

# Monday Night Raw – January 31, 1994: The Tax And Coin Toss Show

## Monday Night Raw

Date: January 31, 1994

Location: Fernwood Resort, Bushkill, Pennsylvania

Attendance: 1,600

Commentators: Vince McMahon, Irwin R. Schyster

We're finally on a new taping cycle and that means we're getting ready to start the build towards Wrestlemania X. In that case we need to have some clarification on the World Title situation, which is one heck of a mess at this point. As for tonight though, it's the 1-2-3 Kid vs. Johnny Polo, which would be one heck of a drug conversation. Let's get to it.

We take a quick look at the Bret Hart vs. Lex Luger situation. They tied in the Royal Rumble so we need to know who faces Yokozuna for the title first. The solution? A coin toss! I know face vs. face was rare back then but a coin toss? Really?

Opening sequence.

For reasons I don't even want to comprehend, IRS is on commentary. He offers the loser of the coin toss a pair of Buffalo Bills t-shirts. Luger is originally from Buffalo so he might be happy with those.

## Marty Jannetty vs. Johnny Polo

Jannetty is replacing an injured Kid who is relegated to commentary. Here's what I don't get: the Kid injured his leg on January 17 and the commentary that announced his match vs. Polo was recorded after the Rumble on January 22. So why in the world did they even bother announcing the match in the first place? The 1-2-3 Kid vs. Johnny Polo isn't exactly a masterpiece so how does Marty being in there instead make any difference?

Anyway Polo insults the crowd and the Kid so Marty ties him up with the microphone cord and laughs at him a lot. Polo is sent outside and teases leaving but gets slammed in the aisle instead. Hey now,

he might have had a reservation at Cracker Barrel. Back in and Marty takes a shot to the face and seems a bit, ahem.....oh you know what I mean. Back from a break with Marty botching his half of a backdrop (dude it's a simple front flip) and getting caught in a chinlock. Normally I'd say he can't botch anything out of there but you never can tell. Marty fights up and a bad looking collision sends Polo outside.

Back in and we hit the pinfall reversal sequence before Johnny slows things back down with a headlock. Polo goes up to for the "I'm only going up top so I can dive onto your raised boot" spot and it's time for the comeback. Marty crotches him on top but charges into the post. The Rocker Dropper finishes Polo a few seconds later.

**Rating:** D+. Thank goodness Polo was trying here because it was clear that Marty was in no condition to do anything. I still don't get how anyone could ever make it back on TV when they look like that. It's clear that Marty, who could wrestle circles around a lot of people when he's clean, is in bad shape when he can't take a backdrop. Why was he allowed to go back out there without getting in some real trouble?

IRS goes after the Kid post match and loses his briefcase somewhere in between. Cue Razor Ramon, who has recovered his gold chains which IRS stole. It seems that Kid took it, which makes me wonder how IRS couldn't catch a guy on a broken leg.

After a break, IRS blames Marty for the chains being stolen.

Jack Tunney explains the World Title situation and the weird coin toss/mini tournament idea (there are brackets for this thing) for Wrestlemania. There will be guest referees for both matches. Of note: a Videocassette of the Year Award on the wall featuring Survivor Series 1987. Can we watch that instead? This whole thing is actually rather complicated, or at least moreso than it probably should have been. Today it would just be a triple threat so it's better in a way....I think?

#### Bam Bam Bigelow vs. Miguel Rosado

IRS officially challenges Marty for next week, which he'll accept if he has any guts. Normally those would be fighting words but in Marty's condition, he'll probably build a swing set shaped like a goldfish. Bigelow beats on him, beats on him some more, shrugs off a lame comeback and finishes with a falling headbutt.

It's coin toss time, which includes another explanation of the rules for the live crowd. I have no idea why Tony Garea, Blackjack Lanza and various other yes men are there too. Luger wins and gets to face Yokozuna first (he would have faced Crush otherwise) and can't wait to wrestle twice at Wrestlemania. Bret is upset about having to face Owen but there's no way around it.

#### Kwang vs. Rich Myers

Kwang is Savio Vega in a masked Japanese gimmick. Some chops and a spinwheel kick in the corner stagger Myers as we go to Owen Hart on the phone. Owen is the real winner of the coin toss because he gets to prove that he's better than Bret. The fans are doing the Wave in the tiny arena as this boring squash continues, complete with martial arts posing. Kwang ducks a middle rope crossbody and finishes with a superkick.

**Rating:** D-. It says a lot when a phone call is the highlight of the match. Normally I get annoyed at fans for doing something like the Wave but.....yeah it must get a bit boring with all of these squashes in a row. Kwang was a goofy gimmick and it's pretty clear you're done when your name might come on screen during an Adam West Batman fight.

Time for the Wrestlemania Report and we recap the World Title situation for a ridiculous third time. It REALLY shouldn't be that hard.

Paul Bearer knows the Undertaker is coming back.

#### Earthquake vs. Corey Student

That's a horrible name, even by jobber standards. Student goes after him to start and is thrown down even faster than you would expect him to be. An over the shoulder backbreaker makes things even worse, even with IRS saying it's an illegal hold. A slam sets up the Earthquake to finish the squash, which Vince actually called it earlier on.

**Rating:** D. Of all the people they could pick to push as a face, it's Earthquake? If nothing else it's kind of amazing that it was only three and a half years ago that Earthquake was the top heel in the company. Nothing to see here, other than that really horrible jobber's name. Seriously: Corey Student?

Marty and Razor accept IRS' challenge with Marty going on an anti-

government rant.

We run down next week's card to wrap it up.

**Overall Rating:** D. It wasn't a good show or anything but above all else it felt like something important was actually going on here. That's a problem that plagues so many of the shows from this era (and a lot of them today as well) but when things feel important, even a series of jobber matches are a bit easier to sit through.

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# Monday Night Raw – January 24, 1994: Somebody Do Something

## Monday Night Raw

Date: January 24, 1994

Location: Richmond Coliseum, Richmond, Virginia

Commentators: Vince McMahon, Jim Ross

Here's a rare one as we have a TV show taped before a pay per view yet serving as the fallout show. There's a chance that the commentary has been updated (remember that the Rumble was on a Saturday so they would have extra time) but this could be an

interesting case. Let's get to it.

#### Lex Luger vs. Austin Steele

The commentary has indeed been done post-Rumble as the announcers talk about Luger being a co-winner. Steele has a great name but looks like Buddy Landel, which isn't the best thing in the world in 1994. Luger starts with the right hands and a pair of hiptosses but Steele actually gets in a few shots to the ribs to take over. Lex grabs a belly to back followed by a regular superplex for the pin. I don't think I've ever seen him use that as a finisher and...well it was just a superplex so there isn't much to say about it.

**Rating:** D. Just a match here and the ending didn't exactly do much. It's a smart move to have Luger on here two nights after he won a major match. I know the fans didn't get that at the time but at least they're keeping him on TV to keep him hot. You would think he'd be a bit more upset but he can't actually say that until next week.

We hit the Royal Rumble recap to cover everything major. Todd does screw up and say the show was last night (it was two nights ago).

#### Jeff Jarrett vs. John Paul

Jeff starts with a dropkick but gets small packaged and sunset flipped for two each. The comeback doesn't take long though as JR brings up a good point about Jarrett: for someone who wants to be a country singer, he certainly dresses oddly for his wrestling matches. Jarrett misses an elbow and gets rolled up for two, followed by some uppercuts to the jaw. Jeff comes right back with a rollup and a handful of trunks for the pin.

**Rating:** D+. Well it was better than Luger's match. I know his later stuff wasn't the most interesting in the world but DEAR GOODNESS Jeff was so much worse back at this point. The gimmick, the look and the wrestling itself really didn't work and that's a dangerous combination. It's bad enough when one of them isn't up to par but with 1994 Jarrett, I'm not sure any of them were.

#### Men on a Mission vs. Headshrinkers

Men on a Mission are replacing the Harts, which is annoying as I wanted to see the original match. Mo sends Fatu into the corner in one of the only successful things you'll ever see him do. The Samoans head outside for a breather as this is already dragging. For

some reason Mo tries a faceplant and is almost immediately superkicked down.

It's off to Mabel to scare Fatu, who actually tries a slam. A pair of superkicks actually bring Mabel down to a knee but for some reason Fatu tries a suplex. That earns him a big boot to the face before it's back to Mo as we take a break. Back with Mo taking a double clothesline and giving one of the most bewildered faces I've ever seen. Mo is sent into the steps and chopped down but does manage to get in a sunset flip.

Fatu is right there for a save, which probably isn't necessary considering it's freaking Mo (Did I mention I'm not a fan of his?). A double headbutt gets two more but Mo manages to fall into the ropes to crotch Fatu. The hot tag brings in Mabel for all of his usual stuff, only to have the Samoans knock him outside. Mo takes another double headbutt and a top rope splash for the pin.

**Rating:** D-. Who decided that Men on a Mission should have gone this far? Being a big Headshrinkers fan helped a bit but this was hardly the easiest thing in the world to watch. Mabel was good for a big man but....yeah Mo was horrible. Like horrible horrible. The look on his face when he got beaten up was amusing though.

#### Adam Bomb vs. Tommy Angel

Angel shrugs off some offense and scores with a few dropkicks, only to get shoved into the corner for a stomping. Bomb dropkicks him in the ribs as the announcers take shots at Bill Clinton. JR switches over to blaming Harvey Wippelman for screwing up Bomb's career as Adam hits a top rope clothesline. The Atom Smasher (powerbomb) puts Tommy away.

**Rating:** D. Angel was a regular jobber around this time so he was able to put on a watchable match. The same could be said for Bomb, who was a good power guy but with a gimmick based on being the result of a nuclear disaster who sounded like he was from southern Alabama was a bit too much for him to overcome.

Sparky Plugg loves cars.

#### Doink the Clown vs. Joey Stallings

Dink has an invisible dog....and the jobber actually sells for it. JR: "Stallings is a sandwich or two short of a picnic." Doink gets two off a belly to belly and it's off to an armbar. Back up and

Stallings grabs a bad looking side slam, only to miss a dropkick. Doink grabs a powerslam and finishes with the Whoopee Cushion.

**Rating:** D-. I'm not sure what there is to say about this one. Do you really brag about beating someone who was attacked by a non-existent dog? I know 1994 was kind of a dumb time but are we really to the point where jobbers are scared of a tiny clown's invisible dog. I....can't believe I actually had to type that.

#### Tyrone Knox vs. Shawn Michaels

Knox has a good look. They run the ropes to start with Shawn taking him down and dropping an elbow across his back. Knox's offense doesn't go very far as Shawn gets in a hiptoss and stomp to the head. We hit the chinlock and Vince confirms that the WWF will NOT be replacing the NFL on CBS. Thanks for that boss. Knox gets in a few headbutts (JR: "YOU GO TYRONE!") but it's a superkick and the piledriver (good one too) for the pin.

**Rating:** D+. Shockingly Shawn has the best match on the card. It helps when you have someone who doesn't look like a complete loser and Knox at least looked good at times. It's still just a squash but when you have a decent opponent and one heck of a piledriver to end the show, things are at least a bit better.

**Overall Rating:** F. Oh yeah this one was bad. They knew they had to be careful with what they could say in the arena and that makes for a REALLY dull show. Just long and boring here, which really shouldn't be the case on a show that is only about forty five minutes long when you take out commercials. The new cycle should help but this was really boring.

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# Royal Rumble 1994: As Weird As Undertaker Ever Got (And That's Saying Something)

## Royal Rumble 1994

Date: January 22, 1994

Location: Providence Civic Center, Providence, Rhode Island

Attendance: 14,500

Commentators: Vince McMahon, Ted DiBiase

This is one of those shows where the good stuff is good but the bad stuff is REALLY bad. The main idea here is that someone has to stop Yokozuna, and it's going to be one of three people: Bret Hart or Lex Luger who could get the shot by winning the Rumble, or the Undertaker who has a casket match against Yoko tonight for the title. Oh....this is going to be a long night. Let's get to it.

Vince is on commentary here and gets to do his carnival barker stuff. The guy knows how to make a show sound exciting, I have to give him that. DiBiase comes out to do commentary with McMahon due to having to retire late in 1993 due to a bunch of injuries.

### Tatanka vs. Bam Bam Bigelow

Bigelow is in Ludvig Borga's spot because Borga broke his ankle. Bigelow pounds on Tatanka to start and dropkicks him into the corner. Tatanka literally bounces off of Bigelow before coming back with a chop to take Bigelow down. A DDT puts Bam Bam down again but Tatanka goes up for a cross body, missing Bigelow by a mile. This is a REALLY hot start so far. Bigelow crushes Tatanka in the corner with a splash and things slow down somewhat.

Tatanka gets in a shot to the head and tries a top rope sunset flip, only to have Bam Bam sit on him. When all else fails, sit on the



other guy. Off to a bearhug for about two minutes before Bigelow drops him with a shoulder block. Tatanka starts his war path thing so Bam Bam decks him in the head with an enziguri to drop him. The moonsault misses though and Tatanka goes up again, this time hitting the cross body for the pin.

**Rating:** C+. Shockingly hot opener here and if you cut the bear hug in half or so, this is a really solid match. They stuck to the formula really well here and the match was good as a result. This is one of the nice surprises in wrestling: on paper this sounded horrible but it turned out to be a pretty nice match. Good opener.

We recap the tag title match, which is a rare instance where it's all about the challengers rather than the champions. Owen Hart was the only Hart Brother eliminated in the Survivor Series match against Shawn and his Knights, which ticked him off. Owen had been whipped into Bret on the apron and the distraction let Shawn roll Owen up for the pin.

This caused Owen to cut a heel promo, talking about how he was tired of being in Bret's shadow and wanting a match with him to escape it. Bret of course said no, but instead offered to team up with Owen to get his brother his first championship. Owen talked about leading the team but seemed genuinely ok at this point. For some reason we also see the Quebecers losing the tag titles to the 1-2-3 Kid and Marty Jannetty for a single week for some reason.

The Harts talk about all the teams they're going to give title shots to once they win the belts tonight.

#### Tag Titles: Bret Hart/Owen Hart vs. Quebecers

The Quebecers are managed by Johnny Polo, who would change his name to Raven in ECW. Pierre and Bret start things off with the challenger taking over. Off to Owen to work on the arm with his signature spinning counter to a wristlock. Off to Jacques and they botch something, but Owen hits a quick suplex to keep things on track. An enziguri gets two for Owen and it's back to Bret.

After a bunch of rollups by Bret, everything breaks down and the

Quebecers take over. Actually scratch that as Owen hits a kind of spear into a rollup for two and the Harts stand tall. It's Bret vs. Jacques with Hart in control until it's back to Owen for a gutwrench suplex for two. Bret comes back in, only to get powerslammed down by Pierre. A pair of knees to the back gets two and it's back to Jacques.

That goes nowhere so Pierre comes in to jump into a boot. Owen comes back in and belly to bellys Jacques down before hooking the Sharpshooter. Pierre bulldogs Owen down for a fast save of course and it's back to Pierre legally. Owen dropkicks both Quebecers down and it's off to Bret again. For some reason both champions are allowed to stay in the ring for way too long. Pierre is atomic dropped to the floor, and now we get to the turning point of the match: Johnny Polo holds the ropes open to send Bret to the floor. Bret comes up holding his knee and he's in big trouble.

Pierre rams the knee into the barricade to further the damage and the match turns into a kind of sloppy brawl on the floor. Owen finally throws Bret back into the ring and the leg work begins. Jacques puts on a half crab but Owen makes a fast save. The champions load up the Cannonball (kind of an aided Swanton) but Bret rolls away. Instead of tagging though, Bret tries the Sharpshooter...and the referee stops the match for the knee injury.

**Rating:** B-. This is one of those matches where you can look at it in multiple ways. From a match standpoint, it's a standard tag match with the faces and heels doing exactly what they would be expected to do. On the other hand, the idea here was about setting up Owen's heel turn, and the ending does that perfectly. There was no reason for Bret to not tag at the end and it sets Owen off as it should.

Post match Owen glares at Bret and paces back and forth. Bret manages to pull himself up but can barely stand up. Owen kicks the leg out, officially turning heel to HUGE booing. He leaves so here are some officials to come check on Bret. Ray Rougeau, a reporter for WWF at this point, comes out to interview Bret while he's on his back in agony. For some reason that cracks me up.

Owen is in the back and goes on a huge tirade about how selfish Bret is and how Bret cost him the biggest match of his career. Bret is being carried to the back and has to watch this promo on the video screen. Owen's face here is great as he unleashes all this pent up anger and frustration on Bret, saying he'll win the Rumble because he doesn't have to count on Bret. This would be the top feud for the next eight months or so.

#### Intercontinental Title: IRS vs. Razor Ramon

Guess who is defending here. JR and Gorilla Monsoon do commentary for this match. IRS goes on a big rant about how evil the crowd here is for not paying their taxes, even though they have about three months left to file. Razor goes off on IRS to start, knocking him out to the floor. IRS comes back with some forearms but Razor punches him right back down to take over again.

Ramon hits a bunch of basic stuff like atomic drops and clotheslines for some two counts, but IRS ducks under a clothesline to send Razor out to the floor. Back in and IRS goes up but jumps into a boot. For one of the only times I can EVER remember this happening, IRS avoids the foot and drops an elbow for two instead. WHY IS THAT SO HARD FOR PEOPLE TO DO???

We hit the chinlock for well over a minute before Razor fights up and hits the fallaway slam. The referee gets knocked out in the corner and IRS grabs his briefcase, only for Razor to take it back and clock him in the head with it. No referee though, so Razor loads up a belly to back superplex. There's still no referee, so Razor sets for the Edge, only to have Shawn run out and clock him with the fake IC Title. IRS finally wakes up and pins Razor for the title.

**Rating:** D+. This wasn't bad but the overbooking hurt it a lot. This should have lasted about three minutes less and it would have been a lot better. Oddly enough I don't remember IRS being champion at all, but then again this is the remastered version so maybe they really cleaned things up.

Or maybe another referee comes out to explain the interference and the match is restarted. Razor hits the Edge to retain.

Bearer and Undertaker are making a coffin for Yoko.

We recap the world title match, which is Yoko being scared of Taker and Taker being one of the last hopes to stop the monster.

Apparently the contract was signed before Yoko and company knew it was a casket match. Taker I believe debuted his popping out of the casket spot in this feud.

#### WWF World Title: The Undertaker vs. Yokozuna

They stare each other down to start and Taker fires off his uppercuts to stagger the champion. A clothesline puts Yoko down and another uppercut puts Yoko on the floor. Taker is sent into the steps and it's immediately no sold, scaring Yoko to death again. There's Old School but the jumping clothesline misses as Yoko ducks. Why does no one else ever think of doing that?

They fight over a chair on the floor which winds up going upside Yoko's head. There's a plastic chair to the back of the champion but Yoko grabs the trusty salt to blind Taker. Now it's Taker's back getting hit with the chair and we head back inside. A clothesline puts Taker down but he fights out of the casket. Taker wins a slugout in the middle of the ring but Yoko belly to belly suplexes him down. Come on. You know that's not holding him down. Taker pops up and grabs Yoko by the throat and hits a DDT to put the champion down again.

Yoko is placed in the casket but here's Crush to block Taker from closing it. Taker slugs him down so here's Great Kabuki and Tenryu but Taker beats them down as well. Yoko is still out cold in the casket. Bam Bam Bigelow comes in now and it's 4-1 in the ring. One has to wonder why Paul Bearer doesn't go over and close the casket but this match doesn't seem to be the most logical one. Fuji and Cornette have stolen the Urn.

Yoko finally gets out of the casket as Bearer beats up Fuji and Cornette, stealing the Urn back. He uses it to recharge Taker, who fights off all four mercenaries. Now it's Adam Bomb to make it technically 8-1 but Taker fights everyone off with the salt bucket. Jeff Jarrett comes in as well, as do the Headshrinkers. That makes

it NINE wrestlers (Yoko, Crush, Kabuki, Tenryu, Bigelow, Jarrett, Samu, Fatu, Adam Bomb) against Undertaker.

AND HE GETS UP. Diesel comes out and they get Taker in the coffin but he fights ALL OF THEM OFF. Yoko steals the Urn and hits Taker in the head with it before opening the Urn. Green smoke comes out of it and Taker now is powerless. Everyone hits a bunch of moves on him as this goes on WAY too long. After ALL THAT, Taker is put in the coffin and Yoko retains the title.

**Rating:** F. On a major wrestling show, The Undertaker just fought off ten men until green smoke was released to drain him of his power. I've seen Japanese anime that makes more sense than this. Oh and the match itself, as in the one on one part, might have gone about six minutes.

BUT IT GETS WORSE!

The heels all push the coffin away when a gong goes off. Smoke comes out of the casket....and a FREAKING CAMERA FEED FROM INSIDE THE CASKET POPS UP ON THE SCREEN. Taker says his soul lives in everyone and he can't be extinguished. He says there's going to be a rebirth of the Undertaker and he won't rest in peace. Then electrical noises go off and we get something like an inverse camera shot (as in it's all in black and white but what is white is black and what is black is white).

Then, to REALLY hammer home the point, the image on the screen starts to rise up through the top of the screen (which should be the top of the casket, meaning it should be ramming into the people that put him in the freaking casket) and A FREAKING BODY RISES OUT OF THE TOP OF THE SCREEN. AS IN A TANGIBLE BODY (which might have been played by Marty Jannetty).

In other words, WWF just said Taker is something like Jesus. Oh and one other thing to really make sure this is stupid: YOU CAN'T SEE IT. All I can see are some quick shots of it when flashes go off. This is one of those things that embarrasses me as a wrestling fan. I mean....WOW.

The usual Rumble interviews eat up some time.

### Royal Rumble

Scott Steiner is #1 and Samu is #2. Also the intervals are every 90 seconds this year so the entrances will come in faster than ever. Scott pounds away to start and hits a butterfly suplex as Samu tries to hang on. He does indeed survive and kills Scott with a clothesline. Rick Steiner is #3 and Samu is in BIG trouble. After some suplexes he's out very quickly (but not before getting his head caught in the top and middle rope which is always kind of scary looking), giving us the Battle of the Steiners.

That battle literally lasts six seconds as Kwang (Savio Vega in a mask, allegedly Asian here) is #4. Scott suplexes Kwang down and Owen Hart is #5 to BIG heel heat. The heels take over and Owen actually dumps Rick out. That's one of the rare times where the constant pushing against the ropes worked. Bart Gunn is #6 and things speed up a bit. No one really does anything so here's Diesel at #7. This is where things pick up as this match is without a doubt Diesel's coming out party.

He beats on everyone and throws out Bart, Scott, Owen and Kwang inside of 45 seconds. Bob Backlund is #8 and immediately goes for the leg. He actually gets Diesel up against the ropes and upside down, but Diesel will have none of that. Who would believe these two would have a world title match in Madison Square Garden later in the year? Backlund is gone quickly. Billy Gunn is #9 and doesn't even last fifteen seconds.

We cut to the back where Kabuki and Tenryu are destroying Lex Luger. After Diesel stands around for a bit, he has to throw out Virgil who is #10 in about thirty seconds (causing DiBiase to laugh loudly and get in some good verbal jabs). Note that the fans are LOUDLY chanting for Diesel here, who had NEVER gotten a reaction until this point. No one has been able to stand up to Diesel at all so far. #11 is Randy Savage. This should be a bit better challenge I'd think.

Savage goes right for him and pounds away on the big man in the corner before peppering him with jabs. He has Diesel in trouble but

Jeff Jarrett is #12 to save the not yet Big Daddy Cool. We hear about Jarrett wanting to become WWF Champion so he'll be a famous country singer in Nashville. And people wonder why he never got over until he completely changed everything about his character.

Savage is thrown to the apron by Jarrett but Randy comes back and eliminates Jeff with ease. Crush, who Savage HATES at this point, is #13. Diesel just kind of chills in the corner as Savage beats up Crush. The numbers finally catch up with Savage though until Crush eliminates him with ease. Doink is #14 and he gets beaten up as well but not tossed. Here's his big rival Bam Bam Bigelow at #15 and it's 3-1 now. Bigelow easily throws the clown out ala the Spike Dudley throw from ECW.

Mabel is #16 and dang there are some big guys in there. He goes right for Diesel in a terrifying preview of Summerslam 95. Mabel cleans house until Sparky Plugg (Bob Holly as a racecar driver and debuting here as a replacement for the 1-2-3 Kid) is #17. Shawn Michaels is #18 and stares down Diesel to start. Everyone gets on Diesel and Shawn gives the final push to eliminate him. Diesel gets a VERY audible ovation and chant as he leaves.

Mo, Mabel's totally useless partner, is #19. Nothing of note happens so here's Greg Valentine in a one night only appearance at #20. Mabel misses a charge in the corner and Shawn is gorilla pressed by Crush but not eliminated for some reason. Tatanka comes in at #21. To recap we've got Plugg, Valentine, Tatanka, Mabel, Bigelow, Crush, Michaels and Mo in there. Valentine puts Michaels on the apron but can't get him out.

Kabuki is #22 and almost everyone gangs up on Mabel to dump him out. It's amazing how much easier it is to see with the big fat purple tub of goo out of there. Lex Luger (looking FINE after that attack like 15 minutes ago) is #23 and he cleans house. There are ten people in the ring right now but there goes Kabuki at the hands of Lex. Luger clotheslines Bigelow down and here's Tenryu at #24.

There are WAY too many people in there right now. Like seriously, do we need FREAKING MO in there? Or Valentine? Those are bodies you

could dump out and no one would care. Luger and Tenryu go at it as Shawn is almost dumped out. Bastion Booger is supposed to be #25 but he's not here for some reason (Vince says it was supposed to be Bret Hart but more on that in a bit). I believe there are nine people in there at the moment so Booger not coming in was a good thing. Granted it was a good thing either way but you get the idea. Rick Martel is #26 and nothing happens.

For your big face pop of the match (other than Diesel): Bret Hart is #27 and limping very badly. Today, people would have a bandage on the knee and charge to the ring because modern wrestling is stupid. Fatu is #28 and DEAR FREAKING GOODNESS THROW SOMEONE OUT ALREADY! A bunch of guys team up and FINALLY throw Crush out as Marty Jannetty is #29. Naturally he goes right for Shawn and punches Shawn to the apron.

Adam Bomb is #30, giving us a ridiculous THIRTEEN FINAL PEOPLE in the Rumble. The final group is Bigelow, Sparky, Shawn, Mo (seriously, FREAKING MO?), Valentine, Tatanka, Luger, Tenryu, Martel, Hart, Fatu, Jannetty and Bomb. Bret saves Shawn (shocking I know) to dump out Sparky, thank goodness. Bret beats on everyone as we still need to get rid of more people. Everyone beats on everyone for awhile and nothing is happening. DiBiase: "The smart thing to do is go after Bret Hart's knee." Vince: "The smart thing to do is throw people out of the ring." Did....did Vince just burn Ted Dibiase?

Martel dumps Valentine but is quickly dumped out by Tatanka. Luger throws out Bomb and Mo is FINALLY put out as well. Bigelow tosses Tatanka and Lex forearm Bam Bam out. Jannetty goes out to get us down to Luger, Hart, Fatu, Tenryu and Shawn. Tenryu rams Shawn and Fatu's heads together which only hurts Shawn of course. Luger and Bret put out Tenryu and it's Bret vs. Shawn (duh). Luger goes for Fatu's head and gets superkicked for being stupid.

The heels put Luger on the apron but he fights them both off and clotheslines Fatu into a 360. Bret dumps Fatu and Luger dumps Shawn and we're down to two. They slug it out and Luger picks up Bret, but they both fall out at the same time, giving us a double elimination



to end the Rumble.

**Rating:** C+. This is a hard one to grade. The pacing is TERRIBLE with guys like Sparky Plugg and Mo staying in for over twenty minutes each, but the action is solid for the most part. The stuff with Diesel is excellent and it truly made him a star. The ending stuff once they got rid of about seven guys in 90 seconds was good too, but stuff in the middle didn't work all that well.

Post match there's a disagreement over who wins but both guys have their music played. This would lead to a somewhat complicated decision where there was a coin toss and two world title matches at Mania. This goes on for about eight minutes or so but it's just the referees arguing and both guys saying they won. Replays don't really show us anything either. They do a good job here of making it impossible to tell who won, unlike in 2005 when it was clear that one of them (I want to say Cena) hit first. They're finally declared co-winners to end the show.

**Overall Rating:** C-. This show is one where it's very hard to come up with an overall grade. I really liked the opener and the tag match and Rumble were both good, but when a show has what might be the dumbest moment in wrestling history (and that covers A LOT of stupid moments), it's brought down a lot. Early 1994 was not a good time for the WWF but once they finally picked Bret as the guy, things got a lot better.

#### Ratings Comparison

Tatanka vs. Bam Bam Bigelow

Original: B

Redo: C+

Quebecers vs. Bret Hart/Owen Hart

Original: A+

Redo: B-

Razor Ramon vs. IRS

Original: C+

Redo: D+

Yokozuna vs. Undertaker

Original: F

Redo: F

Royal Rumble

Original: B

Redo: C+

Overall Rating

Original: B

Redo: C-

DANG I liked this show a lot better on the first viewing.

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

<http://kbwrestlingreviews.com/2011/01/13/royal-rumble-count-up-1994/>

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# Monday Night Raw – January

# 17, 1994: A Phone Call From The Future

## Monday Night Raw

Date: January 17, 1994

Location: Richmond Coliseum, Richmond, Virginia

Commentators: Vince McMahon, Crush

It's the go home show for the Royal Rumble and that means it's time for a good old fashioned hard sell show with a big brawl at the end. Unfortunately it also means more about Undertaker vs. Yokozuna to help set up one of the worst matches of all time. This show starts the second year of the show so let's get to it.

We open with a recap of last week's Tag Team Title change, including the false finish for some reason.

Opening sequence.

Crush is on commentary. I didn't know he could talk for five minutes straight, let alone an hour. We get some ranting about how Crush is going to win the Royal Rumble and how horrible Savage is.

## Owen Hart vs. Terry Austin

It's weird to see Owen as a face with Bret in his corner. Owen takes him down and hits a monkey flip without the flip. We hit the chinlock as Crush is actually complimenting Owen on his good stuff, which you rarely hear from a heel comment. It's time to work on the arm as we go to a phone call from Stan Lane at Madison Square Garden for a live report on the Tag Team Title match. This is a bit more interesting as the title match wouldn't take place for another week. Owen throws him down for a top rope elbow, followed by the missile dropkick. The Sharpshooter ends Austin in a hurry.

**Rating:** D+. Nothing to see here but Crush said "Brudda" every other word and it's going to be a long night. Owen was starting to come into his own around this time and he's on the verge of launching through the roof when his brother gave him one of the best rubs of all time. You can hear the seeds in the commentary too as we keep hearing about how their issues have been smoothed over.

Owen is happy for Marty Jannetty/1-2-3 Kid but he wouldn't mind the

Quebecers getting the titles back so the brothers can have a shot. Bret says about the same but knows Marty and the Kid would give them a shot too.

### Tatanka vs. George South

South is a long time NWA jobber who Ric Flair always wanted to have a classic match with but the company would never let it happen. Scott hammers away in the corner and they trade clotheslines. We hear from Lane again as the title match has begun with the champs showing a lot of fire. A ram into the buckle sends Tatanka onto the warpath and it's a series of chops, capped off by the top rope chop, for the pin.

Video on Alundra Blayze.

Here are Yokozuna and Mr. Fuji for a chat. Jim Cornette isn't here because he's over in Tokyo at a press conference to get ready for Yokozuna's big celebration. Cue Paul Bearer with the big casket to scare Yokozuna. This takes forever and of course Undertaker is inside. Yokozuna wobbles away after taking nearly six minutes for the whole thing.

Next week: The Hart Brothers vs. the Headshrinkers. That actually sounds pretty good.

### Diesel vs. Scott Powers

Diesel hits Snake Eyes and a side slam before throwing it to Shawn for some cheating on the floor. There's something so evil about a guy who can beat up the jobber like that but allows his buddy to get in a few shots of his own. We go back to Lane at MSG and THOSE DASTARDLY QUEBECERS HAVE STOLEN THE TITLES BACK! As we try to digest that, Diesel powerbombs Powers and then boots him in the face (odd choice of a sequence) wraps it up.

**Rating:** D. This was about what you would expect but the amazing thing is that Diesel would be World Champion in about ten months. Then again that's the kind of thing you can never guess in wrestling, which is one of the most fun aspects. Diesel was starting to get good and only needed a few more months to put it all together.

We hit the Royal Rumble report with a look at most of the card and everyone in the Rumble.

### Randy Savage vs. IRS

Vince calls Savage the Joe Montana of the WWF. IRS actually takes over to start and sends Savage into the corner and then to the floor. I guess Savage is devastated over the title change. Crush continues to surprise me as he basically turns his commentary into a long heel promo on Savage, only to be cut off by Savage's comeback taking us into a break.

Back with Savage being dropped across the barricade, which Crush hopes will shut his big mouth. A suplex sets up a chinlock (pretty clearly a choke) for a bit until Savage misses a charge into the corner. Savage is sent outside and we take a second break. Back again with Savage caught in an abdominal stretch before hitting the third chinlock of the match. Another quick comeback sees Savage slam him and go up for the elbow, only to have Crush come in for the DQ.

**Rating:** D+. The chinlocks took the life out of this but I'm glad they didn't have IRS, who is challenging for the Intercontinental Title at the Rumble, lose clean here. You could see that Savage had lost a lot of steam at this point but he was still able to have a perfectly acceptable match, especially if he had someone willing to put in a bit more effort than IRS here.

Post match the Mini-Rumble breaks out to end the show.

**Overall Rating:** D-. Horrible show here but that's pretty standard for this era. The 94 Rumble wasn't the most interesting thing in the world and they really didn't do much of a job of featuring Luger, especially when he's possibly the biggest star in the whole thing. It really does feel like a show where anyone could win, but that doesn't always make for the best match. If nothing else we do have to sit through the build for Undertaker vs. Yokozuna and that wouldn't be good for anyone.

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# Monday Night Raw – January 10, 1994: Marty Does It Again

## Monday Night Raw

Date: January 10, 1994

Location: Richmond Coliseum, Richmond, Virginia

Commentators: Vince McMahon, Randy Savage

It's the first anniversary and that's almost hard to fathom when we're used to the show being well over twenty years old. I can't imagine we'll have a ton of highlights or memorable moments as there were only so many things to pick from at this point. We do however have a Tag Team Title match with the Quebecers defending against Marty Jannetty/1-2-3 Kid. Let's get to it.

We open with a recap of the title match with the Quebecers helping Johnny Polo beat Marty a few weeks back. Marty and the Kid want revenge and maybe some titles.

Polo and the Quebecers are sure they'll win.

Opening sequence.

Savage comes out to do commentary.

Tag Team Titles: 1-2-3 Kid/Marty Jannetty vs. Quebecers

The Quebecers are defending of course. Marty starts with Jacques and an early victory roll almost gives us new champions. Pierre comes in and tries his luck with the Kid, who sends him outside again as we get a long 1-2-3 chant. Everything breaks down and the champs are sent together, setting up a meeting on the floor. Marty comes in and launches Kid into a dropkick on Pierre as the champs bail again. The Quebecers go to leave but come back almost immediately like the teases they are.

Back from a break with footage of a false finish during the break as Marty pinned Jacques, only to see a foot on the ropes. We settle down to Marty vs. Pierre and some heel miscommunication has the champs in trouble. It's off to the Kid, who drops both champs with a spinning kick and a flip dive from the top.

The referee is checking on a downed Jannetty and the champs shove the Kid off the top to take over for the first time. We take another break and come back with Jacques scoring with a jumping back elbow. The Quebecers do a lame looking clothesline/legsweep combo before Jacques adds a piledriver for no cover.

Instead it's the Cannonball (assisted Swanton) but they STILL don't cover. They load up a second so Marty comes in for the save, drawing some swearing from Savage. The hot tag brings in Marty for the house cleaning, capped off by a suplex/high crossbody combination for the pin and the titles.

**Rating:** B. This was a bit longer than it needed to be but the pop for the title change was worth it in the end. Marty and the Kid weren't exactly long term champions as they would lose the belts back a week later at a house show but this was exactly what it was supposed to be. And remember, even though Marty won the Tag Team Titles before Shawn and had previously beaten Shawn for the Intercontinental Title, his name should be used as an insult when talking about split up tag teams. For the life of me I still don't get why it's not "he's the Jim Neidhart of the team". Anyway, good match and a fun moment.

We look back at the 1-2-3 Kid beating Razor Ramon about nine months ago.

Jim Ross does the Royal Rumble Report so we go over the rules and look at all 30 entrants. The rest of the card gets a look and thankfully the Quebecers still have their belts in the graphic.

Last year, Jerry Lawler tormented Tiny Tim. This wasn't funny in 1993 and it still isn't now.

#### Ludvig Borga vs. Brad Anderson

Joined in progress with Borga destroying the jobber and shrugging off some clotheslines. Lex Luger calls in to talk about the Rumble as Borga scores with a side slam. The torture rack ends Anderson in a hurry.

We look at Yokozuna winning a squash but getting scared by Undertaker building a casket to reveal the stipulations.

Back in September, Doink threw water on Bobby Heenan to officially turn face

#### Undertaker vs. Ray Hudson

Snake Eyes, chokeslam, Tombstone. There might have been some uppercuts scattered in between.

We look back at Bastion Booger vs. Bam Bam Bigelow, which is fallout from Luna Vachon rubbing Booger's hump.

Macho Man has a Happy Anniversary Raw cake and just happens to be facing IRS next week. Either the next match is running a long time or there's something planned for the end of the show.

#### Bastion Booger vs. Bam Bam Bigelow

Bam Bam beats him down to the mat to start as I have to hear far too much about hump rubbing. Booger ducks a charge and sends Bigelow outside so Luna blows Bastion kisses. The distraction lets Booger hit him from behind and drop the headbutt for the pin. At least it was short. Fat but short.

Bigelow beats him up even more post match.

Polo and the Quebecers are distraught but they have a rematch at Madison Square Garden in a week.

Kamala turned face in 1993. This would lead to bowling.

IRS comes out and gets thrown into the cake to end the show.

**Overall Rating:** C-. It's so weird to see Raw having almost no big moments to look back on when you're used to the show having a greatest hits list dating back nearly twenty five years. The title change was a nice way to commemorate the anniversary but that's about all there is here. You might think they would spend more time on the World Title match at the upcoming Royal Rumble but we had humps to rub.

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# Monday Night Raw – January 3, 1994: A New Year's Hangover?

## Monday Night Raw

Date: January 3, 1994

Location: Mid-Hudson Civic Center, Poughkeepsie, New York

Commentators: Vince McMahon, Johnny Polo

It's a new year as we're getting close to the start of the second year of Raw. We're also getting close to the 1994 Royal Rumble and that means we're still in the fallout of the Lex Express. It also means we're seeing the upgraded Bret Hart rising to the top of the company and that's a very, very good thing. Let's get to it.

We open with Undertaker building a casket which Paul Bearer says is for Yokozuna. Undertaker's New Year's Resolution is to make Yokozuna rest in peace.

On Wrestling Challenge, Jim Cornette reveals that the title match he accidentally signed Yokozuna up for a casket match. As expected, Yokozuna is scared of caskets. Of note here: Stan Lane, as in Cornette's old client in the Midnight Express, is the interviewer here.

Opening sequence.

## Yokozuna vs. Dan Dubiel

For some reason Dubiel goes right after him and has exactly the same luck you would expect. A hard Rock Bottom sets up an even harder belly to belly with Polo absolutely loving this on commentary. The

usual sets up the Banzai Drop with Yokozuna landing much higher than usual and nearly hitting the guy's neck for the pin. That could have been very, very bad but Dubiel seems to be fine.

**Rating:** D+. The first thing here is how much better Polo is on commentary. He's just so laid back and relaxed about everything and that's all exactly what he should have been. It made for a very amusing exchange as he kept referring to Vince as Vic. Oh and the Banzai Drop looked TERRIFYING here, which is fine as long as the jobber was ok.

We look back at the Quebecers switching places and still losing to Lex Luger anyway. Polo took a steel forearm of his own.

Earlier today, Luger sat down with Vince for a chat. Luger is on fire at the moment but none of that matters if he doesn't get to compete in the Royal Rumble. We'll find out whether or not he gets to be involved in a week but the people have already given him a vote of confidence via a poll. Until the decision is made though, Jim Cornette and the rest of Yokozuna's people can keep being worried about having to face even more competition. Lex gives Tunney and the people one last plea and we're done in a hurry.

Sparky Plugg drives cars.

#### Smoking Gunns vs. Bastion Booger/Bam Bam Bigelow

My that's a lot of B's, plus Luna Vachon in the monsters' corner. Bigelow throws Billy around to start but a dropkick puts him on the floor. It's off to Bart for some arm cranking before Booger comes in, meaning Polo wants to know what's up with the hump on his neck. The cowboys are sent outside and it's time for an early break. Back with Booger getting shouldered down but he low bridges Bart....through the ropes because Bart didn't get over the top for some reason.

Polo talks about Booger wanting to lose three pounds by the end of the year but there are several excuses, such as a dog running his running shoes or the TV at the gym being on the wrong channel. It's off to Bigelow, who Polo says has made Barney and Betty proud since he broke up with Pebbles.

A legdrop gets two on Bart but he avoids a charge and makes the hot tag to Billy. Polo: "N000000000!!!!!!" Luna is busy rubbing Booger's hump (don't ask) and a double backdrop gets two on Bigelow.

Unfortunately for Bam Bam, Bastion kisses Luna and gets slapped for

his efforts. Bigelow finally sees what's going on and gets in a brawl with his partner for the countout.

**Rating:** F. Go back and read through some of what I wrote near the end of that match and try to figure out why I call this match a failure. There was nothing to this one and it was a great example of how horrible wrestling can get at times. I'm sure Vince found this hilarious in some twisted way and I'm going to leave it inside his head.

Todd Pettengill is in the Royal Rumble Control Center to explain the concept of the namesake match and list off twenty seven confirmed named. The other three will be announced over the weekend. The rest of the card gets some attention as well.

Next week: Raw's First Anniversary!

#### Jeff Jarrett vs. John Chrystal

Jeff actually gets rolled up for two to start so he runs John over without much effort. A sunset flip gives John two more and it's time for some right hands while the announcers talk about the pay per view. Chrystal gets in a weird powerslam for two more but a running DDT (not a great one either) gives Jeff the pin.

**Rating:** D. Who would have expected this to be so competitive? Again though Jarrett was hardly anything worth seeing but that's the case with almost anything he did more often than not. The long blond hair didn't help him much either but at least John seemed more than game here.

Last week, Polo beat Marty Jannetty with a little help from the Quebecers. Therefore, Jannetty and the 1-2-3 Kid come out to ask for a Tag Team Title shot against the Quebecers next week.

Razor Ramon doesn't want us to smoke.

#### Shawn Michaels vs. Brian Walsh

Since this is going to be a squash, let's take a phone call from Quebecer Jacques. Shawn takes him to the mat without breaking a sweat and it's time to work on an armbar. Walsh bridges up from the mat and Shawn can't break him down. A few rollups are good for two each on Shawn and Polo is freaking out. With nothing else working, Shawn throws him to the floor so Diesel can....put him back inside. A bodyguard who does his job and nothing more? I don't see much of a future for him in this business. We hit a chinlock on Brian so

Johnny can talk about his ancestor Horatio Abercrombie Polo settling the island of Palm Beach. Walsh makes a comeback but misses a dropkick, setting up the superkick. A piledriver gives Shawn the pin.

**Rating:** D. This was similar to the previous match, making it a pair of slightly more competitive than usual squash matches. Polo continued to be the most entertaining part of the match but I'm not sure he's enough to overcome an interview with Jacques. How could someone decide that was the best possible option here?

We run down the Anniversary Show card to end the show.

**Overall Rating:** F+. Pretty standard show for the time and that's not too surprising. As mentioned multiple times, Polo was the best part of the show and that's a good thing, assuming he actually sticks around. Unfortunately I have a feeling we'll be seeing a replacement sooner rather than later because it could mean some entertaining TV. It's a bunch of bad wrestling around Polo though and that's not going to work.

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## Impact Wrestling – April

# 13, 2017: Our Long Orlando Nightmare Is Over

## Impact Wrestling

Date: April 13, 2017

Location: Impact Zone, Orlando, Florida

Commentators: Jeremy Borash, Josh Matthews, D'Angelo Dinero

Tonight is all about the announcers as we have an eight person tag between Team Borash and Team Matthews with the winner getting....it seems just bragging rights actually. This is the top story in the promotion at the moment as we're still waiting on most other stories to really take off. Let's get to it.

Opening sequence.

We get a recap of most of last week's show.

Reno Scum vs. Laredo Kid/Garza Jr. vs. Decay

It's not a good sign when your tag division is the champs and the three teams they beat to win the belts. Josh starts off by insulting "all the marks and idiots on Twitter" as Adam kicks Garza down. It's off to Crazy Steve as Josh talks about all the support he has on social media. The Kid gets dragged in so Abyss can hammer away, leaving Josh to insult the fans some more.

Josh officially confirms that he's off commentary if his team loses, thankfully followed by Pope talking about the match for a few seconds. That's too long though so let's plug Fury being unleashed tonight and the Fite Network app. Luster comes in for a spinebuster on Steve but gets chokeslammed by Abyss. It's back to Kid for a springboard dropkick to send Abyss outside, followed by a suicide dive from Adam. Luster hits a running Razor's Edge into the corner and an assisted double stomp ends Steve at 6:10.

**Rating:** D+. This is going to be a really, really long night with the commentary being way more annoying than it needs to be. At the end of the day, it's a match about arguing commentators instead of the

World Title situation or anything important. The match was nothing special and was your usual calamity, which happens way too often in these matches.

Josh leaves for a phone call.

Andrew Everett thinks he's earned a title shot but the Helms Dynasty comes in to say not so fast. Instead, tonight it's a four way with Everett vs. Suicide, Marshe Rockett and someone else. Everett has an idea: Helms himself can fill out the match. Helms is eventually talked into it.

Here's Bruce Prichard to announce the new #1 contender by way of a fan vote. The choices were James Storm and Ethan Carter III with the fans choosing....Storm. This brings out a ticked off Carter to say Prichard needs to read it again. Bruce says it was Carter's idea to put the choice in the hands of the people and that one loss to Alberto El Patron probably stuck in the fans' heads. Bruce's suggestion is to go find a mirror and see if Carter can find out what happened to the man that used to run Impact Wrestling. Maybe the fans gave up on him for tapping out to El Patron. Carter is off to ponder.

Good segment here as Carter is really starting to sink into his heel turn, which they've allowed to build over time. Bruce was solid here too, which isn't something you normally get from him. I can get where both of them are coming from and that's not something you see too often.

Karen Jarrett wants to make Impact great.

#### Allie/Braxton Sutter vs. KM/Sienna

The guys start things off and here's Josh back from his long phone call. KM misses a charge in the corner and let's look at the commentators for a bit. Allie drops to the floor so Sienna yells a lot, allowing KM to run Sutter over from behind. As usual, commentary continues to talk about the main event and ignores Sutter slipping out of a powerslam. A suplex sends KM into the corner and Sienna misses a charge into another corner. Allie tags herself in

and hits a crossbody with Sienna tripping over KM for the pin at 3:49.

**Rating:** D. Not much to see here again but thankfully Allie and Sutter finally won something. This story is starting to go long but at least they won a match here, which isn't likely to be the blowoff. Allie pinning Sienna makes sense and hopefully they win a few more matches going forward.

Post match Kongo Kong (the Fury that was to be unleashed, complete with his rather large and saggy breasts) comes in and beats up Sutter. Laurel Van Ness comes out and helps beat Allie down.

Josh to JB on what happens after tonight's main event: "I'm going to beat you and drag you out of here like United Airlines!"

#### Rosemary vs. Santana Garrett

Non-title and Santana used to wrestle here as Brittany. Rosemary chokes her over the ropes as Josh says he and his team are going to party in the hotel room and watch You've Got Mail on Pop TV. What hotel is he staying in that gets Pop TV? Back in and a clothesline in the corner sets up a t-bone suplex for no cover. A Last Chancery lets Santana do the long crawl to the ropes, followed by a handspring elbow in the corner. Josh: "Shades of Muta. Or Matthews!" Garrett misses a Lionsault though and the Red Wedding is good for the pin at 4:57.

**Rating:** C-. Slightly better match here and having Garrett back would be a good thing for the division. They're really needing some fresh blood and having a familiar face (even one who wasn't the biggest deal) back is a good thing. Rosemary doesn't really have a top opponent to face at the moment, which isn't good when she's had the title for six months now.

Angelina Love stops kissing Davey Richards to say everyone deserves the suffering they'll hand out.

#### Andrew Everett vs. Marshe Rockett vs. Suicide vs. Shane Helms

Helms is in a jacket, Impact t-shirt and jeans with knee pads. Everett goes after him at the bell but Helms bails to the floor and

trips Everett, only to run from Suicide. Not that it matters as everyone else hits a dropkick, leaving Rockett in control. Everett slips on a springboard spinwheel kick but takes Rockett down anyway. Helms makes a save and finally takes off his jacket. A Downward Spiral stuns Everett but he knocks Helms outside anyway. Rockett comes back with a gordbuster, only to miss a high crossbody. Everett kicks Suicide to the floor and hits Rockett with the shooting star for the pin at 6:11.

**Rating:** C. The match was watchable (Everett's botch aside) and all my normal X-Division complaints stand. They've got something interesting here with the Everett feud but the rest of the division (if you can call it that) is just floating along in their multi-man matches because that's the only thing this company knows how to do with them. At least there's a feud, though it hasn't been the best executed.

Trevor Lee goes after Everett and gets laid out.

Matt Morgan wants to make Impact Wrestling great.

#### DJZ vs. Davey Richards

Davey kicks him down in the corner to start but stops to kiss Angelina. That earns him a suicide dive but more kicks stagger DJZ. The top rope double stomp misses though and DJZ kicks away before grabbing a jawbreaker. Richards pulls him down with an ankle lock for the submission at 3:22.

**Rating:** C. Just a squash here and there's nothing wrong with that. Richards is far more interesting as a singles heel than he ever was as a tag wrestler and I've dug his feud with Edwards. DJZ is a talented guy and he's not going to lose anything from a loss to a bigger star like Richards.

Post match Eddie Edwards and Alisha come out for the brawl but security breaks it up.

The Veterans of War are coming.

The announcers bicker one last time.

#### Team Matthews vs. Team Borash



Matthews: Lashley, Bram, Eli Drake, Tyrus

Borash: Alberto El Patron, Chris Adonis, Matt Morgan, Magnus

Alberto runs Drake over to start as the announcers are already at it again, though this time it's a bit more understandable. It's quickly off to Lashley, who misses an elbow on Adonis as Josh yells about Lashley spearing Pope last year. Bram and Magnus come in and quickly head to the floor for a brawl with Bram getting the better of it.

Drake can't keep control though and it's off to Alberto for the house cleaning. Back from a break with Tyrus running Adonis (Josh: "If that's your real name!") over from behind. Josh's team starts taking turns stomping away on Adonis with Drake getting in a good looking slam.

Tyrus misses a Vader Bomb though and there's the hot tag off to Morgan. House is cleaned and we hit the parade of finishers with Bram breaking up Morgan's chokeslam. Magnus tags himself in as Morgan adds a Carbon Footprint, setting up the top rope elbow for the pin on Bram at 18:53.

**Rating:** C+. Pretty good eight man tag and the ending was the right call, which is the whole point of the show. The thing is this match showed the problem with the whole evil announcer idea: it made sense for him to be running his mouth here but it doesn't mean as much when he's doing it for the other ninety minutes of the show.

The locker room empties out to bid Josh (who is speechless in a funny moment) goodbye.

**Overall Rating:** C-. This show was more of a relief than anything else. Josh and JB's feud has ruined a lot of shows in recent weeks but hopefully this wraps it up (assuming TNA doesn't find a way around it) for good. The rest of the show was....well it was certainly there. The Carter turn is going to be good but I'm not really sold on a lot of the other stuff. Maybe the new taping cycle will help but they really shouldn't be running out of steam five weeks into a relaunch.

Results

Reno Scum b. Decay and Laredo Kid/Garza Jr. – Assisted double stomp to Steve

Allie/Braxton Sutter b. Sienna/KM – Crossbody to Sienna

Rosemary b. Santana Garrett – Red Wedding

Andrew Everett b. Shane Helms, Marshe Rockett and Suicide – Shooting star press to Rockett

Davey Richards b. DJZ – Ankle lock

Team Borash b. Team Matthews – Top rope elbow to Bram

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## Quick Thought on JBL and Mauro Ranallo

So one of the biggest stories going on in recent weeks has been the Mauro Ranallo vs. JBL issue. While we don't know all the details yet, it seems that JBL kept yelling at/insulting/tormenting Ranallo, who has bipolar disorder, to the point where Ranallo had a major issue and is likely gone from the company as a result.

Without getting into the full bullying debate, I'd say there's a difference between some low level hazing (for example, NFL rookies

having to buy the doughnuts or pick up the shoulder pads etc.) and treating someone like garbage every single day. This would seem to fall into the latter category as there's a very firm line between treating someone a bit rough for a day or two, patting them on the back and saying glad to have you aboard and this stuff, which seemed to go on for a long time.

JBL has a LONG history of this kind of thing and allegedly Vince loves it, which is a major part of the problem. Joey Styles punched him in the face over it but how many people over average size who aren't wrestlers or athletes of some kind are going to punch a loud mouthed 6'6 wrestler with a reputation for being tough when they're being supported by the king of the wrestling business?

This is nonsense and something that people shouldn't have to put up with. Ranallo was just there doing his job and yeah he would seem to go a good bit over the top at times but that doesn't mean you have to berate him, often in public. Talk to him backstage in private or something but don't treat him like this. Vince needs to get over himself as well (yeah I know) as this is nonsense and shouldn't continue. I don't think JBL will be fired at this point but if the story keeps getting picked up, that very well may change.

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# Ring of Honor 15th Anniversary Show: You Can't Rely on This Forever

## 15th Anniversary Show

Date: March 10, 2017

Location: Sam's Town Live Casino, Sunrise Manor, Nevada

Commentators: Ian Riccaboni, Kevin Kelly, Colt Cabana

This was a recent request and for once I'm actually trying to get some of those knocked off. Ring of Honor has been around for a long time and the fact that they've made it this far is really quite

impressive. Since it's a major milestone show, the main event is an ROH legend in Christopher Daniels trying to win the ROH World Title for the first time. Let's get to it.

The opening video looks at some of the bigger names in the company's history (the only logical way to go) before switching up to Daniels talking about starting wrestling in 1993 and getting here. Champion Adam Cole says 1993 was important for him too as he learned to color. This is your classic young punk vs. veteran and there's nothing wrong with that. It worked for Raven vs. Terry Funk and it can work well here. As a final note, Daniels' best friend Kazarian joined the Bullet Club, which sounds rather swervish.

### Jay White vs. Caprice Coleman

Great. We're starting with a bonus match and a bonus REBELLION match on top of that. This show isn't looking very promising. Ian: "Collar and elbow tieup to start here." Colt: "Great call Ian!" They fight over wristlocks and armdrags to start with King getting the better of it and driving some knees into the back.

White gets in a few Tomoaki Honma spots to pop the crowd (Honma was badly injured and out of action at this point). Since it's just a headbutt, King knocks him to the floor for a flip dive. A chinlock goes nowhere so White gets up and dives on fellow Rebellion member Caprice Coleman.

This proves to be a bad idea (as is almost always the case) as King hits a running dropkick, followed by a bridging capture suplex for two. White comes back with a Downward Spiral but charges into a spinebuster for no cover. Jay gets dropkicked on the top but shoves King away for a high crossbody. That's rolled through as well with King trying the Royal Flush, only to have White small package him for the pin at 9:52.

**Rating:** C+. Nice match here with both guys looking good, or at least as the Rebellion is capable of looking. White is one of the many talented people in ROH who can wrestle a solid match but doesn't really have a character, meaning he has a bit of a firm ceiling to how far he can go. The match was a good opener and the ending was exactly what it should have been.

We recap the dissolution of the Addiction with Kazarian joining the Bullet Club.

The Club welcomes their newest member.

Kazarian vs. Hangman Paige vs. Chris Sabin vs. Punisher Martinez vs. Cheeseburger vs. Silas Young

One fall to a finish, tags required, lucha rules and the winner gets a future TV Title shot. We start with Kazarian and Sabin trading probably a dozen one counts off a rollup. They're on the floor in a hurry and that means we hit the parade of dives with the 6'7 Martinez hitting a step up dive of his own to really freak the crowd out (I'm not sure if that's really easy or really hard to do around here).

Kazarian and Page take Martinez down, leaving us with a short lived Bullet Club showdown. Cheeseburger comes in to break it up but gets beaten up by Young, leaving the announcers to make food jokes. Martinez chokes Cheeseburger (Colt: "What a pickle!") but everyone comes back in, allowing Sabin to hit a springboard tornado DDT on Young. Page loads Cheeseburger up for the Rite of Passage on the apron but Martinez breaks it up for no apparent reasons.

Adam spits at him for reasons of general stupidity, earning himself a chokeslam onto the apron. Back inside, Sabin German superplexes Kazarian but gets caught in Young's Misery for two. Cheeseburger escapes the same thing and kicks Silas from the apron. The palm strike drops Young but Kazarian grabs the Ace of Spades (twisting Stunner) for the pin on Cheeseburger at 10:19.

**Rating:** B-. It was fun but this is one of Ring of Honor's major problem areas: throwing a bunch of people into a match and thinking that's good enough for a story. Kazarian was the only one in the match that had a real chance of winning (based on the story) so why did four others need to be there? Let Kazarian fight any of them (build someone up so they seem like a real threat to beat him) and tell a better story. Just throwing a bunch of people together feels like the easy way out and while the match was fun, it could have been better.

Jay Lethal and Bobby Fish both say they need to win the match so they can go after the World Title.

Bobby Fish vs. Jay Lethal

The match is billed as a top contenders match which may or may not mean a #1 contenders match. It's pretty early in the show for

something that big so I'll assume it's just another one of ROH's ideas that might mean someone gets a title shot on some house show. They hit the mat to start before Fish starts in with the kicks. One big kick puts Lethal on the floor for a second thought on his strategy.

Back in and Lethal scores with a dropkick to send Fish outside. Another dropkick sends him into the barricade but Jay misses the suicide dive and hits the barricade as well. That means a bad arm but Jay gets in a third dropkick to keep control. Fish kicks him hard in the chest a few times though, shrugs off a European uppercut (why yes, we are watching an indy wrestling match) and hits another kick to the chest to drop Lethal.

Jay comes right back with a superkick (make your own jokes) and this time the suicide dive works. They get back inside for the big serious exchange of forearms with Fish driving him into the corner for an ankle lock. That's not the brightest idea so Lethal grabs a cutter but Hail to the King is countered into the heel hook. A quick Lethal Combination sets up Hail to the King, only to have Fish grab another heel hook. Jay reverses into a rollup for the break, followed by the Lethal Injection for the pin at 15:12.

**Rating:** B. The matches are getting better and this one told a good story with the submission grappler against the natural all around performer who comes up biggest on the grand stages. I had a good time with this match, which isn't the most surprising thing in the world given that I like both guys. Fish is a very solid hand but I think he's pretty much resigned to the position of making the stars look good. Not the most horrible thing in the world to be sure.

We recap the Six Man Tag Team Title match. The Kingdom have the titles and since Dalton Castle and the Boys are a three man combination, they get a title shot. These belts continue to be one of the worst ideas possible for a company like this but hey, New Japan has them right? Both teams have a quick promo, saying they'll win for the obvious reasons.

#### Six Man Tag Team Titles: The Kingdom vs. Dalton Castle/The Boys

The Kingdom is defending and Castle is just crazy over, being accompanied to the ring by an army of Boys. Thankfully Cabana is there to insult Castle and the Boys after their long feud. It's a brawl to start and I don't remember hearing a bell. The Boys start

fast with double suplexes and the Kingdom bails to the floor for a meeting.

Castle and Marseglia start things off with Dalton wrestling him down and slamming the Boys onto him. Cabana actually knows how to tell the Boys apart and it's #1 being taken to the floor for a beating. Colt: "THE BOYS ARE BACK IN TOWN!" #1 gets slammed back first onto the apron and Marseglia follows up with some running forearms to the head. Since he's a good boss, Castle offers a distraction so the Boys can switch.

Colt is losing his mind as he tries to get the referee's attention but the hot tag brings in Castle anyway. The Bang-a-Rang plants O'Ryan for two so the Boys come in for a double dropkick on Vinny. O'Ryan sends the Boys outside and tries an Asai moonsault....which hits the barricade, giving him a legitimate broken leg. Taven and Marseglia throw #1 back inside for a double powerbomb (Rockstar Supernova, an awesome name) to retain at 7:54. You can tell they were home REALLY fast and that's completely understandable.

**Rating:** D+. This wasn't any good and would have been boring on a regular TV show, let alone a major pay per view. I can't imagine it would have been much to see even with the regular ending but you can't fault them for ending the match soon because of a broken leg. The titles need to go away in a hurry though because they're just not working.

We recap Marty Scurll vs. Lio Rush for the TV Title. Scurll has been a dominant champion and Rush is his latest challenger, having beaten him in a non-title 2/3 falls match. Assuming Scurll was champion then, why in the world was a 2/3 falls match non-title?

TV Title: Lio Rush vs. Marty Scurll

Rush is challenging and they're quickly on the mat with a series of headlocks into headscissors. Things speed up a bit with Rush tripping him to the floor for a hurricanrana off the apron. That's fine with the arm flapping Scurll who superkicks him from the apron. Back in and Scurll start sin on the arm, including a stomp to the hand. Rush blocks the finger break though and hits a Tajiri handspring into a body block to take over.

Something like Sister Abigail into a DDT instead of a Downward Spiral gets two on the champ but he sends Rush shoulder first into the post. Rush speeds things up again and sends him outside for a

double stomp to the back. Back in and Marty kicks at the legs for a change of pace (with the announcers explaining that he's trying to break Rush down piece by piece and that he can always go back to the arm later).

One heck of a forearm puts Rush outside but he storms back in for a rapid fire exchange of forearms. Rush's Tajiri handspring is pulled into the chickenwing but Rush makes the ropes. Scurll gets two off a piledriver but Rush comes right back with a running C4 (Rush Hour) for the same. With nothing else working, Rush heads outside and grabs the belt (Colt: "You have to win that first.").

Not that it matters as he throws it right back outside and kicks Marty in the head for two. With nothing else working, Rush loads up a chair on the floor. A super Rush Hour is broken up though and Scurll takes him down with a Tower of London (hanging cutter out of the corner). The finger is snapped and Marty chickenwings him to retain at 18:38.

**Rating:** B. Really solid stuff here as Rush continues to grow on me in ways I never would have expected. Scurll is so much fun to watch though I could go for him doing more villainous things than just saying he's a villain. To be fair though, when the setup for your finisher is breaking a finger, you're quite evil in the first place. Good match here and probably the best thing all night so far.

We look at Bully Ray helping the Briscoes in Manhattan, which is all you're getting for a recap.

#### Briscoe Brothers/Bully Ray vs. War Machine/Davey Boy Smith Jr.

This was supposed to be Smith/Lance Archer vs. the Briscoes but Archer is injured so this is a replacement match. War Machine and Smith don't get along though so this might not be the most competitive match. It's a brawl to start (of course) with Bully sending Davey into the corner a few times. The Briscoes come in and get suplexed at the same time in quite the power display.

Smith gets slammed down for What's Up with Mark hitting an elbow instead of the headbutt. That means it's time for some tables but War Machine makes a save and takes over on Mark. Kelly tries to explain the backstory with all the New Japan stables and as usual, I need a good sized chart to make sense of all this (please don't explain it to me). A series of stomping sets up Smith's camel clutch and a delayed vertical suplex.



Hansen tries one too many right hands and gets caught in a suplex, allowing the hot tag off to Jay. House is cleaned for a few moments until a pop up powerslam plants Jay for two but a clothesline allows the real hot tag to Bully as everything breaks down. Bully actually goes up top for a high crossbody (!) to take out everyone at once. The Jay Driller into the Froggy Bow sets up a three man 3D to finish Rowe at 11:45.

**Rating:** C+. This was the kind of fun match that you would expect. They beat each other up for a bit and didn't bother wasting time on anything more than they needed to. Bully is best used as a featured attraction like this as he's a legend who can just come in, do his signature stuff, and go to the finish. The match was fine and entertaining, which is all it needed to be.

Smith and War Machine fight on the floor which I'd assume will be resolved in another promotion in Japan.

We recap the Tag Team Title match. The Young Bucks were the champions and successfully defended at Manhattan Mayhem. Post match the Broken Hardys appeared and won the titles in an impromptu match. Roppongi Vice was already scheduled to challenge in a street fight so we'll just make it a three way.

Tag Team Titles: Roppongi Vice vs. Young Bucks vs. Broken Hardys

Matt and Jeff are defending in a street fight. This is just after the TNA lawsuit, meaning the Hardys can only be kind of Broken because TNA is annoying and petty because they seem to think they can just throw the Broken gimmick on anyone and it'll work (it won't work because no one else can play the characters like Matt and Jeff). But hey, TNA gets to stand by its principles and if they just happen to look like penny pinching imbeciles, so be it.

Vice is knocked to the floor to start so they bring in some weapons to put the bigger teams down. A springboard dropkick drives a trashcan lid into Jeff's back. The Bucks can't hit a Meltzer Driver but the Hardys come back in to beat up Vice instead. Vice breaks up another Bucks vs. Hardys showdown so Nick powerbombs Romero off the apron and onto the ramp. The Bucks and the Hardys start brawling....and let's hit the replay!

The champs get dropped with superkicks but the Bucks miss the stolen Hardys' top rope shots. It's time for the first ladder because I'm not sure the Hardys know how to work a long match without one. Jeff

brings in a trashcan but gets superkicked with Matt taking one as well. A third superkick knocks Jeff off the ropes and into a big pile, only to have Nick get shoved off the ladder into a springboard flip dive onto the same pile.

Nick is right back in with a springboard 450 onto a trashcan onto Trent for two. More Bang for Your Buck is broken up and Jeff's Swanton hits raised knees. With everyone down, Romero grabs a sleeve (as in from a shirt) covered in thumbtacks for a string of clotheslines in the corner. Strong Zero gets two on Nick with Matt making the save. Beretta pours out another bag of tacks but due to wrestling law #1, that means he's sent face first into them, this time via something like a Steiner Bulldog.

The Five Star Driver (or maybe it's the Meltzer Driver or whatever their insider name is for it that the fans cheer for because it makes them feel smart) sends Trent into the tacks, setting up another slugout with the Hardys. The champs get the better of it and bring out a table and a second ladder for various hardcore reasons. Matt and Jeff send the Bucks to the floor and a flip dive (not exactly a Swanton through Trent through the table is enough for the pin to retain at 17:14.

**Rating:** B+. These matches, along with most Bucks matches, are like junk food: there's no quality to them but they're a lot of fun to watch. I'd rather watch them just do their stuff with the superkicks and flips than try to have people tell me how great a match it is because they know how to put together better matches than any other team. The match was a fun, violent brawl and that's all it needed to be. It was designed to pop the crowd and I got into a lot of those big spots, though the ending felt a bit flat. Also, well done on putting this together so quickly with the surprise addition of the Hardys.

The Hardys take the Young Bucks' Superkick Titles too.

We recap the World Title match. Christopher Daniels won a tournament designed for older competitors to earn his shot. The idea is Daniels has given his all to the business but has never actually won the World Title. He's put in everything he's had for twenty four years and absolutely cannot lose.

This includes another outstanding promo from Daniels where he breaks into tears, talking about how he just has to win. Daniels has been

on fire with the promos lately and I actually want to see him win after really not being a fan for years on end. The other detail is Daniels' best friend Kazarian turning on him to join the Bullet Club to side with champion Adam Cole.

#### ROH World Title: Adam Cole vs. Christopher Daniels

There are no seconds here. Daniels is challenging and we're ready to go after some Big Match Intros. We actually get a Code of Honor as the announcers talk about Daniels being 0-8-1 in World Title matches. Cole takes him down and makes a face before doing it again and slapping Daniels in the back of the head. The feeling out process/mind games continue as Cole sends him into the ropes for an ADAM COLE BAY BAY!

That earns him a right hand to the jaw so Adam stomps away in the corner. A backdrop sends Cole outside to give Daniels his first major offense nearly five minutes in. That's quickly wrapped up though as a superkick knocks Daniels' head into the post to draw some blood. Thankfully Adam is smart enough to stay on the cut and we hit a chinlock, which should squeeze more blood out of his head.

More kicks to the head have Daniels reeling but one too many poses allows Daniels to get in a Koji Clutch for a big hope spot. Daniels can't follow up though so Cole talks trash about Daniels' wife, which gives us the expected result. We hit the slugout with Daniels getting in an STO and a Blue Thunder Bomb for two.

The BME misses though and Adam scores with a superkick for two more. A Shining Wizard sets up the Last Shot for a near fall but Daniels hits him in the face again. Angel's Wings is countered and it's a double clothesline to put both guys down. Cole's Canadian Destroyer is countered but he grabs Angel's Wings on Daniels for two.

As you might expect, Daniels hits a Last Shot of his own for the same, followed by a Styles Clash of all things for a very near fall. Back up and the referee gets superkicked so heeere's Kazarian. We nearly get some heel miscommunication but instead Kazarian rips off the Bullet Club shirt to reveal a Daniels shirt. A Rock Bottom into three straight BME's give us a new champion at 21:47.

**Rating:** B. I liked this more than I was expecting to with a great story as Daniels survived until he got one shot, just like he had done for his entire career. The Kazarian stuff was really well done (a bit predictable but still good) and Daniels did everything

himself (Kazarian never touched Cole). They nailed the big moment and that's all that mattered here with a good match to make it work even better.

The long celebration with a lot of the locker room coming out ends the show.

**Overall Rating:** A-. This really was a great show with the worst thing being the Six Man Tag Team Titles and even that was far from bad. They nailed the big ending which is all almost anyone is going to remember from this show and that's the most important thing. However, it also brings up one of ROH's major problems.

Aside from the main event and the Tag Team Titles to a lesser degree, almost nothing on here feels like it has a story that has either been thoroughly explained or even exists at all. I watch every episode of ROH TV and I couldn't begin to tell you where a lot of these matches came from. Yeah Rush beat Scurll in a 2/3 falls match. Not only do I have no idea when/where he did that but I don't remember it being mentioned on TV unless it was in passing.

This comes back to ROH's TV being all screwed up. The go-home show for this (dated March 8) featured Kazarian turning, the Kingdom defending against the Rebellion with Dalton Castle on commentary and a Top Prospect Tournament match. Before that it was Addiction having issues, another Top Prospect Tournament match and the setup for Rush vs. Scurll, which involved about six more people. Finally, the last show of February featured Colt Cabana (on commentary here) squashing the Boys (title contenders here), an unrelated match and Daniels becoming #1 contender.

In the three weeks of build to this show, three out of the eight matches (World Title, TV Title, Six Man Tag Team Titles) got any kind of significant mention on TV. Maybe the other five matches were mentioned on the ROH website or something but I really should have a better idea of a pay per view by watching the last three weeks of TV. Run down the card or give us some promos (maybe you could get rid of the horrible Top Prospect Tournament matches or move them to a later date or something) or do SOMETHING to help build these matches up.

The formula worked here but you're not going to be able to rely on the wrestlers knocking it out of the park every time. So much of this show worked because the main event (which was well built and

told a great story) rocked and the ladder match had people who know how to work that match to near perfection. You can't rely on that every single time and a big solution to that problem is to fix their freaking TV. I mean, they haven't in years and it's not going to get better anytime soon but it need to get better. Anyway, really strong show here and one of ROH's best in a long time.

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<http://kbwrestlingreviews.com/2017/03/24/kbs-history-of-nxt-volumes-1-and-2-now-available-in-paperback/>

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## **NXT – April 12, 2017: Feel the Power of the New Guys**

### **NXT**

Date: April 12, 2017

Location: Full Sail University, Winter Park, Florida

Commentators: Nigel McGuinness, Tom Phillips, Percy Watson

We're finally back to normal as NXT returns home. We're also just over a month away from Takeover: Chicago, meaning things need to get set up in a hurry. The big story tonight is the return of Drew McIntyre, who hasn't been in WWE for several years and has done a lot of growing up in that time. Let's get to it.

There's a new theme song and of course it's rap based because Heaven forbid we have a rock theme on any of these shows.

### Aleister Black vs. Corey Hollis

Hollis is ready to go while Black stands with his arms behind his back...until Black Mass is good for the pin at 30 seconds.

We look at Tye Dillinger debuting on Smackdown.

Tye is thrilled at being on Smackdown but there's unfinished business around here. Earlier today he talked to William Regal and gets to face Eric Young in a steel cage next week.

### DIY vs. Dylan Miley/Michael Blaze

Miley is a big guy with a great look for the late 80s. Ciampa can't take him down with a headlock as Miley just lifts him into the air. Gargano tries the slingshot but gets caught in a very delayed vertical suplex. It's off to Blaze who gets kicked in the head, followed by a running chop in the corner. A running knee knocks Miley off the apron and Meet in the Middle finishes Blaze at 2:59. Miley is going to get somewhere based off this performance as he's built like a tank and looks like a monster.

Miley destroys Blaze post match. Oh yeah he'll be pushed soon.

We look back at Asuka defeating Ember Moon at Takeover.

After the loss, Ember Moon walked through the empty arena, talking about how this was supposed to be her moment and destiny. Revenge is sworn.

### Ruby Riot vs. Kimberley Frankele

That would be Kimber Lee of course. Kimberly takes her into the corner to start but gets armdragged down. Cue Nikki Cross for a distraction, allowing Kimberly to get in a backbreaker. Riot fights back with a series of knees and a Pele kick to the face for the pin at 2:21.

Video on the Authors of Pain.

Billie Kay and Peyton Royce are at the Performance Center and yell at Aliyah and Liv Morgan. A fight ensues with Kay being knocked into a water tub.

### Oney Lorcan vs. Drew McIntyre

McIntyre's music has a bagpipe entrance. I'd assume that's going to be changed one day as it's really not working for him. Drew, who looks huge compared to Oney, drives him into the corner and throws him down with a belly to belly. Back in and Oney scores with some running uppercuts to send Drew outside for a running flip dive. A top rope dive is pulled out of the air and Drew slams him into the apron.

We take a break and come back with McIntyre throwing him off another suplex and scoring with a hard headbutt. Lorcan breaks up a superplex but gets caught in a choke throw. Back up and Lorcan just unloads with strikes to the head, only to get caught in a very hard reverse Alabama Slam. The Claymore (running jumping boot to the face, not named here) ends Oney at 8:50.

**Rating:** B. I'm scared to rate it any lower in case they hit me that hard. This was one of the hardest hitting matches I can remember in a very long time that didn't involve Shinsuke Nakamura. McIntyre looked like a brawler but that size difference was bordering on comical as he towered over Lorcan, though Oney was slugging right back. Really fun match here and a good way to show that Drew can slug it out with anyone.

Post match Drew says he has all the raw talent in the world and can put the Smackdown on anyone but he only wants to be right here.

Here's Shinsuke Nakamura for his big farewell. He came here a year ago and wanted to become the best in the world. One year later he calls NXT his home. Over that year, he's learned a lot of things from a lot of people, including the fans. He's learned that the people around here are crazy for things like singing his song. That strikes up the band as Nakamura calls NXT the fans' style. He will always be NXT because we are NXT. Nakamura does his dancing poses as the locker room comes out to the stage to send him off. Even Finn Balor appears to close out the show.

**Overall Rating:** B-. This is another odd show as it was all about showcasing new talent instead of really moving things forward. That was a goal accomplished tonight as McIntyre got to look good, along

with Ruby Riot, Black and Miley (especially him) doing the same. This show helped to start restocking the shelves, though there's a long way to go to really have that all set up.

### Results

Aleister Black b. Corey Hollis – Black Mass

DIY b. Dylan Miley/Michael Blaze – Meet in the Middle to Blaze

Ruby Riot b. Kimberly Frankele – Pele kick to the face

Drew McIntyre b. Oney Lorcan – Claymore

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