

Impact Wrestling – September 7, 2017: What's Spanish For Shut Up About AAA?

Impact Wrestling

Date: September 7, 2017

Location: Impact Zone, Orlando, Florida

Commentators: Jeremy Borash, Josh Matthews

As the company tries to go a week without some kind of controversy, here we are with more continuing adventures of a bunch of MMA fighters. That's the top story at the moment as American Top Team and Bobby Lashley continue to dominate the show, which seems to be setting up a big deal at Bound For Glory. In actual wrestling news, tonight Eli Drake defends the World Title against Matt Sydal. Let's get to it.

Opening sequence.

Caleb Konley/Trevor Lee vs. Sonjay Dutt/Petey Williams

Dutt armbars Konley to start before it's off to Petey to speed things up. As assisted Sliced Bread #2 gets two on Konley as everything breaks down early on. The villains are put in the Tree of Woe with Petey standing on both of them and singing O Canada. Petey gets caught in the wrong corner for some double teaming, only to slip away for the hot tag to Dutt a few seconds later.

The tornado DDT gets two on Konley and everything breaks down again. Another tornado DDT (this time with Petey being used as a launching pad) puts Konley down again (bad night for his head) and there's the Canadian Destroyer. Dutt's top rope splash puts him away at 7:24.

Rating: C+. Just four guys doing moves to each other but at least it was energetic. The division really isn't the best in the world right now and having someone like Williams, who was a star nearly fifteen years ago, isn't the best course of action. Granted the whole thing has been a mess

for years now so this is hardly anything new. Nice opener though.

LAX vs. John Bolin/Zachary Wentz

Non-title. The jobbers get stomped down in the corner as OVE is watching from the back. Bolin gets caught in a hanging Stunner/bicycle kick combination, only to have Wentz thrown onto him. The Street Sweeper ends Zachary at 1:37. Total squash.

Post match OVE comes out to challenge for the titles but Konnan says they'll do it in the Crash. That's cool with the brothers.

Taryn Terrell/Sienna vs. Gail Kim/Allie

Gail goes after Taryn to start but settles for some clotheslines on Sienna. A flapjack cuts Gail off though and it's Taryn coming in for a few cheap shots before handing it right back to Sienna. Taryn's running flip neckbreaker keeps Gail in trouble but she hurricanranas Sienna down and brings in Allie to clean house. Sliced Bread #2 gets two on Sienna as Braxton Sutter and KM brawl to the back. Allie goes up for a high crossbody but Sienna rolls through and grabs the tights for the pin at 4:24.

Rating: D+. I feel so sorry for Sienna. She's done what she can but as always, the division belongs to Gail and whomever she's feuding with because this company is obsessed with pushing her through the roof. Even Roman Reigns probably thinks the push is a bit too much. Hopefully they don't give her the title as a retirement present as she never needs to be near the thing again.

Post match Allie gets beaten down until Rosemary comes out for the save. Cue the debuting Taya Valkyrie for quite the impressive entrance. Taya gets in Sienna's face but knocks Rosemary down instead, setting up a double chickenwing faceplant. You can probably book the six Knockouts tag already.

Eli Drake is ready for Matt Sydal.

Here's Jim Cornette for a chat. Jim praises some of the talent including Johnny Impact before hyping up the main event. Cornette would put his

money on Sydal but here's Impact to interrupt. Impact gets straight to the point: he wants the winner of tonight's match. This brings out LAX with Low Ki leading the way.

Cornette doesn't think five against one is a good thing but Konnan gets in Johnny's face to say Impact's opinion doesn't mean anything. What's up with Konnan overlooking Low Ki for a title shot? Cornette says it has nothing to do with them being Latino and Low Ki is in line just like everyone else. The brawl is on with Johnny holding his own until security breaks it up.

Post break Cornette makes Impact vs. Low Ki for the #1 contendership.

Joseph Park tells Grado that there's a big problem with Laurel Van Ness being Canadian. Grado hugs Laurel but the wedding is off. He tells her not to cry but Laurel seems to snap again, despite Grado's high five.

Video on GFW's involvement in TripleMania. There's a focus on Lashley and Moose appearing in a battle royal. It was actually a team battle royal and their partner, Jeff Jarrett, isn't mentioned at all. Moose eliminated Bobby and tensions ran high.

Video on Johnny Impact being so dominant in AAA, where he's a triple champion. Impact successfully defended his titles in a three way ladder match and says his gold means more than Drake's.

Video on the Sexy Star/Rosemary incident from TripleMania as we hit twenty minutes of packages on the show. Sexy Star was never mentioned.

Video on how important the talent relationship between the companies is.

Next week it's OVE vs. LAX for the titles from Tijuana.

Video on Dezmond Xavier, who credits his military training with getting him into wrestling.

Pagano is coming.

Eddie Edwards is the first American to win the GHC (Pro Wrestling Noah from Japan) Title.

Video on Garza Jr.

Richard Justice is still exercising after being hurt last week.

Matt Sydal is ready to win the title in what is his official cash-in for beating Lashley.

GFW World Title: Eli Drake vs. Matt Sydal

Drake is defending and shoves him around to start but Sydal doesn't seem too shaken. Some kicks to the leg set up la majistral for two on Drake as we talk about TripleMania some more. The champ hammers away to take over again as this isn't exactly thrilling so far. A pop up Big Ending (with Sydal flipping backwards to land on his back instead of his stomach) gets two and we take a break.

Back with Drake elbowing him in the chest and hitting a powerslam. We hit the chinlock for a bit before Drake's jumping neckbreaker gets two more. Drake gets posted though and Sydal scores with some chops for a breather. Eli stomps him right back down and grabs a DDT for two.

A kneedrop only hits mat though and Sydal hits a backdrop to put both guys down. Matt's standing moonsault gets two and an ELI SUCKS chant starts up. The top rope double knees put Drake down for two so Adonis throws in the title. Sydal gets in a jumping knee to the face for another near fall. The shooting star is loaded up but Adonis offers a distraction, setting up a belt shot to the head. Drake adds the Gravy Train to retain the title at 19:28.

Rating: C-. The ending was better but it wasn't the most thrilling match in the world. Drake getting a title defense under his belt helps though and this felt like a big enough deal. Adonis is fine in his role too and works as some extra muscle. Also, it's nice to have the main event finish without the MMA guys coming in to take all the attention.

Overall Rating: C. This show was rolling along until it hit the wall that was the TripleMania stuff. That was literally over twenty minutes of just talking about a show where the GFW talents were supporting players, save for Impact. If you cut that WAY down and focus on other stuff that

actually deserves some attention (assuming the promotion actually has that), this is a much better show. The fast paced first forty five minutes are good but outside of that, the show fell apart.

Results

Sonjay Dutt/Petey Williams b. Caleb Konley/Trevor Lee – Top rope splash to Konley

LAX b. John Bolin/Zachary Wentz – Street Sweeper to Wentz

Sienna/Taryn Terrell b. Allie/Gail Kim – Reversed crossbody with a handful of tights

Eli Drake b. Matt Sydal – Gravy Train

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Monday Night Raw – April 7,

2003: Aloha Terrible Summer

Monday Night Raw

Date: April 7, 2003

Location: Bradley Center, Milwaukee, Wisconsin

Commentators: Jim Ross, Jerry Lawler

We're in a new era now as last week saw Goldberg debut to attack the Rock, likely setting up the main event of the upcoming Backlash. Other than that we have a big tag match this week between Booker T./Shawn Michaels vs. HHH/Chris Jericho. Other than that we need to see what else is in the cards for the pay per view. Let's get to it.

We open with a long recap of Rock beating Austin at Wrestlemania and then getting speared the next night.

Opening sequence.

Women's Title: Trish Stratus vs. Jazz

Trish is defending and gets taken down without too much difficulty to start. There's a little too much trash talking though and Trish kicks her away for a breather. A Chick Kick sends Jazz outside for a Thesz press from the apron. Back in and an ax handle to the back drops Trish before the fisherman's buster (minus a lot of the busting) gets two. The STF sends Trish over to the ropes again and it's time to get fired up. Another Chick Kick is good for another two and the Stratusphere gets the same. Stratusfaction (with Jazz lifting Trish up) gets the pin though Jazz's foot is on the rope.

Rating: D. This is one of the better matches the division has at the moment (which isn't saying much given that the division is all of three people) so having them set up a rematch makes sense. The division is dying for some fresh talent at this point though and this feud is only going to get them so far without it.

Rock arrives and goes in to see Eric Bischoff. He doesn't want to talk about Wrestlemania though because his mind is on Goldberg spearing him

last week. Goldberg is on his way here so Rock mocks the catchphrases and promises a beating later tonight.

Rob Van Dam and Kane are glad to have won the Tag Team Titles. Kane celebrated by taking a skunk into his basement...and I'm glad Rob cuts him off there.

Teddy Long and Rodney Mack (Jazz's real life husband) come up to Jazz and offer her a spot on the team. Jazz accepts and joins the battle against bigotry.

Rock runs into Trish (Rock: "Aloha mama.") and asks if she's sweaty and wet from thinking about him. It was just because of her match apparently and here's Jeff Hardy. Rock refuses him an autograph but Jeff would rather talk about Goldberg last week. Jeff vs. Rock is on for later in a match that would be incredibly different just a few years later.

Chief Morely vs. Rob Van Dam

Part of Morely's video is Bischoff on the phone with Morely nowhere in sight. I get that it's Morely and no one is going to pay attention but that was approved by someone on the production team? Rob clotheslines him a few times to start and gets a great looking German suplex for two. Morely's neckbreaker gives him a breather though and he rolls some suplexes for a delayed near fall of his own.

That means it's time for a chinlock for a bit before Rob gets in some kicks and the monkey flip. Rolling Thunder connects but here's Lance Storm to put a foot on the rope. Rob kicks him down but decides to dive onto Storm instead, allowing Morely to get in a DDT for the pin. A DDT? On a new champion? It really is 2003.

Rating: D. I'm still trying to get over a DDT finishing Van Dam. The ending wasn't clean but Morely can't even hit his finisher to win? Anyway, on top of a stupid finish and an annoying loss that didn't need to happen so soon, it was made even worse by the fact that the match wasn't any good. Just bad in general here.

Van Dam cleans house with no real effort.

Booker is getting taped up when Shawn comes up to say nothing of note about tonight's main event.

Ivory and Shawn Michaels went to a Naval base.

Scott Steiner vs. Christopher Nowinski

Before the match, Nowinski goes on a rant about patriotism making everyone blind to reality and how terrorism can't be stomped out by attacking sovereign nations. Steiner beats him up on the floor as the announcers distance themselves from Nowinski's comments as fast as they can. Nowinski gets slammed on the ramp and put in the Recliner with Lawler calling Nowinski's comments anti-American. I'll let you make your own comments on that one.

Video on Goldberg.

Christian comes in to see Rock and tries to get a DVD autographed. That's all cool with Rock until he finds out it's for Christian. Not THAT Christian of course but rather a friend of his. Rock suggests some tips on owning the room (Rock: "Not this room. This is the Rock's room.") and Christian dubs himself Born Again. Uh, yeah. Anyway Christian thinks the people thinks the Rock is scared of Goldberg so Rock is going to show them next.

Trish kisses Jeff Hardy for luck.

The Rock vs. Jeff Hardy

Rock doesn't think much of the paint job so he slugs away to take over. More right hands allow Rock to get in some dancing but he stops due to a ROCKY SUCKS chant. There's a Samoan drop to put Hardy down but Rock charges into a boot in the corner. Jeff scores with a middle rope dropkick as Lawler yells about Jeff wearing too much makeup.

Some clotheslines and lame forearms to the back look to set up the Whisper in the Wind but Rock is a bit too smart for that. Jeff falls down trying a reverse Twist of Fate but is able to hit his own People's Elbow. A DDT and the Rock Bottom end Jeff. Well to be fair, Rock is no Chief Morely.

Rating: D. Egads Jeff is actually getting worse. There's no energy or pop to the vast majority of his offense and the forearms to the back were a disaster. Thankfully Rock can basically do anything at this point so it could have been a lot worse. Still though, I have no idea who can think Jeff is any good at this point, save for the preteen girl audience.

Rock calls out Goldberg post match so here he is, walking through the pyro in a cool visual. Before any violence can break out, Rock turns down a match at Backlash and leaves. Christian tries to sneak in on Goldberg but gets speared down to almost no reaction. Rock's cheap shot has even less effect and Rock bails again. Goldberg got almost no reaction at all here. JR: "I smell a chicken****!" King: "JR!"

Rock leaves and yells at Terri for asking why he's gone. Actually hang on as he will give an answer. Rock: "You want to know why? Because."

Kane vs. Dudley Boyz

Tagging is required here so Kane hammers on D-Von, then does the same to Bubba. D-Von crotches Kane from the floor but doesn't seem happy about having to do so. Kane fights back with some clotheslines and a backdrop. The top rope clothesline gets two on D-Von but the double chokeslam is countered into the 3D.

Rating: D. I can live with a great team beating a champion in a handicap match with their finisher but it still could have been done later. The match was as good as it was going to be for a three minute Dudleys vs. Kane match, though that doesn't make the story any more interesting. It's still just Val Venis/Lance Storm/the Dudleys vs. Van Dam/Kane. The division needs an interesting team and they need it in a hurry.

Van Dam comes out for the save but Storm and Morely cut him off, setting up the big beatdown with the aide of a chair. For people who are forced into being heels, Bubba and D-Von don't seem to mind the excessive violence.

Test yells at Goldust for screwing up with Stacy last week. He hasn't gotten any in a week so Goldust needs to HBO: help a brother out. Since when have Test and Goldust been brothers, or even distant cousins? Post

break, Goldust tells Stacy that it was his Playboy and Test wasn't talking to Torrie. Test says he doesn't read those magazines but Goldust stooges him off again, this time about a magazine in Test's bag. This whole thing feels like a bad rib on someone that's only funny to the people writing it.

Here's Eric Bischoff coming out in Austin's truck to Austin's music. Eric, in Austin's vest, rips into Austin for hiding his medical condition and is very happy with the firing. Austin was a liability that Bischoff couldn't risk and he doesn't feel bad about anything he did. This brings Bischoff to JR's rant from last week (including the stupid line of Bischoff not being able to find anyone who could beat Austin, the night after he lost to Rock) and Eric wants JR to come up to him man to man.

JR meant every word of what he said last week and quits. Eric yells that he's fired as he leaves to wrap this up. I'm still not angry at Bischoff for benching someone who admitted they had a bad neck and back. That doesn't make him a heel, no matter how much WWE seems to think that it does.

Goldust vs. Steven Richards

Lawler is on commentary on his own so this could be interesting. Richards grabs a neckbreaker and it's a suplex into a chinlock. Thankfully Coach comes out to join commentary as Goldust fights back and gets two off something like a Sky High. The Curtain Call is broken up and Richards calls for a belt. Since she's no longer champion, Goldust uses the distraction to grab a powerslam for the fast pin. Just a match.

Ric Flair tells Chris Jericho and HHH to get along tonight.

La Resistance, the evil French team of Rene Dupree and Sylvan Grenier, are coming. This would be around the time France wouldn't fight in Iraq so FRANCE IS EVIL!

HHH/Chris Jericho vs. Booker T./Shawn Michaels

HHH is going to put Booker over here isn't he? It's a brawl to start with HHH being knocked outside and Jericho being catapulted out next to him.

We settle down to Booker elbowing HHH down for two before it's off to Shawn to work on the arm. Jericho comes in and gets armdragged down as well as things break down a bit. It's too early for Sweet Chin Music or a Pedigree but Flair low bridges Shawn to the floor. And now, to the parking lot where a limo arrives.

Back from a break with HHH getting two off the jumping knee to the face. Jericho comes in and does Shawn's pose but misses an elbow. It's back to HHH for a sleeper, followed by Jericho's jumping back elbow to the jaw. Shawn finally gets in a hard shot to the face to make the hot tag off to Booker.

House is cleaned in a hurry and a DDT gets two on HHH. There's the Spinarooni and a Bookend to Jericho but HHH gets in another knee, allowing Jericho to grab the Walls. Shawn makes the save with Sweet Chin Music but HHH clotheslines him to the floor. The Pedigree is countered into a jackknife cover to give Booker the pin.

Rating: D+. Nothing special here and, of course, HHH gives up the pin in a match that means nothing, despite the fact that he already beat Booker in the important match. There's just no reason for HHH to not drop the title to him at Wrestlemania, as it's not like HHH can't just get it back in April because he must be the champion long term no matter what.

Post match the beatdown is on with Shawn being tied to the top rope. Hurricane tries to make a save but the returning Kevin Nash makes the real save. HHH grabs the hammer but Nash's chair scares him away to end the show. So there's the reason Booker isn't likely getting a rematch at Backlash.

Overall Rating: D-. So to recap: Booker T. loses in the big match but gets to win a tag match while Goldberg and Kevin Nash are heading straight to the main event. Goldberg is at least a logical move but Nash? The guy who can't go two months without a career killing injury and draws no reaction the rare times he's healthy?

Couple that with the popular Tag Team Champions getting pinned a week after winning the belts, Test getting no sex because of Goldust and being told that if you don't completely support the military that you're a

horrible person and there's not much to look forward to. It's going to be a very long summer and I have a bad feeling it's only going to get worse.

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NXT – September 6, 2017: Depends on the Version

NXT

Date: September 6, 2017

Location: Full Sail University, Winter Park, Florida

Commentators: Nigel McGuinness, Percy Watson, Mauro Ranallo

There's a lot going on around NXT at the moment but the big story is the status of Asuka and the NXT Women's Title. While still undefeated, Asuka has suffered a broken collar bone, which would keep her on the shelf for a long time, though she'll be here tonight. Other than that we have Adam Cole, Bobby Fish and Kyle O'Reilly as the ROHNEW0. Let's get to it.

We open with a recap of Hideo Itami losing at Takeover: Chicago and turning heel as a result. Kassius Ohno had been trying to calm him down

for months but it eventually turned violent. Tonight they're squaring off in a No DQ match.

Opening sequence.

Andrade Cien Almas vs. Cezar Bononi

Zelina Vega is on commentary and says she's known Almas for seven years. Their relationship seems to be business only at the moment. Bononi drives him into the corner, only to have Almas light him up with a chop. Vega takes credit for the aggression as Bononi comes back with a clothesline and dropkick. Not bad athleticism for someone his size. Almas gets in a knee to the back in the corner and the hammerlock DDT ends Bononi at 2:53.

We look back at Cole and company attacking Drew McIntyre last week and William Regal chasing them off.

Regal says the trio knows this can't happen again and all fighting will take place in the ring.

An interviewer is standing outside Asuka's door when the Velveteen Dream comes up to say that he'll speak soon about someone who caught his eye in Brooklyn.

Lars Sullivan vs. ???/???/???

Sullivan doesn't want tagging and tosses all three of them around like they're something that is tossed around with ease. Two of them are thrown into each other in the corner for a splash and it's three straight standing Boss Man Slams for the pin at 1:18.

Post match No Way Jose comes out to say Sullivan messed up the conga line in Brooklyn and it's payback time. Sullivan beats him down too.

There's something odd here. On the live stream version of the show, this aired normally. On the on demand version though, about forty seconds into the match, we cut away to the clip that would follow the match. There's no mention of the end of the match or Jose's involvement and it just picks up like nothing happened. I've never seen that before.

Johnny Gargano says Brooklyn was amazing and the DIY shirt didn't change anything. He just lost focus. Riddick Moss and Tino Sabbatelli come in to say they broke up DIY at Full Sail. Gargano laughs it off and offers to fight one of them next week.

Video on Sonya DeVille.

We go to a clip of Sanity being laid out in the parking lot.

Sanity doesn't care about who these three are or think they are. The only thing that matters is chaos.

Zeda vs. Sonya DeVille

Zeda is from the Mae Young Classic. Sonya gets rolled up for an early one before easily taking her down. A slam sends Zeda bailing to the floor and a kick to the chest drops her back inside. That's enough for Sonya as a triangle choke ends Zeda at 1:42.

Earlier today, Regal was watching an in-ring workout at the Performance Center when Ruby Riot came in to ask for a handicap match against Billie Kay and Peyton Royce. Regal won't do that but if Ruby can find a partner, she can have a tag match.

Kassius Ohno vs. Hideo Itami

No DQ due to Itami hitting him low to break up their previous match. Ohno wastes no time in slamming him down and dropping a leg before kicking Itami in the head. Itami pops back up and backdrops him to the apron, followed by a ram into the post. Back in and Itami nails a running hesitation dropkick in the corner. It's already chair time with Itami holding it up to block the rolling elbow as we take a break.

Back with Itami slowly kicking him in the face and telling Ohno to bring it. Ohno kicks him in the face a bit harder, followed by a Shining Wizard. They're certainly liking the head strikes so far. The GTS doesn't work so Ohno BLASTS him with the elbow to knock Itami outside. Another forearm (Ohno: "HOW MUCH DOES THIS HURT???") sends Itami up the ramp but he suplexes Ohno right back down.

Itami hits another hesitation dropkick into the chair into Ohno's face for a near fall. The knockout makes Itami demand respect (From the chair perhaps?) but the GTS still won't work. Instead Ohno hits a heck of a low blow, followed by another rolling elbow for the pin at 12:21.

Rating: B-. This needed some more time and the ending really surprised me (not a bad thing). Ohno hasn't really gotten a big win in months now so this should revitalize him for a good while. They didn't do much with the stipulation until the ending, but that's what the story called for here. It was good, but certainly nothing great or with a big feeling.

Next week: RubyRiot/??? vs. Billie Kay/Peyton Royce and Pete Dunne defends the UK Title against Wolfgang.

Regal brings out Asuka for the big update. The fans cut her off with a THANK YOU ASUKA chant before she talks about all the great superstars she's fought around here. She's grown so much around here and is grateful for NXT. Regal praises her for her efforts in NXT but says people have started to recognize her lack of competition. She is now in negotiations with both Raw and Smackdown, which draws a heck of a YES chant.

However, that means she's stepping down as Women's Champion. The locker room comes out to the stage to applaud her (Riot claps weirdly) and Asuka says NXT comes with her everywhere. Ember Moon comes to the ring for a big hug and here's HHH, flanked by a guy carrying flowers. He can carry Great Khali but not a bouquet?

They trade the title for the flowers and HHH announces her as the undefeated NXT Women's Champion at 523 days to end the show. I'm not sure what needs to be added here. She's dominated NXT and is going to be a big deal on the main roster too. I'm not wild on vacating titles but she deserves this and the injury was a perfect way out.

Overall Rating: B. Odd edit in the Sullivan match aside, this was a rather good show. The Asuka part was especially good and the main event was a nice brawl. I could have gone for another trio appearance but it's never been NXT's style to have the same acts week to week. Good show here and we'll get back to the big stuff later on.

Results

Andrade Cien Almas b. Cezar Bononi – Hammerlock DDT

Lars Sullivan b. ???/???/??? – Side Slam

Sonya DeVille b. Zeda – Triangle choke

Kassius Ohno b. Hideo Itami – Rolling elbow

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205 Live – September 5, 2017: If You Don't Like It...At Least There's Not Many Of You

205 Live

Date: September 5, 2017

Location: Denny Sanford Premiere Center, Sioux Falls, South Dakota

Commentators: Nigel McGuinness, Vic Joseph

It's a big night here as we have a new commentator to replace Corey Graves, but more importantly we have a fatal five way for the #1 contendership to the Cruiserweight Title. The survivor of tonight's main event will be facing Neville for the title at No Mercy 2017 in what could be a very interesting match depending who gets the show. Let's get to it.

All five of the participants in the five way (Cedric Alexander, Tony Nese, Enzo Amore, Brian Kendrick and Gran Metalik) say they'll win.

Opening sequence.

TJP vs. Ariya Daivari

Rich Swann, with popcorn in hand, comes out for commentary. By that I mean he puts a chair on the table and has a seat. Daivari takes advantage of the distraction and stomps away in the corner, only to have TJP swing through the ropes to avoid falling to the floor. Back in and a kick to the leg ties TJP in the Tree of Woe, allowing Daivari to grab a reverse DDT for two.

We hit the double arm crank for a bit before TJP hits the spinning spring forearm into the nipup. They finally head outside with Daivari glaring at Swann for no apparent reason (must be a popcorn hater). Daivari misses the frog splash and gets caught with the Detonation Kick for the pin at 4:10.

Rating: D+. Just a step above a squash here as TJP vs. Swann continues. They're likely setting up a big blowoff match though I'm not sure how interesting that really is. There's no real hatred between the two of them and it's just likely to be a good match rather than an interesting one.

Post match Swann tells TJP he wants a match next week and throws in a dab.

We look back at last week's No DQ match with Kendrick beating Jack Gallagher to a bloody pulp.

Here's Drew Gulak for a chat before his match. After the CAPTAIN UNDERPANTS chant, Gulak talks about not being pleased with being left out

of the main event. To explain his issues, he's got a PowerPoint presentation! He has a plan for a better 205 Live, starting with #1: no jumping off the top rope. Point #2: no jumping off the middle rope. #3: never mind as it's time for a match.

Drew Gulak vs. Akira Tozawa

I guess Tozawa is more of a notepad guy. Gulak headlocks him down to start before a dropkick sends Drew bailing to the corner. Tozawa follows him out but gets sent hard into the barricade as Gulak is being far more aggressive here than usual. A bow and arrow hold stays on Tozawa's back before a bottom rope stomp to the back (not the top or the middle mind you) keeps him down. Tozawa fights up and sends him outside for the suicide dive. A rollup gives Drew a breather, only to have Tozawa kick him in the head. The top rope backsplash gives Tozawa the pin at 6:39.

Rating: B-. Gulak was WAY better than usual here, partially due to some extra aggression. Or maybe because he had an upgraded opponent with Tozawa, who is certainly better than most of the cruiserweights with the resume to back it up. I liked this one quite a bit and again, if Gulak gets enough of a push, he could be something around here.

Enzo Amore says he has the gift of gab and will work "shmarter" to win the title shot tonight. Neville comes in to say he still doesn't think much of Enzo. Amore promises to win the title at No Mercy. Why are we bothering with the five way again?

Cedric Alexander vs. Tony Nese vs. Enzo Amore vs. Gran Metalik vs. Brian Kendrick

Elimination rules for the title shot at No Mercy. Everyone looks at Enzo so he hits the floor, which should already tell you how this match is going to end. Cedric launches Metalik into a double dropkick to send both villains outside, leaving Alexander and Metalik to jump over each other. Metalik walks the ropes to dropkick Cedric but Nese pulls Gran outside for a staredown with Cedric.

That's fine with Alexander who scores with a dropkick as everyone else continues to vanish for long stretches at a time. You can still hear Enzo

running his mouth though, just in case you were worried about his absence. Nese catches Cedric in a backbreaker but Enzo runs in to roll Tony up for two. Kendrick suplexes Enzo to the floor and FINALLY gets back in the ring to help Nese double team Enzo. You know, the real threat in this match.

A double superkick knocks Enzo outside so it's Metalik and Alexander diving back in. Cedric catches Metalik in a C4 to put everyone down. Alexander heads up top and of course that means it's a Tower of Doom with everyone not named Enzo involved, including Metalik adding a sunset bomb to really add some impact. Enzo's dive onto Kendrick and Nese is pulled out of the air and he's tossed over the announcers' table for a crash. Kendrick decks Nese from behind, setting a new record for fastest broken alliance.

Metalik dives onto Kendrick and we get the ultra rare (as in probably for the first time ever) 205 chant. Back in and Cedric hits a quick Lumbar Check to get rid of Nese and get us down to four. Metalik tries a handspring but dives right into another Lumbar Check to make it three (note that Alexander missed most of it but got a very deep cover to make up for it in a nice touch). Kendrick comes in with Sliced Bread and the Captain's Hook but Cedric FINALLY makes the rope for the break. The third Lumbar Check is good for the third elimination....and here's Enzo to roll Cedric up with a handful of trunks for the pin at 14:48.

Rating: B. This was exactly what you would expect. It's still entertaining but Enzo is the most recent obvious winner in the history of obvious winners and there's....well there probably is something wrong with that but I think you get the idea at this point. Alexander was really shining here and while I still think he would have been a great choice to face Neville for the title, it's clearly Amore's time and there's no reason to not give him the shot.

Overall Rating: B-. I'm not sure what else you were expecting here as we move full steam ahead into the Enzo Amore era. The old system didn't work so this is probably the right course. You won't like this if you were a fan of the focus being on the in-ring product but it's not like many people were watching it in the first place. These changes were required

and there's just no way around it.

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New Column: Roman Reigns Should Buy John Cena a Christmas Card

<https://wrestlingrumors.net/kbs-review-roman-reigns-buy-john-cena-christmas-card/>

Those promos have a silver lining and they could be the answer to the Roman problem.

Smackdown – September 5, 2017: The Shane McMahon/Kevin Owens Hour

Smackdown

Date: September 5, 2017

Location: Denny Sanford Premiere Center, Sioux Falls, South Dakota

Commentators: Corey Graves, Tom Phillips, Byron Saxton

The march towards the Cell continues and we have a new commentator to help us get there. The big story tonight is Randy Orton vs. Shinsuke Nakamura for a future shot at Jinder Mahal. Other than that we'll be having more on Shane McMahon vs. Kevin Owens, which only exists for the sake of having Shane in the Cell again. Let's get to it.

Opening sequence.

Tom Phillips explains that JBL has left on good terms and introduces Corey Graves as the new analyst. Nothing wrong with that.

Randy Orton says he's seen a bunch of stars come and go so Nakamura is nothing new.

Shinsuke Nakamura says the title is his destiny.

Carmella and James Ellsworth are here for her match against Natalya but Kevin Owens comes out to say he'll be referee. Cue Shane McMahon to say this isn't happening again. He's not going to let Owens take over like he did last week and he's certainly not having Owens become a referee. Shane talks about Owens blaming him for all of his problems. We even go all the way back to Owens being handed the Universal Title a year ago.

Owens thinks this is all about Shane wanting attention from his daddy. That's why he brings out his kids and has them dance around. That's a major red line for Shane so Owens talks about Shane diving off the Cell and surviving the helicopter crash. Shane's whole family would have been better off if he hadn't survived that crash, including his kids. The

beating is on and Owens gets knocked over the table before it's broken up.

Post break, Owens is helped to the back when he runs into Daniel Bryan. Owens says this really is going to become the Kevin Owens Show because he's going to sue the McMahon Family for everything they have. Daniel says there has to be something else Owens can do so Kevin says he'll just press criminal charges against Shane instead.

Carmella vs. Natalya

Non-title. Carmella snaps off a headscissors to start and a dropkick gets two. We take an early break and come back with Natalya fighting out of a bodyscissors. Carmella superkicks her back down and Ellsworth throws her the briefcase. She screams no and Natalya grabs a rollup for the pin at 6:19.

Rating: D. Barely enough to rate here but technically you could see it due to that stupid picture in picture thing during the break. This was all angle of course due to the Ellsworth stuff and I still have no idea why he's out there with her. I mean, I get it from his perspective but what did Carmella gain from him?

Post match Carmella yells at him for being such a screwup and call him a charity case. They're done.

Conor's Cure video.

Here's the reinvented Dolph Ziggler, who looks just like he has for years. Ziggler says no one appreciates what he can do in the ring. These people would rather sit on their hands unsatisfied while he's right here in front of them. The fans would rather have some dumb gimmick. Ziggler leaves and here's John Cena's music....with Ziggler doing Cena's entrance. Ziggler holds up a Cena hat to the camera: "We're on Smackdown Live! BUY THIS BABY!"

If that doesn't work, we can try this. Cue Ziggler to Pomp and Circumstance with a good looking blonde and a bad robe. That's not it either so Ziggler has one more idea. This time it's Naomi's Glow

entrance, complete with wig. Ziggler says that doesn't work either so it's the fans' fault and he's done. I think I get what they're going for here but it feels like a YouTube video rather than a storyline.

Sami Zayn vs. Aiden English

Sami headscissors him down to start but misses a high crossbody, allowing Aiden to grab a rollup for the clean pin at 1:05.

Post match Aiden tries to sing again but gets chased off. He manages to keep singing even as he begs Sami not to hurt him.

Bryan is upset by what happened with Shane when New Day comes in, showing off their new underwear (for sale of course). The Usos come in as well and announce that it's going to be a street fight against New Day next week for the titles. The tag teams leave and Bryan gets a phone call from someone who says something has to be done in the ring. Bryan says he'll do it right now but he's not pleased.

Here's Bryan (with no music) to the ring. Bryan calls Shane to the ring so here's the boss, also without music. Daniel asks Shane what he's thinking and talks about all the times he's had to swallow his pride as boss. You can't run Smackdown doing things like he wants. Shane apologizes and says there's no coming back once you cross a line about his kids. He asks Bryan what would happen if he was in Shane's place but Bryan says don't put him in that place. The call from before the break was from Vince, who has indefinitely suspended Shane.

Jinder Mahal doesn't care who he faces.

Tye Dillinger vs. Baron Corbin

AJ Styles is on commentary. Corbin heads outside to yell at him so Tye dives onto Baron to take over early on. A clothesline sends Corbin outside again and we take a break. Back with Dillinger fighting out of a chinlock and scoring with a forearm. The Tyebreaker doesn't work and Corbin sends him outside for a kick to the head. A chokeslam is countered into a rollup for two and Tye hammers away in the corner. Corbin hits him in the throat though (AJ: "CHEAP SHOT!") and the End of Days is enough

for the pin on Tye at 7:40.

Rating: D+. Tye got in some offense here so it was far from a squash but the winner wasn't exactly a secret here. Corbin vs. Styles for the title should be fine and it's nice to see that Corbin's punishment seems to be over, or at least slowing down. To be fair, Corbin going after the US Title makes more sense than the World Title anyway so this is the right call.

Post break AJ tells Dillinger that he has the US Title shot next week. That's the third title match on the card.

Video on Bobby Roode.

Ellsworth runs into Carmella in the back and begs her forgiveness. Carmella says from now on, they're doing things her way. She kisses him and then slaps the taste out of his mouth.

Shinsuke Nakamura vs. Randy Orton

The winner gets Mahal, who is watching in a sky box, at Hell in a Cell. The threat of an RKO sends Nakamura bailing into the corner and Orton offers a smile. Nakamura does his head on the chest but Orton tries the draping DDT, sending Nakamura to the floor as we take a break. Back with Nakamura elbowing his way out of a chinlock but getting dropped onto the announcers' table to keep Orton in control.

We hit another chinlock until Mahal kicks him in the head to get a breather. The knees in the corner keep Orton in trouble but he comes back with his backbreaker. Nakamura gets caught on top for the superplex but Orton can't follow up. That earns him a COME ON and Nakamura starts with the knees.

Kinshasa is countered into the powerslam and Orton is shocked by the kickout. Now the hanging DDT works but the RKO is countered into a cross armbreaker (nice). A triangle choke has Orton in trouble though it's not all the way in. Orton breaks it up with a powerbomb, only to eat Kinshasa for the pin and the title shot at 13:26.

Rating: B. Good though somewhat predictable match here as there was no

way they were doing Orton vs. Mahal again. Nakamura seems like a good option to win the title as Mahal has done just about all he can with the belt. The fact that he's been called repetitive and someone who does the same thing every time tells you a lot about the problem with his reign.

Nakamura looks a bit shaken up but gets to his feet.

Owens is in the back when Bryan comes up to him. This was just the beginning because next week, Smackdown is Owens' personal playground. No one can do anything about it, but Bryan has a surprise of his own: Vince is here next week.

Overall Rating: D+. This was a very flat show with a focus on two stories that aren't too thrilling in Carmella/Ellsworth and Owens/Shane. It doesn't help that they've all but made up the graphics for Owens vs. Shane inside the Cell and are waiting for the actual announcement. That being said, we have three title matches set for next week and that should breath some life into a show that really needs it at this point.

Results

Natalya b. Carmella – Rollup

Aiden English b. Sami Zayn – Rollup

Baron Corbin b. Tye Dillinger – End of Days

Shinsuke Nakamura b. Randy Orton – Kinshasa

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Monday Night Raw – September 4, 2017: A Labor of Love

Monday Night Raw

Date: September 4, 2017

Location: CenturyLink Center, Omaha, Nebraska

Commentators: Michael Cole, Corey Graves, Booker T.

As has been the case in recent weeks, we're coming in with a big match on the card. In this case it's Jeff Hardy making a return to singles action as he challenges Miz for the Intercontinental Title. Other than that we also have a showdown as Braun Strowman faces Big Show inside a steel cage. Let's get to it.

We open with a long recap of the John Cena vs. Roman Reigns promo last week. The more I think about it, the more I like it for Reigns. More on this later this week.

John Cena vs. Jason Jordan

Before the match, we look at Cena answering an open challenge from Kurt Angle fifteen years ago in his debut match. The fans are actually behind Cena, which should tell you a lot about Jordan's future. Jason grabs an early takedown and grabs a waistlock. Cena can't do much with him to start until a hard clothesline drops Jason without much effort. A suplex gets two on Jordan, followed by a hard whip into the corner for the same as we take a break.

Back with Jordan hitting his own suplexes and that's enough for Cena, who initiates the finishing sequence. Jordan's rollup is countered into the STF but he reverses into something like a Crossface. Cena powers out

(because he's Cena) and reverses another suplex into a crossbody. That's enough for Cena though as he grabs the AA for the pin at 11:38.

Rating: B-. These performances make Jordan look like a star but the whole being Angle's son thing is really not doing him any favors. It's not an effective story and I think WWE is starting to get that. Hopefully they build Jordan up and then do something to get rid of the Angle connection because it's not doing much for him.

Post match Roman Reigns comes out for a chat. Back from a break with Roman asking why it took a veteran twenty minutes to beat a rookie. I don't think Reigns knows A, what a rookie is or B, how to tell time. Cena says Roman is starting to ask questions and that's the worst thing he could do. They're distracting him and he's out here with his zipper down. Reigns: "I busted it actually. Big dog."

Cena promises that Reigns will get his answers at No Mercy, either by a guy who has lost his steps or someone who has been stringing Roman along. Roman is going to learn that he's an entitled golden boy while people like Chad Gable, Jason Jordan and even the Miz have had to fight and claw their way to get where they are. Point being, Cena doesn't respect Reigns because Roman is the only one living a lie. Reigns wants to fight right now but Cena doesn't seem interested. That makes Roman think he's all talk, which is why Reigns doesn't respect him. More good stuff here as you can feel the personal issues, which is what this match needs.

Cesaro/Sheamus vs. Heath Slater/Rhyno

Dean Ambrose and Seth Rollins are on commentary. Slater rolls Cesaro up for a very early two and gets caught in the wrong corner for his efforts. It's off to Rhyno for the power, only to walk into the Brogue Kick for the fast pin at 2:17.

Matt Hardy thinks it's a WONDERFUL night for a new Intercontinental Champion. Jeff talks about wrestling each match like it's his first as well as his last. Tonight he's either going out in a blaze of glory or as the new Intercontinental Champion. Matt is ready for the Miztourage too.

Intercontinental Title: The Miz vs. Jeff Hardy

Miz is defending. Jeff gets three near falls in the first minute before a clothesline puts Miz on the floor. A dive is teased but Jeff pulls back as Miz moves, sending us to a break. Back with Jeff getting two off his sitout gordbuster but mostly missing the Whisper in the Wind. Dallas offers a distraction so Axel can break up the Swanton, leaving Matt to take care of both of them. All three are ejected and it's Jeff grabbing a rollup for two.

Miz's DDT gets the same but he misses the running clothesline in the corner. Miz hits a running knee ala Daniel Bryan for two and we hit the YES Kicks. Jeff is right back with a dropkick but his dive off the apron is broken up. We hit the Figure Four for a bit with Jeff getting out without too much trouble.

The Twisting Stunner has Miz in trouble so he heads outside, only to get caught by Poetry in Motion against the barricade. Back in and the Swanton misses thanks to Maryse telling her husband it was coming. Another Twist of Fate is countered into the Skull Crushing Finale to retain the title at 13:02.

Rating: B. Better match than I was expecting and Miz retaining clean (the Maryse thing wasn't interference) is a good idea. The fact that they're pushing Miz's total days as champion is interesting too as he's only about six months away from setting the all time record for combined days with the title. That's easily something he could reach, along with most title reigns. They would be crazy not to push the heck out of that and it seems to have started.

We look back at last week's main event with Alexa Bliss winning the title but getting beaten down by Nia Jax.

Nia comes in to see Kurt Angle and wants to know why she's not in the title match. Emma comes in to do her "I started the Women's Revolution and it's all over Twitter" stuff. Nia threatens to end her so Kurt makes a tag match with the two of them facing Bliss and Banks. If Nia and Emma win, they're added to Bliss vs. Banks at No Mercy to make it a four way.

We look back at Big Show and Braun Strowman breaking the ring in April.

Enzo Amore/Cedric Alexander/Gran Metalik vs. Tony Nese/Drew Gulak/Noam Dar

Rematch from 205 Live because that show needs to be made even less important. Enzo says it's ok for him to cheat last week on 205 Live because it means he's smart. He has nicknames for the other five people in the match, most of, all of which we heard on 205 Live. Joined in progress after a break with Nese and Alexander jumping over each other.

Nese gets sent into the corner so Enzo tags himself in, only to get dropped into the corner. Drew grabs a seated abdominal stretch until Enzo fights up to send all three villains to the floor. Back up and the hot tag brings in Cedric for the handspring enziguri to Gulak. Alexander and Metalik hit stereo dives but Enzo tags himself in again for a poke to the eye. The Jordunzo ends Gulak at 4:59.

Rating: D+. So yeah, this was just a shortened version of the 205 Live match, meaning it's even more worthless than I was expecting. As is still the case, Enzo is the most over member of the roster and there isn't another option to push on the show. No one else has gotten any traction and Enzo is popular so this makes sense, as annoying as it is.

Sasha Banks is getting ready when Alexa Bliss comes in. A shouting match ensues with Banks promising to make Bliss scream at No Mercy.

Here's Finn Balor for a chat. He misses being Universal Champion and thinks the Intercontinental Title would have looked good around his waist, had it not been for Bray Wyatt. Just because he beat Bray at Summerslam, a monster like that never really goes away. Finn doesn't run from his demons because sometimes he becomes them.

Bray pops up on screen to talk about Abigail taking him hunting. His first kill was an exhilarating experience but one day it became too easy. Then he put his weapon down and began hunting with his hands. He showed them no mercy and it showed him his purpose. The Demon is Finn's bow and arrow so face Bray with his bare hands at No Mercy. Balor says he's made his choice so Bray tells him to run.

Nia Jax/Emma vs. Alexa Bliss/Sasha Banks

If Emma and Jax win, they're added to the No Mercy title match. Joined in progress with Sasha not being able to wristdrag Nia. Emma tags herself in and stomps away in the corner before grabbing a seated full nelson. It's off to Bliss for some kicks to Emma with Nia not even offering a tag.

Bliss and Banks take turns beating on her, even joining up for a double suplex. Twisted Bliss doesn't work and it's off to Nia for the Samoan drop on the champ. Sasha has to dive in for a save but can't get the Bank Statement on Nia. Jax plants Banks and drops the big leg but Emma runs in for the pin at 8:55.

Rating: D+. Well it's better than just having Banks vs. Bliss all over again. Emma's Women's Revolution thing is still annoying but at least she's not getting squashed in a minute anymore. The division needs all the fresh blood it can get and Emma is as good of an option as there is at the moment.

Nia Samoan drops Emma post match.

Strowman thinks tonight is a recipe for destruction and that's a message to Brock Lesnar.

Ambrose and Rollins run into Elias with Dean liking the music.

Dean Ambrose/Seth Rollins vs. Anderson and Gallows

Non-title with Sheamus and Cesaro at ringside. Seth stomps Anderson in the corner to start as Cole can't stop laughing for some reason. The champs knock Anderson and Gallows to the floor for stereo dives and we take a break. Back with Ambrose in a chinlock, followed by a chokebomb for two.

Rollins makes a quick save and Dean dropkicks his way to freedom. The hot tag brings in Seth to clean house with a suicide dive and a Sling Blade. Cesaro and Sheamus finally do something by offering a distraction, only to have Rollins grab a rollup on Anderson for the quick pin at 11:50.

Rating: C-. Another skippable match in a series of them tonight. The tag division continues to be weak due to having no depth but that's the problem with having so few people around here and the Revival on the

shelf. The match wasn't bad but there's just no interest here and that's not surprising at all.

Cesaro and Sheamus beat up Anderson and Gallows to make the point clear.

Conor the Crusher video for pediatric cancer awareness month. Some other kids got to invent their own characters too in a nice touch. Nothing wrong with that.

Enzo is celebrating with Metalik and Alexander when Neville comes in. The three of them will be in a fatal five way elimination match tomorrow night on 205 Live with the winner getting the title shot at No Mercy.

The referee from the ring collapse match says he's going to let them fight tonight.

Big Show won't stand for this idea of being put out to pasture by Strowman because Braun doesn't know what a cage match is. There hasn't been anyone in twenty three years big enough or bad enough to break Big Show. This was one of Show's best promos in years, even though he was looking just slightly to the left for some reason.

Brian Kendrick and Tony Nese are the other two in the five way.

Big Show vs. Braun Strowman

Inside a cage with pinfall/submission/escape to win. Strowman splashes him up against the cage to start but runs into the KO punch as we go to a break. Back with both guys down again until Show slams him into the cage over and over. Show tries to climb for some reason and gets crotched, only to shove Strowman off again.

That means a top rope elbow for two and a THIS IS AWESOME chant. Show goes for the door but gets pulled back, only to have Strowman get the door slammed on his head. A double shoulder puts both of them down but Show's chokeslam is countered into a DDT for two. The chokeslam is good for two and Show escapes the powerslam. Strowman misses a charge and goes into the cage wall but is still able to catch Big Show escaping. The big old superplex plants Show and it's the running powerslam for the pin at 16:58.

Rating: B. These two continue to surprise me as they haven't actually had a bad match. WWE has a bad tendency to turn these battles of the big men into really boring matches but this was another great power match with both guys looking good. It's also proof that having an obvious winner isn't the worst thing in the world. Strowman was obviously winning (Big Show isn't Kalisto after all) and it didn't make the match any less entertaining.

Post match Strowman says that's nothing compared to what he'll do to Lesnar. Now it's time to put Big Show out to pasture, so Strowman powerslams him through the cage (a section of which breaks and falls to the floor) to end the show.

Overall Rating: C+. This show flew by which is a major upgrade over what they do so often anymore. The main event was good enough, especially due to tying it to the ring collapse match throughout the night. Other than that, there wasn't a lot of great wrestling, but they're hyping the heck out of No Mercy for the sake of getting people to renew their Network subscriptions. If I just have to see a stacked pay per view, so be it. Good enough show this week and that's not the worst thing in the world.

Results

John Cena b. Jason Jordan – Attitude Adjustment

Cesaro/Sheamus b. Heath Slater/Rhyno – Brogue Kick to Rhyno

Miz b. Jeff Hardy – Skull Crushing Finale

Enzo Amore/Cedric Alexander/Gran Metalik b. Tony Nese/Drew Gulak/Noam Dar – Jordunzo to Gulak

Nia Jax/Emma b. Alexa Bliss/Sasha Banks – Legdrop to Banks

Dean Ambrose/Seth Rollins b. Anderson and Gallows – Rollup to Anderson

Braun Strowman b. Big Show – Running powerslam

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Mae Young Classic Episode Eight – Someone Has to Lose

Mae Young Classic Episode #8

Date: September 4, 2017

Location: Full Sail University, Winter Park, Florida

Commentators: Jim Ross, Lita

It's semifinals time and that means we should be in for some nice, long matches. It wouldn't surprise me if we didn't get a bonus match thrown in as well and that wouldn't be the worst idea in the world. Hopefully they can live up to the expectations as the matches have been good but nothing great. The extra time should help a lot so let's get to it.

We open with a recap of last week.

JR and Lita offer a preview.

Video on Shayna Baszler, who held that choke longer last week to send a message.

Video on Mercedes Martinez, who says this is the culmination of her

career. We also see clips of Martinez training Baszler, which offers a very nice bonus aspect to the match. Why wasn't that mentioned before?

Semifinals: Shayna Baszler vs. Mercedes Martinez

Baszler shakes hands this time. Martinez isn't as polite and slugs away at Baszler with right hands and chops in the corner. A kick to the ribs is blocked but Martinez just lets it go, seemingly in an attempt to get inside Baszler's head. The threat of a running kick sets up a chinlock, which isn't a rear naked choke no matter how much JR seems to think it is.

Baszler sends her into the corner and hammers away before getting two off a gutwrench suplex. A kneebar has Martinez in trouble until she finally kicks away. This time it's Martinez grabbing a hold of her own with something like a Regal Stretch before they forearm it out from their knees. Baszler gets the better of it but Mercedes fights up into a fisherman's suplex to put Baszler down. The fisherman's buster is countered into the rear naked choke and Mercedes finally taps at 8:10.

Rating: B. Baszler winning is the absolute right call, especially with the Four Horsewomen battle coming up. Martinez doesn't have a background in WWE but they've treated her as a major deal, which makes it more impressive to have Baszler beat her. Good match here, which is becoming the trend around here.

They hug post match with Stephanie McMahon (well duh), HHH and Sara Amoto out to congratulate Baszler.

Video on Toni Storm, who is here to win.

Video on Kairi Sane, who promises to win. I was hoping she was here for a flagon of rum and a treasure hunt.

Semifinals: Kairi Sane vs. Toni Storm

Sane takes Toni down and rides her for a bit until Storm slips out of a chinlock. That's fine with Kairi who hits a running dropkick and starts smiling. Storm goes with a shot to the face for two, only to get pulled to the floor with her back landing on the apron. Kairi adds a big dive to

put Storm down again and it's off to a Boston crab.

The sliding forearm is blocked with some raised boots though (smart) and it's the running hip attack rocking Kairi. Storm tries another one but takes a clothesline to the ribs (not quite a spear) to cut her off again. They slug it out with Kairi getting the better of it but she gets caught on top. Storm gets two off a fisherman's suplex.

It's off to a flip over armbar (ala Tommaso Ciampa) with Toni CRANKING on that thing. Kairi finally rolls over to the other side for two but can't follow up. Toni's top rope legdrop hits the back but she bangs herself up at the same time. Kairi kicks her down again and hits the top rope elbow for the pin at 12:24.

Rating: B+. This might have been the best match of the tournament so far, or at least the hardest hitting. Kairi winning was pretty obvious and there was no secret to the fact that it was going to be her vs. Baszler, almost from the beginning. Storm looked great again here and if they don't sign her, they're dumber than I thought.

Sane gets the victory celebration as well. Baszler comes out for the showdown with JR getting in the usually awesome summary line: the one with the biggest fight in the dog is fighting the biggest dog in the yard.

Overall Rating: A-. I'm ready for the finals and that's a good thing. The two matches were both quite good and I want to see the winners beat the heck out of each other next week. They've built both of them up as unbeatable, which is what makes for an awesome showdown in the end. Really good good show here and the best thing they've done so far.

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Mae Young Classic Episode Seven: New Orleans on April 8 is a Place and Time

Mae Young Classic Episode #7

Date: September 4, 2017

Location: Full Sail University, Winter Park, Florida

Commentators: Jim Ross, Lita

We're down to the final eight and that means four quarterfinal matches tonight. You can probably guess what's coming for the final four but that's what makes these rounds exciting: there's the chance of a big upset and that could change everything. Things were a lot better in the second round and hopefully that's the case here too. Let's get to it.

We open with a recap of how all eight made it to the quarterfinals.

No bio videos here, though to be fair you should know who they are at this point.

Quarterfinals: Abbey Laith vs. Mercedes Martinez

Abbey takes her down in a test of strength to start until a hard palm strike to the jaw slows Laith down. Mercedes headlocks her for a bit before a heck of a slap staggers Abbey again. A spinning kick is countered so Abbey just does the splits instead of getting dropped again. Laith kicks at the arm a bit and JR brings up the two years off that

Mercedes needed for a shoulder injury. That little background information often helps things so much and I wish we got more of it in WWE.

Abbey chops her back and kicks Mercedes in the head for two. That just earns Abbey a hard whip into the post and they fight to the apron with Lita joining the IT'S THE HARDEST PART OF THE RING club. Abbey kicks her out to the floor (which hasn't been the case very often in the tournament) for a crossbody to leave both of them laying.

Back in and Abbey tries to get fired up but Mercedes sends her outside for a breather. That goes nowhere so Abbey grabs a bridging German suplex for two, drawing a heck of a scream out of Laith on the kickout. Mercedes grabs the fisherman's buster for the pin at 8:57 in another fast finish.

Rating: B. These finishes coming out of nowhere aren't doing much for me and they're becoming a pattern around here. Mercedes advancing is the right call as she's been treated as a veteran killer so sending her to the semifinals makes sense. Good match here too, which is all you can ask for.

Johnny Gargano is here and you know what that means.

Quarterfinals: Candice LeRae vs. Shayna Baszler

The winner gets Martinez in the semifinals. Shayna wastes no time with a hard knee lift and looks like she's toying with Candice to start. A kick misses though and Shayna crotches herself to give Candice a breather. Shayna gets sent outside for a suicide dive into a DDT (cool) to drop her on her head. Back in and we hit an Octopus hold on Baszler, followed by the Gargano Escape for a nice touch. Baszler calmly powers her up for a side slam and tries a super gutwrench suplex. Ms. LeRae's Wild Ride is easily countered into the rear naked choke for the tap at 3:11.

Rating: C+. They were getting going here until the very sudden ending, though this was the right idea. The idea behind Baszler is that she can finish you in the blink of an eye and that's exactly what they should be going for with her. LeRae is going to be fine wherever she goes and that suicide DDT was freaking sweet. Throw in the submission tease and they had me going a few times here. Give this more time though and it's

instantly better.

Baszler won't let go of the hold, to the point where I thought they were going to reverse the decision for a second. She even kicks at LeRae as the doctors check on her. Now that's how you book a heel.

Quarterfinals: Piper Niven vs. Toni Storm

Storm takes the far bigger Niven into the corner and gives her a playful tap on the jaw. For some reason Toni thinks a test of strength is a good idea with Niven taking her down. Storm bridges up and Niven can't break it for an impressive strength display. Like, a very impressive one as Toni isn't that big. They bridge up at the same time and shake hands upside down for a cute bit.

Niven powers her down and gets two off a splash, followed by Toni getting the same off a crossbody. Two more splashes give Piper the same so Toni grabs a Backstabber (popular move in this tournament) for a breather. A German suplex is countered into the Michinoku Driver for two and Piper is stunned. She tries the Vader Bomb, only to get caught in a German superplex. A top rope legdrop sends Storm on at 7:36.

Rating: C+. I don't think anyone was buying the idea that Niven was anything more than a dragon for someone to slay. Storm is as good of an option as anyone else as she has a great look and feels like someone they want to push the heck out of, especially over time. Good enough match here and while Storm isn't making it to the finals, she's getting noticed, which is often more important.

Baszler's fellow Four Horsewomen are proud of her win but here are Bayley, Charlotte and Becky Lynch for the staredown. Rousey: "Anytime, anyplace." Say....New Orleans perhaps? Maybe early April?

Funaki is here.

Quarterfinals: Kairi Sane vs. Dakota Kai

Kairi headlocks her down to start and the fans seem pleased at an early standoff. A spinning backfist misses and Kai gives her a martial arts pose. Kairi takes her into the corner for some hard chops as this is

getting physical. The fans are behind Kairi but get quieted down with a running kick to the jaw in the corner. Kairi is tired of getting hit in the face so she spears Kai down for a breather.

Kai hits another running kick in the corner but gets sent into the corner. Kairi can't hit a superplex but can avoid a top rope double stomp with Kai tweaking the knee on the landing. A top rope Phenomenal Forearm gives Kairi two but Kai kicks her down again. Another running kick in the corner misses though and it's an Alabama Slam it's the top rope elbow to send Sane to the semifinals at 7:42.

Rating: B. I'm starting to get the appeal of Sane and a lot of it is due to having her do stuff like this. Kai was very game here and that made for a more entertaining match. People like Sane are going to get more out of this than by squashing someone so it's definitely the right call. Kai will have a job in WWE if she wants one but this is Sane's tournament to win. Maybe.

The semifinals are set:

Kairi Sane

Toni Storm

Mercedes Martinez

Shayna Baszler

Overall Rating: B. I'm not sure what it says that I'm more interested in the Four Horsewomen battle than the tournament but that was definitely one of the big draws of this whole thing. The final four are interesting and while you can almost pencil in Sane vs. Baszler for the whole thing, that's not the worst result in the world. Good show here and I'm fired up for the last two shows.

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Mae Young Classic Episode Six – This is What I Signed Up For

Mae Young Classic Episode #6

Date: September 4, 2017

Location: Full Sail University, Winter Park, Florida

Commentators: Jim Ross, Lita

It's time to finish up the second round and get us down to the final eight. That means we have some big names facing some other big names on this show and that should be a lot of fun. I've managed to avoid as many spoilers as possible and it's amazing how much more entertaining a show like this can be when that's the case. Let's get to it.

We open with the standard recap of the previous show and tonight's preview.

Opening sequence.

We see Ronda Rousey and the Four Horsewomen arriving earlier. Gee I wonder who is making the finals.

Video on Toni Storm, who wants to fight and win.

Video on Lacey Evans, who is everything a modern woman is supposed to be.

Second Round: Toni Storm vs. Lacey Evans

They fight over a headlock to start with Toni getting the better of it. Lacey grabs one of her own with a fairly serious look on her face until a kick to the chest puts her down again. Storm tries a bit too flashy hip attack and gets rolled up for two for her efforts. A legsweep from the apron into a slingshot elbow gives Lacey two and it's time to work on the arm.

Storm goes back to the strikes to get a breather and it's a Backstabber (not a Codebreaker JR) to put Lacey down in the corner. Lacey comes back with a good looking swinging neckbreaker, only to walk into Strong Zero (modified White Noise onto the knee) to send Storm on at 5:08.

Rating: C-. I'm digging Storm (good look, strong enough work) so far as she's got a bit of a charisma that is helping her stand out. Hopefully she's sticking around for awhile as I could see her going somewhere with the right coaching. Evans' gimmick is kind of odd as she has the serious military background but looks like one of the Andrews Sisters in the ring. I liked her when I saw her live but it's not quite working this time.

Video on Mia Yim, who has been working specifically to be the best.

Video on Shayna Baszler, who has combat experience.

Second Round: Mia Yim vs. Shayna Baszler

Of note: Baszler, one of MMA's Four Horsewomen, walks past Charlotte, Becky Lynch and Bayley with only a passing glance. An exchange of kicks naturally goes to Baszler (JR: "Some people enjoy going to the mall. I think she'd go to the mall just to beat people up.") but Mia knocks her outside for a heck of a suicide dive. Back in and Baszler rolls some gutwrench suplexes for two but gets caught in the Tarantula (with JR calling Tajiri a handsome rascal).

An ankle lock cuts Mia off again but she's right back with some strikes to the face for two. Not that it matters as Baszler knees her hard in the

face for a knockdown and it's right back to the ankle lock. Mia kicks her way to freedom and is able to powerbomb Baszler for two because ankle injuries aren't a thing. Just in case you thought it was a thing, Mia tries a 450 but gets caught in a rear naked choke for the tap at 5:36.

Rating: B-. Lack of selling aside, I'm sad to see Mia go out so early. For a long time I never got her appeal but she grew on me a lot during the tournament. That being said, Baszler is someone they're going to push very hard in this thing due to the Four Horsewomen affiliation. It would surprise me if we didn't see a four on four match at Wrestlemania and that would be just fine.

Post match Shayna celebrates with her friends before going over to the wrestling Horsewomen to throw up the hand signs. Fans: "YES! YES! YES!"

Video on Dakota Kai, who is a fast striker. A striker? In a women's wrestling tournament?

Video on Rhea Ripley, who is big and strong but young.

Second Round: Dakota Kai vs. Rhea Ripley

The much bigger Ripley works on a headlock before diving over Kai, who snaps off some armdrags. A dropkick sends Ripley into the corner before a running kick to the chest makes things even worse. Ripley gets sent outside and drops her face first onto the apron for another two. Some running knees to the chest give Ripley the same and frustration is setting in.

The full nelson slam is broken up by a kick to the head, followed by a running dropkick. One heck of a running kick to the face in the corner gives Kai two, only to have Ripley superkick her away. A northern lights suplex drops Kai for two more and Ripley looks stunned. They head up top with Ripley getting caught in the Tree of Woe for the top rope double stomp to send Kai on at 7:03.

Rating: B-. Another good match, though this only sends Kai on to be Sane's latest victim. Ripley has every tool you could possibly need to be a huge star and I'm sure she's going to be just fine down in

developmental. Kai looked great as well and should be just fine if she sticks around with NXT. Good match here as Ripley continues to impress.

Video on Candice LeRae, who will give everything she has to win this.

Video on Nicole Savoy, who loves to suplex people. She must have been miserable in the first round then as she didn't do a single one.

Johnny Gargano is here. I love how these wrestlers are ushered in and out every match.

Second Round: Candice LeRae vs. Nicole Savoy

JR talks about PWG and my head threatens to explode. Lita on the other hand slips up a bit by saying Savoy's previous match was last night. Savoy kicks away a handshake offer and we're ready to go. The fans, with a decidedly female sounding voice, are behind Candice. Savoy sends her into the corner for a crash but LeRae comes right back out with a jumping Downward Spiral for two.

The first suplex drops LeRae for two and they trade modified surfboards. Candice elbows her way out of trouble and hits a Codebreaker for a breather. Savoy rolls some butterfly suplexes but can't get a cross armbreaker. Another kick to the head gives Candice a breather and it's off to something like a Black Widow to slow Savoy down. For some reason Savoy takes her up top and even old man JR knows it's a bad idea to put LeRae up top when her finisher comes from there. As you might expect, Ms. LeRae's Wild Ride ends Savoy at 5:54.

Rating: C+. Savoy looked better here but you knew LeRae was winning here, especially with the idea of her being massacred by Baszler in the next round. This was some good storytelling with LeRae fighting from underneath and being willing to go the extra mile to beat the fighting machine. Good match here.

Again, no brackets are shown for the next round but here you are:

Mercedes Martinez

Abbey Laith

Shayna Baszler

Candice LeRae

Toni Storm

Piper Niven

Dakota Kai

Kairi Sane

Overall Rating: B. Now this is more like it. The wrestling was good from top to bottom and while a lot of the endings were obvious, there's nothing wrong with having some good wrestling where you know who's winning. I'm digging this more and more every single episode and the fact that they've done this all in two major content drops is a great idea. Best show of the tournament so far with ease.

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