. Shane wanted to fight either guy and Austin would have gotten a good attraction either way. That's actually logical, even if it seems that they're stretching quite a bit to get to the ending they want.

Hurricane vs. Rodney Mack

Still no Theodore Long. Rodney shoulders him in the ribs to start and cuts off a charge with a powerslam. Mack dared to mock the Hurricane pose before slapping on a bearhug. Hurricane fights up with a crossbody but can't hit a chokeslam. Instead he goes with a high crossbody to put Mack away.

Rating: D. So much for Mack, but that was the case after the Goldberg feud anyway. Hurricane is a character who can work very well in certain circumstances and he can wrestle a very solid match, but there's only so much you can do in a situation like this one. I actually like the team with Rosey, though it's not something that would have much of a shelf life.

Post match Mack beats Hurricane down until Rosey makes the save. This

seems to confuse Hurricane, but to be fair it's probably confusing to have a 400lb Samoan in a home made superhero costume save you.

Video on the Elimination Chamber.

It's time for the Highlight Reel. Chris Jericho wants to set the record straight about his hair vs. hair match with Kevin Nash. The rules are very simple: when he beats Nash, Kevin has to shave his head. If Jericho somehow loses though, he'll shave every bit of hair off his face (meaning eyebrows only) because there's no way anyone is touching these gorgeous locks. Jericho: "Watch how it cascades around my face as I flick it to and fro."

Cue Nash with a metal briefcase to talk about how Jericho needs a makeover. Nash asks "Kerwin in the back" to put up some images on the Titantron. Jericho: "ONLY I CAN DO THAT!" Instead we put the clip on the Jeritron 5000, which is a shot of Jericho with his hair changing to various FUNNY styles. Jericho says Nash is funny but what's going to be funny is eliminating Nash from the Chamber. Then he'll take the title and put it back around his gorgeous waist.

Nash pulls out some electric clippers and wants an answer on hair vs. hair. Wasn't that already accepted? After threats of beating him up and cutting his hair right now, Jericho agrees to the match for next week. Nash fights off a cheap shot and hits a side slam before pulling out some gardening sheers. Jericho tries to hide underneath the ring but comes out with a fire extinguisher to blind Nash and bail. I believe Nash had to get his hair cut for a movie so this wasn't the biggest mystery in the world. At the same time it does add a personal issue to the Chamber and gives the fans a big match to look forward to on Raw.

Summerslam rundown.

Ric Flair vs. Goldberg

Anything goes with Randy Orton as guest referee. Orton slips some brass knuckles to Flair before Goldberg comes out. Flair wastes no time in hitting Goldberg in the jaw for a fast two and a belly to back suplex gets the same. Goldberg is right back up with a gorilla press for the

customary extra slow count. A clothesline gets the same, because Goldberg is so well known for going for multiple covers off run of the mill offense.

Goldberg yells at Orton and gets chaired in the back for no effect. Instead it's a shot to the knee to set up the Figure Four with Orton stomping on Goldberg as he makes the rope. Flair lets go for no apparent reason and stays on the knee but Goldberg spears them both down. Cue Shawn Michaels to superkick Orton, allowing Goldberg to Jackhammer Flair. Shawn grabs Orton's hand and slaps the mat three times for the pin.

Rating: D. So Goldberg can beat Flair and Orton up at the same time. That's some good information to know and I'm glad it took them two weeks to establish that fact. Goldberg could have speared Flair down and pinned him clean but why do what works with Goldberg when you can just throw everything together and take away what made Goldberg work in the first place?

Overall Rating: D-. Well it did get better from the Steiner match on but that's about as much as I can say about this one. The wrestling was a disaster as the big story continues to be the adventures of the battling bosses who can't actually fight, plus waiting on Kane vs. Shane, which isn't that thrilling in the first place. Then there's the Elimination Chamber, which has thrown most of the card into a tailspin. I'm not exactly looking forward to Summerslam at this point and the next few weeks aren't likely to make things much better.

Remember to follow me on Twitter @kbreviews and pick up the Monday Nitro and Thunder Reviews Volume VI: July – December 1999 in e-book or paperback. Check out the information here:

<http://kbwrestlingreviews.com/2017/11/22/new-book-kbs-monday-nitro-and-thunder-reviews-volume-vi/>

And check out my Amazon author page with cheap wrestling books at:

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