

TNA's Latest Woes – October 14 Version

Oh sweet goodness where do I even begin?

So in the last twenty four hours or so, the following news has come out (believe at your own risk in some cases):

1. Billy Corgan is suing Dixie Carter for various reasons. This includes a RESTRAINING ORDER against her and can you really blame him?

<http://www.pwinsider.com/ViewArticle.php?id=105347>

2. Dixie Carter seems to owe half of the world money for selling off pieces of TNA to keep the thing going.

<http://411mania.com/wrestling/tna-news-dixie-carter-personally-owes-billy-corgan-money-funder-for-last-impact-taping/>

3. Some TNA talent might walk if they don't get paid this weekend.

<http://411mania.com/wrestling/some-tna-talent-will-reportedly-declare-themselves-as-free-agents-of-not-paid-this-weekend/>

I'm sure I missed something in there but we've reached the point where the court system is trying to keep Dixie Carter away from TNA. They're out of money and they have bills. I don't know who Dixie can fleece this time but it looks even worse than usual.

News and Notes – October 14,

2016

I don't normally do this but there was so much news yesterday that I had to take a quick look at some of it.

1. TJ Perkins Replaces Hideo Itami in Dusty Rhodes Tag Team Classic.

Itami is out for awhile with a neck injury so Kota Ibushi needed a new partner. In this case, there really isn't a better option than Perkins. I'm very glad they didn't go with a random Japanese wrestler for the sake of having a Japanese team. Instead it's two guys with a history together and something like a dream team.

2. Mickie James to Face Asuka at Takeover: Toronto.

This is a very smart idea and the best thing NXT could have done. It's no secret that the rest of the women in NXT aren't ready to challenge Asuka and it would have been a waste of a Takeover match to have her squash one of them. James can come in and give Asuka a good match while the other women get ready. I know I say this a lot but it show thinking, which is where NXT specializes.

3. Roderick Strong Debuts in NXT.

Strong is one of my favorites in ROH so again I have few complaints here. He's teaming with Austin Aries in the Dusty Rhodes Tag Team Classic, which means it's possible they'll feud in the future. They've got history together so why not put them in the tournament and see where it goes from there? It's worth a shot and there's nothing wrong with having another veteran on the roster.

Wrestling Wars Podcast

Episode 49

TNA gets the courts involved, No Mercy, Raw, Smackdown, NXT and Mailbag time!

<http://mightynorcal.podbean.com/e/wwp-49-the-loltna-saga-continues-no-mercy-review-raw-smackdown-plus-mailbag/>

Impact Wrestling – October 13, 2016: Suddenly, A Change

Impact Wrestling

Date: October 18, 2016

Location: Impact Zone, Orlando, Florida

Commentators: D'Angelo Dinero, Josh Matthews

A lot happened last week with the biggest change of events seeing Eddie Edwards becoming the new TNA World Champion by defeating Lashley. Tonight we have Maria Kanellis' rematch for the Knockouts Title as she challenges Gail Kim in a No DQ match, though there's always the chance that Maria's cronies could screw things up again. Let's get to it.

We open with a long recap of last week's show, primarily focusing on Lashley losing the World Title.

Here's Edwards for his first address as champion. Edwards says he's worked to get here and the fans tell him he deserves it. He's fought Lashley a few times now but something was different this time around. Edwards promises to be a fighting champion who will defend this title anywhere anytime and that includes facing Lashley again. Cue Lashley who quickly beats Edwards down and demands a referee out here for a rematch.

Instead it's Moose and Ethan Carter III for the save as Lashley leaves. That's not exactly the best way to showcase the new champion but at least he didn't lose the title yet.

The Tribunal wants to see Billy Corgan but get Aiden O'Shea instead. The boss hasn't been impressed with them lately and they're on the bubble. O'Shea advises them to do something to impress Corgan and soon.

Corgan says Lashley has just lost his automatic title rematch. Now that's actually interesting. I'm glad we don't immediately have to sit through Lashley getting yet another shot just because he was champion a week ago.

Grand Championship: Aron Rex vs. Jesse Godderz

Rex is defending and Godderz is coming in with a hamstring injury. They hit the mat to start and exchange some early headlocks as Josh and Pope argue over who is closer to Corgan. Jesse's rollup gets two but he grabs at his hamstring on the kickout. The round wraps up with Godderz working on the arm and that's enough to win the round.

A frustrated Rex rolls Jesse up a few times to start the second round, only to get caught in the Adonis Lock. Rex grabs the ropes but Jesse works on the arm some more as the round ends. Godderz wins round two and we take a break before the final round. Back with Rex being a bit less aggressive than you would expect and forearming Godderz outside. Jesse is smart enough to sit on the floor and eat up some time, only to have Rex kick him in the hamstring on the way back inside. The Revelator retains Rex's title at 13:15 (including commercial and time between rounds).

Rating: D+. So they seem to already be teasing a Rex heel turn. To be fair he's been a champion for a whole eleven days and that's WAY too long for a face to be a good guy around here. I really don't need yet another heel around here but it's not like Rex is interesting as a guy in trunks so maybe it's for the best.

Lashley tells O'Shea he has a surprise later tonight.

The Hardys talk about getting things back to where they were a year ago, which Jeff thinks means they're even again. Matt says no because he can

only indulge his addiction for one night only. Jeff seems a bit more like his old self here.

Allie gets an e-mail from someone (presumably Corgan) saying everyone is banned from ringside for Maria's title defense. Maria freaks out and yells at Allie for not telling her.

Lashley interrupts Moose and Ethan Carter III and tells them that they're in the main event tonight.

Here are the Hardys for a chat. Matt says he set his brother on an odyssey to regain the Tag Team Championships of the World and that debt was repaid at Bound For Glory. They're the best team in the world, including the Bucks of Youth and the Day of the New. Jeff sings the theme song and Matt makes noises because he's having a pre-mo-nition: there will be new #1 contenders crowned tonight in the Zone of Impact. Cue the Tribunal to jump the Hardys from behind.

Video on Mike Bennett vs. Cody. Bennett isn't pleased with Cody showing up and trying to make an impact. Tonight they'll settle things in the ring.

Cody vs. Mike Bennett

Feeling out process to start with Cody grabbing a sunset flip for two but missing the Beautiful Disaster. With Bennett on the floor, Cody hits a springboard dive to take him out in a big crash. Maria offers a distraction though and Mike gets in an elevated DDT off the barricade. Since it's 2016, that's not even enough for a close call though as Cody is back in by eight.

A dropkick gets two for Mike but Cody starts his comeback with some forearms and an Alabama Slam. The Beautiful Disaster connects but Bennett ducks the moonsault press. Instead it's a Pedigree from Bennett for another near fall, only to have Cody take him down and try what looks like a Figure Four. Maria offers another distraction but Cody comes right back with Cross Rhodes for the pin at 8:45.

Rating: C+. Cody looked like his usual self so that's all well and good,

though I'm not wild on having Bennett lose again. He's just fallen through the floor lately and while he's still good, there's no fire to him anymore. I'm also not sure why they had this match so early, other than giving Cody his title match way too soon.

Moose is ready for Ethan.

X-Division Title: Marshe Rockett vs. DJZ

Rockett is challenging and we get a quick video package on him before the match. Marshe is 6'4 and 250lbs so he's not your normal member of the division. DJZ goes after him in the corner but gets shoved away by the much bigger Rockett. The champ is launched out to the floor and Rockett hits a good looking dropkick back inside. DJZ speeds things up and sends Marshe outside for a flip dive. The ZDT retains the title at 4:48.

Rating: C. Standard X-Division match here, meaning they bring in someone who could be a big deal and take the division by storm and then he loses in his first singles match because there's no time to build up a story or interest in a match. DJZ is a good champion but he's running through the division way too fast.

Bennett says he'll have Maria's back tonight but Allie says he's banned as well.

Knockouts Title: Maria Kanellis-Bennett vs. Gail Kim

Kim is defending, there are no disqualifications and Madison Rayne is on commentary. If Maria loses, she's out of power in the Knockouts division. Maria tries to bring in some weapons but is quickly thrown to the floor. Gail puts her in a dumpster and sends her flying down the ramp into the post. Back in and Maria uses some trashcan lids to take over, followed by a spinebuster for two. A kendo stick shot puts Maria down but Gail lets her up at two. Instead Gail goes with Eat Defeat into a trashcan lid to retain at 4:57.

Rating: D. I'm really hoping that's it as there's no reason for this to keep going otherwise. Maria is out of power and Gail can be our glorious champion because that's how the world is supposed to work. I'm not sure

who is left to challenge Gail unless they can somehow get us to her vs. Allie, who was the biggest deal in the division for a bit.

Eli Drake tells Ethan not to choke tonight.

Cody comes up to see Eddie Edwards in the back and asks if he'll be ok for their title match next week. Eddie says he'll be fine and they're cool.

We get a vignette with a clock spinning. Three men in masks are sitting behind a table covered in masks. They're bringing clarity and order to Impact and they're not afraid to take a stand.

Moose vs. Ethan Carter III

The winner of this faces Lashley in a #1 contenders match. They start fast with both guys going for their finishers early on. An exchange of dropkicks goes better for Moose and they head outside with Carter taking over off some forearms to the chest. Moose is right back with a bicycle kick to the face and an AA onto the apron for good measure. Back in and Carter missile dropkicks Moose down and it's time to chop it out. A pop up powerbomb and senton give Moose two but Carter is right back up with a Stinger Splash. The chokebomb sets up a discus lariat to the back of Carter's head for the pin at 7:43.

Rating: C+. This was a bit better than I was expecting and it makes sense to have Moose go forward like this. We've seen Carter fighting for the title for well over a year now and it's time for someone else to get a shot in that spot instead. Moose vs. Lashley should be fun, though I would wait a bit longer than a week for that showdown.

Lashley comes out to stare down Moose as the show ends.

Overall Rating: C. That's one of their better shows in a while as TNA actually did a few things. Unfortunately though they did a lot of things in one week that could have been stretched out for several weeks, which has always been a problem for them. The World Title scene feels hotter than it has in months and there's some interesting stuff going on elsewhere. This felt a lot more energetic than most of their shows and

that's a good thing.

Results

Aron Rex b. Jesse Godderz – Revelator

Cody b. Mike Bennett – Cross Rhodes

DJZ b. Marshe Rockett – ZDT

Gail Kim b. Maria Kanellis-Bennett – Eat Defeat into a trashcan lid

Moose b. Ethan Carter III – Discus lariat to the back of the head

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Monday Night Raw – May 13, 2002 (2016 Redo): Night of the Raw Agoobwa

Monday Night Raw

Date: May 13, 2002

Location: Air Canada Center, Toronto, Ontario, Canada

Commentators: Jim Ross, Jerry Lawler

Since when does a city get Wrestlemania in March and Raw in May? It's the final Raw before Judgment Day and the big question is what can possibly happen to Hogan and Undertaker now? Last week was a total disaster and I can't imagine things are going to get any better here. Let's get to it.

Opening sequence.

Hardy Boyz vs. Brock Lesnar

From a Tag Team Title match at Wrestlemania to putting Lesnar over two months later. Matt gets in a few shots to start but hands it off to Jeff, who is planted with a big, strong slam. Matt goes after the leg as the fans chant for the Maple Leafs. The slow beating of Matt continues until a ram into the buckle allows the tag to Jeff. Right hands don't work and a HORRIBLY botched jawbreaker sets up Poetry in Motion for the big hope spot. Jeff hits a splash as Matt drops a top rope leg but Heyman pulls the referee out at two for the LAME DQ. JR: "I think the referee has disqualified Heyman." Not quite Jim.

Rating: D. So Matt and Jeff get to beat Brock and almost have him pinned? Well on one hand, Lesnar shouldn't be able to beat one of the best teams ever but on the other hand, Lesnar shouldn't be in anything close to this much trouble yet. As has been the case with everything else around here lately, this was really poorly booked and does a lot more harm than good.

Post match, the Hardys hit their tandem finishers so Heyman challenges them to a rematch at the pay per view with himself as Brock's partner. Matt immediately accepts in a very loud voice for someone not on a microphone.

The NWO is in the back when Ric Flair comes in. Flair has apparently taken over as leader for the group but he's had to fire Scott Hall for dropping the ball at Wrestlemania and multiple other times (read as because of the Plane Ride). On top of that, of course Nash isn't suspended because he's just out healing from bicep surgery. As for tonight though, there's going to be a new member of the team and it's such a big secret that even the new member doesn't know yet. Uh, that's

kind of a stretch no?

Get The F Out.

Here are Flair and Big Show with something to say. Flair mentions being a sixteen time World Champion, which makes him fifteen times better than the Maple Leafs. The Leafs have won thirteen Stanley Cups so I have no idea what he's going for there. I get what he means but the wording is weird. He also has a real enforcer in Big Show instead of that worthless Tie Domi.

Flair thinks it's clear that there's a problem between himself and Steve Austin. He gave Austin everything he wanted and got Stunned so Austin is like everyone else here: trash. Austin is in big trouble on Sunday, but tonight Flair has other ideas. Tonight, he'll be challenging Hulk Hogan for the World Title. I can live with that actually as their matches can at least be passable and shouldn't involve motorcycles.

Post break we're told that Flair has made his title shot a No DQ match. That's probably necessary.

Hogan arrives....on a motorcyle. Oh geez.

Shawn Stasiak vs. Eddie Guerrero

Non-title and fallout from Eddie accusing Planet Stasiak of growing marijuana. I've heard weirder. I mean, I can't think of anything at the moment but I'm sure it's out there. Maybe on Planet Stasiak. We're not ready yet though as Rob Van Dam comes out to watch as well. Stasiak grabs a quick gutwrench suplex but Eddie gets in a regular suplex to set up the frog splash for the easy pin.

Van Dam jumps Eddie post match. Eddie yells at Rob for interfering in his match (which he didn't do) and promises to get revenge on Sunday.

Steve Austin doesn't think much of Flair and does a lot of WHAT stuff to bother Coach. He says he's going to win on Sunday and insults Flair in a bit that takes about three times as long as it should.

And now, A Day in the Life of Tommy Dreamer. See, Tommy is disgusting and

brushes his dog's teeth before using the same brush, shaves his tongue and drinks toilet water. I'll take an answer to any one of the following questions:

How does this advance anything?

How stupid do you have to be to find this amusing?

What does this accomplish other than making the answer to the previous question laugh?

Was there no one else who could get this time?

Why am I watching this on a wrestling show?

Molly Holly vs. Terri

William Regal, who seems to be dating Molly is on commentary. Terri is wrestling in a tank top and underwear so you can imagine who Lawler is cheering for. We start with Terri's horrible offense (since she's not a wrestler) as Lawler makes fun of Molly for being a virgin. A suplex gets two for Molly but she gets crotched on top and taken down by a shockingly competent hurricanrana. Not that it matters as Molly small packages her for the easy pin. This got double the time as the match to set up Sunday's Intercontinental Title match.

Regal escorts Molly out so she doesn't have to deal with rude Canadian fans.

WWE World Title: Hulk Hogan vs. Ric Flair

No DQ. Hogan is defending and comes to the ring on a motorcycle because that's the plot point of his feud with Undertaker. A shoulder puts Flair down early and it's time to pose a lot. Flair gets shouldered again so it's time for an early chair. By that I mean Ric throws one around and tries chops for some reason, only to have Hogan chop him in the corner instead.

Hogan switches over to the much better right hands and a slam off the top as they're just doing the old standards here. Flair takes over with a low

blow and stomps away before starting in on the knee. The knee drop to the knee is blocked and Hogan puts Ric in the Figure Four. Flair makes the ropes and it's already Hulk Up time. The big boot and legdrop look to finish but X-Pac comes in for the save. Big Show and Bradshaw are your next to run-ins, followed by Austin to Stun Flair, setting up the legdrop to retain the title.

Rating: D. Hogan and Austin in the same match and somehow the idea of them doing ANYTHING together was never even teased on TV. Pay either of them whatever they want to set that match up as I'm sure one of them would be able to get over their legacy issues if the check was big enough. Anyway, Hogan was much more in his element here: getting in and out in less than two minutes and having more than enough interference to keep him from actually wrestling.

Flair yells at the NWO and makes a lumberjack match with Austin facing the newest member of the team. Fine, but have we gotten a reason as to why Flair is with the NWO or whether or not he's actually with the team? I know he's hanging out with them but he's not in NWO gear and isn't announced as an official member. Ignoring the fact that Flair would be the last person to join that group, could they at least make this a bit more clear?

Hardcore Title/Women's Title: Bubba Ray Dudley/Trish Stratus vs. Steven Richards/Jazz

Richards and Jazz are defending and only one title changes if the champions lose. Bubba throws Trish onto both champions to start and tells Richards to shut up. Trish takes Jazz inside for the opening bell before Bubba splashes Richards into Jazz. That means Jazz falls face first into Richards' crotch. It's funny you see. The weapons are brought in because the match is half hardcore (just like the division for years now).

Bubba starts punching Richards and crushes his crotch with a hockey stick and stop sign. Since we haven't buried this idea into the ground enough, here are Crash Holly and Justin Credible to unsuccessfully go after the title. Steven tags Jazz in because tags exist in a hardcore match. Jazz's double chickenwing slam sends Trish crashing to the mat but a quick

Stratusfaction gives Trish the title back.

Rating: D-. My head hurts again and most of it is due to that hardcore nonsense. This story could have been done just as easily (and far more effectively) with the men being left out. At least Trish won the title back in her hometown, which makes you wonder why they didn't just do the title change at Wrestlemania about six weeks ago. The hardcore stuff got the focus because it's flashier and the title change is overlooked. Such is life in 2002 WWE.

Trish tells Bubba to get the tables and the already knocked out Jazz is powerbombed. Nice one WWE.

Undertaker has nothing to say about last week's motorcycle incident. That's probably better for everyone involved.

We run down the pay per view card. I'm not exactly thrilled, even with all the gimmicks included.

Goldust and Booker T. will be lumberjacks tonight so Goldust has given Booker a costume. We get part of the Lumberjack Song from Monty Python and Booker finally snaps. I don't know what it is about these things but they keep cracking me up. It could be that it's two guys with comedic chemistry and funny material instead of unfunny people with no chemistry and bad material. Just a thought.

Bradshaw vs. X-Pac/Big Show

X-Pac starts for the team and gets thrown around like the smaller guy he is so Bradshaw can drop some elbows. Bradshaw makes the mistake of going after Big Show though and gets double teamed with Show pulling him down by the hair. X-Pac gets thrown around some more until Show hits Bradshaw in the back with a chair. Two chokeslams give X-Pac the easy pin.

Rating: D-. Was this supposed to be interesting? The NWO is down to the sixth original member and someone who left the team twice, plus Ric Flair (maybe). It took two members plus a chair shot to beat BRADSHAW. The team can't even beat midcarders on their own anymore and it's not even sad anymore. Now it's just annoying and a really big waste of time.

Hogan, in a helmet and leather jacket, says he was thinking about taking the gear off and scaring hoodlums in neighborhoods but he'd rather be a lumberjack. Cue Undertaker to beat Hogan down and tie him to the motorcycle. Undertaker then rides it around the back of the arena in something that looks like it belongs in a straight to DVD comedy which isn't funny in the first place. Actually, I think Hogan does something like this in Suburban Commando (which is a classic and therefore doesn't fit the earlier description).

After riding around the back of the arena for a bit, which looks more fun than dangerous and painful, Hogan crashes into some cardboard boxes. That could be very abrasive to the skin, especially in leather. This was more funny than bad but can I get Hogan in a leather jacket and helmet rampaging through neighborhoods and beating up low level criminals? That almost has to be a rejected movie script somewhere. Hogan gets looked at by medics and put in a neck brace, despite that probably being the safest stunt this side of a stunt man you'll see in WWE.

Steve Austin vs. ???

Flair has handpicked the lumberjacks so Austin beats up the low level heels for a warmup. The newest member is...Booker T. Well who else was it going to be? Like seriously, who else? Regal maybe? Eddie? It's not like Booker is doing anything else at the moment other than the funniest stuff on the show. Luckily Booker is completely willing to join the team, even though it's a downgrade from the Lumberjack Song. Lawler: "Who wouldn't want to be in the NWO?" JR: "Just about anybody with any common sense." True story.

Booker hammers away and Austin hammers away before grabbing a spinebuster to take over. The FU elbow is broken up by Boss Man pulling Austin to the floor so Brock can beat him up. A ram into the post only gives Booker two so Austin hits another spinebuster and the worst right hands I've ever seen him throw. Flair and the NWO beat on Austin some more but he clotheslines Booker as he gets up from the Spinarooni. The NWO beats up Austin for the third time so he hits Booker low, beats up more lumberjacks, Stuns Regal....and rolls Booker up for the pin.

Rating: F. My head is exploding from watching this. In case it's not clear, Austin is fighting the NWO, which they established earlier tonight, over the last several months, plus THREE TIMES IN A FIVE MINUTE MATCH. The NWO has turned into a horrible disaster (which wasn't that far of a fall in the first place) and now the newest member, and pretty easily the most talented member of the team at the moment, is losing in a 10 on 1 match? Booker is the kind of guy who could easily be elevated to the main event (which is DYING for fresh blood, especially on the face side) but he's jobbing to Austin like this? There are no words.

Post match Arn Anderson of all people jumps Austin from behind and a big beatdown ends the show.

Overall Rating: Agoobwa. This show has turned into a circus and the NWO is stuck in the tiny car. The ONLY face worth anything on this show is Austin and he's stuck with this never ending NWO feud where he's clearly slumming it, even when the entire team is fighting him at once. Flair is a low rent version of Mr. McMahon, Brock is stuck fighting the Hardy's again and again, Booker is now in the NWO because reasons, Eddie and Van Dam are talented but are basically this show's cruiserweights (have the only good matches all night and then get forgotten by the halfway point) and the women are fighting about being virgins.

I don't even know what to make fun of on here. They know how to put on good shows but this whole EVERYONE IS A HEEL BUT AUSTIN schtick is getting old. Let Van Dam go fight in the main event or have Booker help in the fight against the NWO instead of joining it. Just do....ANYTHING other than what they're doing at the moment. I have no idea who thinks this is the best way to go about doing things but something needs to change and it needs to change soon because this is some of the worst wrestling TV I've ever seen.

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NXT – October 12, 2016: Glorious Old NXT

NXT

Date: October 12, 2016

Location: Full Sail University, Winter Park, Florida

Commentators: Tom Phillips, Corey Graves

We're still in the first round of the Dusty Rhodes Tag Team Classic but more importantly we're seeing more in the Samoa Joe path of rage as he tries to get his NXT Title back. In the next few weeks we should also be seeing more matches announced for the upcoming Takeover: Toronto special. Let's get to it.

Opening sequence.

Dusty Rhodes Tag Team Classic First Round: Sanity vs. Glorious Ten

Before Sanity comes out, we have Roode and Dillinger exchanging cheers from the crowd. Sanity are four people in masks and leather jackets who receive a rather impressed reaction. Two of them take off their masks to reveal Sawyer Fulton and Alexander Wolfe, both of whom attack Dillinger while Roode stays on the floor. The double teaming continues with Roode walking away just over a minute and a half in to make this a handicap match. A powerslam/suplex combo put Dillinger away at 1:59.

The smallest member of Sanity (a woman named Nikki Cross) beats on Dillinger until the leader gives Dillinger a wheelbarrow suplex into a

neckbreaker. The leader is....Eric Young. Granted the Canadian flag patch on his jacket was a bit of a hint.

Billie Kay and Peyton Royce laugh off the idea of fighting Liv Morgan because she has no friends.

Roode blames Dillinger for what happened because Roode isn't a tag wrestler.

Liv Morgan vs. Billie Kay

Morgan starts with a dropkick and backslide for two before a gutbuster gets two for Billie. The torture rack with an arm trap makes it even worse for Morgan until an STO gets her out of trouble. Not that it matters though as Royce trips Morgan, allowing Billie to hit the big boot for the pin at 3:30.

Rating: D+. Neither of these two are worth much at the moment but NXT has indeed managed to start turning them into something more than random talent. Maybe they're going to build Morgan up someday but at the moment she's glorified cannon fodder for the heels of the division.

We look back at Andrade Cien Almas turning on Cedric Alexander last week.

Almas yelled in Spanish after last week's show.

Dusty Rhodes Tag Team Classic First Round: TM61 vs. Tino Sabbatelli/Riddick Moss

Moss (formerly known as Mike Rawlis) and Sabbatelli compete against each other so often that they figured they might as well team up. Miller starts with Moss and it's TM61 taking over early on. Thorn comes in with a slingshot senton until Tino low bridges him out to the floor. Back from a break with Tino coming in for some forearms to the chest as the crowd is split on him.

Sabbatelli starts cranking on an armbar and we get some muscular posing. Moss gets in some trash talking but walks into a jawbreaker. The hot tag brings in Miller to clean house as everything breaks down. Sabbatelli's interference doesn't work and it's Thunder Valley for the pin on Tino at

12:02.

Rating: C. Sabbatelli is an interesting case as he looks great and has the athletic background from being in the NFL but he definitely needs ring time and experience. Moss was a more intense version of the guy we've seen for a long time now. TM61 is slowly growing on me but I haven't seen that great performance from them yet.

Buddy Murphy vs. Wesley Blake

Murphy has had a run of bad luck such as travel issues and having his furniture sold for not paying the bill on his storage unit. They stare at each other to start as the fans are more into Blake than Murphy. Buddy nips to his feet and both guys try big kicks at the same time. Blake is knocked out to the floor so Murphy hits a big running flip dive to take over. Fan: "MAMA MIA!" Cue Samoa Joe to jump Murphy for the DQ at 3:12.

Rating: C-. This didn't have time to go anywhere but Murphy continues to look very good in the smaller sample sizes. He's got a somewhat better look and is much better than Blake in the ring but for some reason they won't just let these two split up. Joe coming in is probably the best outcome though as I don't know how long these two could hold a crowd.

Joe says time is up so Regal needs to bring him Shinsuke Nakamura or his title. After a break, here's Nakamura with a quickly removed neckbrace. The fight is on and security is suddenly the most hated team in the building. Their attempt to break up the fight goes nowhere and it continues on the ramp with Nakamura kicking Joe low.

Nakamura is dragged backstage but comes right back, only to be taken back again and again. Joe walks away on his own while Nakamura fights security. The distracted Nakamura is blindsided by Joe but nails Kinshasa inside to end the show. That's more emotion than I've ever seen from Nakamura and it added another gear to his awesomeness.

Overall Rating: B. It's back to what makes NXT great as we had a show dedicated to moving things forward this week. We now have half of the second round set for the Dusty Classic, the reveal of Sanity and Nakamura returning for the showdown with Joe. This felt like a show designed to

make you want to see more in the future and it worked very well in that regard. The wrestling wasn't the point here and the storytelling more than makes up for it.

Results

Sanity b. Glorious Ten – Powerslam/suplex combo to Dillinger

Billie Kay b. Liv Morgan – Big boot

TM61 b. Tino Sabbatelli/Riddick Moss – Thunder Valley to Sabbatelli

Buddy Murphy b. Wesley Blake via DQ when Samoa Joe interfered

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New Column: He's Next

Taking a look at why Goldberg is the best possible option for Lesnar's next opponent.

<http://wrestlingrumors.net/kbs-review-hes-next/>

Smackdown – October 11, 2016: How To Lose A Seven Foot Superstar

Smackdown

Date: October 11, 2016

Location: SAP Center, San Jose, California

Commentators: Mauro Ranallo, John Bradshaw Layfield, David Otunga

It's the show after No Mercy and that means it's time to start getting ready for Survivor Series. There isn't another Smackdown only pay per view until later in the year so we'll get to see some stuff with both brands interacting. Other than that we'll need a new #1 contender for AJ Styles. Let's get to it.

We open with a pay per view recap, focusing as the Smackdown World and Intercontinental Title matches.

Here's Dolph Ziggler to get things going. The fans tell Ziggler that he did it and Ziggler says WE DID IT. Ziggler didn't know how things were going to go until Sunday and check your cable guide if you don't believe him. (My cable guide for this show says "and a look at Dolph Ziggler's exit from WWE." Well done if that was a fake out.) He didn't know if Sunday was going to be his last time but he pulled it off one more time.

Cue Miz and Maryse with Miz going on a rant about how this is just the second act of the story. This is the Empire Strikes Back before he beats Ziggler once and for all. Miz gets in a great line about how people like him get the girl and the gold and he's already got the girl. Ziggler shows us a clip of Miz crying on Sunday but Miz says he isn't done with Ziggler...and neither are there. Cue the Spirit Squad and it's time for a handicap match.

Dolph Ziggler vs. Spirit Squad

Non-title with Ziggler clearing the ring in about thirty seconds before we go to a quick break. For a bonus, we can actually see what's going on during the breaks via a split screen. Back with the Squad in control and Kenny putting on a chinlock. Mikey gets caught in a sleeper before a double DDT plants both cheerleaders. A superkick knocks Kenny silly (Mauro: "OH MY GOD! HE KILLED KENNY!") for the pin at 6:43.

Rating: D. So Ziggler has the big moment on Sunday and tonight he's fighting two over the hill male cheerleaders. Ziggler seemingly can't help but get away from the low level comedy which so often drags his character down. It's bad enough that his name is Dolph Ziggler but he has to fight goons like these two? Hopefully this is a one off moment because it's already taken away a bit of the momentum.

Post match Miz goes after Ziggler but Heath Slater and Rhyno of all people make the save.

We see a WW2K17 version of Miz vs. Ziggler from Sunday. Ignore Ziggler's tights being the wrong colors.

Shane McMahon and Daniel Bryan have a special announcement for Survivor Series: a five on five Raw vs. Smackdown Survivor Series match, a five on five Raw vs. Smackdown tag team Survivor Series match and a five on five Raw vs. Smackdown women's Survivor Series match. I'd much rather them beef up a big pay per view than make it into its own show again.

Naomi vs. Carmella

Carmella jumps her before the bell and we take a break. We come back joined in progress with Carmella holding Naomi in a chinlock and talking trash as Alexa Bliss is shown watching backstage. Naomi's dancing kicks have Carmella reeling but she pulls Naomi off the middle rope to take over. Cue Nikki Bella (who Carmella attacked earlier today) for a distraction though and Naomi rolls Carmella up for the pin at 2:57 shown. That's becoming way too common of a finish again.

Alexa says she can beat Naomi any day of the week and twice on Sunday.

Bryan comes in and says she can prove that next Tuesday.

Jimmy Uso vs. Chad Gable

Gable takes him to the mat and works on an armbar but gets superkicked in the ribs. The Samoan drop keeps Jimmy in his comfort zone and we hit a chinlock. Gable pops right back up and hits a spinning top rope clothesline to show off a bit. A cross armbreaker over the ropes has Jimmy in trouble but Jimmy grabs a rollup with Jey holding him in place for the pin at 2:50.

The Hype Bros talk about picking up women and Ghostbusters when the Ascension interrupt. Evil staring ensues and a tag match is probably set up for later.

Here's AJ Styles to brag about his win on Sunday. He beat Dean Ambrose and John Cena in a single match and that's simply phenomenal. The fans are a bunch of losers for wanting to cheer Cena when he's off trying to be Kelly Ripa's co-host or for cheering someone as weird as Ambrose. Most champions would take a year off after a win like he had at No Mercy but AJ isn't even taking a night off. Instead he's giving someone a chance tonight so bring out his opponent. Cue Ambrose but that's not who AJ meant. Ambrose accuses Dean of ducking him but AJ has a newcomer in mind.

AJ Styles vs. James Ellsworth

It's chin guy! Non-title of course. Dean kind of wants to see this because Ellsworth 3:16 says if you've got two hands, you've got a fighting chance. AJ wants Dean gone but here's Bryan to say hang on a second. The match will take place and Ambrose will be the guest referee. Dean steals the referee's shirt and makes AJ hold everything in his pockets, including a flask and Tic-Tacs.

The bell rings and we get a weapons check before going to a break. Back with barely any contact having taken place, which makes me wonder why bothered ringing the bell before the break. Dean won't let him use a closed fish but AJ argues that everyone uses it in WWE. James throws a right hand and AJ is so incensed that he chases James around the ring. Back in and Dean trips AJ so Ellsworth can get a rollup for two.

The Calf Crusher makes Ellsworth tap but Dean stops to take a phone call. JBL: "HE CAN'T HEAR THAT BEHIND HIM???" JBL annoys me as much as anyone but he's hilarious when he snaps like that. Ellsworth is thrown outside but Dean throws him back in, only to stop to flirt with a good looking woman. Back in and the Styles Clash gives AJ two as Dean stops to stare at him before three. Dirty Deeds lays AJ out and Ellsworth gets a very close two. Dean heads outside to steal a soda before giving AJ another Dirty Deeds. A fast count gives Ellsworth the pin at 10:34.

Rating: B. This was a lot of fun and I had a blast with it. They were trying for goofy here and went with something over the top instead of the same tropes they always use in these things. It's also nice to see a heel get this treatment instead of a face for once. That being said, they might have been better served to do this on a different night than right after AJ wins such a huge match.

Randy Orton asks Kane if he wants to go on the ride through his nightmares. Kane agrees, but says Orton has issues.

Royal Rumble By the Numbers video.

AJ yells at the bosses so he'll take issues into his own hands. Daniel says he has an idea for Ellsworth for next week.

Wyatt Family vs. Kane/Randy Orton

Before the match, the Wyatts say the world being crazy has brought them back together. Tonight Randy and his monster can join them in the abyss. Bray hammers on Kane to start so Kane throws him into the corner for right hands of his own. A big boot looks to set up the chokeslam but Bray bails to the floor and we take a break.

Back with Orton superplexing Harper and making the tag to Kane. That goes bad for the masked one though as he gets double teamed in the corner with the Wyatts starting in on his ankle. Kane easily fights them off and brings Orton back in to clean house. The elevated DDT plants Wyatt but Orton gets distracted by the big guys fighting outside.

The referee yells at Kane, allowing Harper to superkick Orton down. Wyatt

misses the backplash though...and there go the lights again. They come back on to have Harper in Kane's place on the apron, allowing Wyatt to hit Sister Abigail for the pin on Orton at 10:49. Kane is nowhere to be seen. JBL: "You don't just lose a 7ft tall superstar!"

Rating: C+. The ending was fine for Wyatt Family standards and I'm glad Bray pinned Orton again. If nothing else it means that we're not likely to be seeing Orton getting the World Title shot for the time being so at least it's not time to get annoyed. It's not the best ending in the world but it came after two hours instead of three so I can live with it a bit better.

Overall Rating: C. Totally watchable show with a good set of matches announced for Survivor Series and a really fun AJ match. The wrestling wasn't the point here as they were much more about bringing things down from No Mercy and making it clear that we're coming up on a bunch of rematches. I actually liked No Mercy so that's not the worst thing in the world.

Also, I really can't emphasize enough how much the missing hour helps this show. You can have stuff like a vanishing Kane, Ziggler fighting cheerleaders and a screwy referee but no matter what happens there's never more than two hours left, as is so often the case on Raw. It's an easy show to sit through and they do entertaining stuff to boot. Good stuff here, as usual.

Results

Dolph Ziggler b. Spirit Squad – Superkick to Kenny

Naomi b. Carmella – Rollup

Jimmy Uso b. Chad Gable – Rollup with assistance from Jey Uso

James Ellsworth b. AJ Styles – Pin after Dirty Deeds from Dean Ambrose

Wyatt Family b. Randy Orton/Kane – Sister Abigail to Orton

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Monday Night Raw – October 10, 2016: What's The Story?

Monday Night Raw

Date: October 10, 2016

Location: Oracle Arena, Oakland, California

Commentators: Michael Cole, Corey Graves, Byron Saxton

We're less than three weeks away from Hell in a Cell and only one of the namesake matches has been set up so far. The interesting question is what will be the second (if not the third): Seth Rollins vs. Kevin Owens or Charlotte vs. Sasha Banks. Both have been announced for the show but neither has officially been announced as taking place inside the Cell. Let's get to it.

Opening sequence.

Here's Sasha Banks to get things going. Sasha says she's on top of the world right now and wishes Eddie Guerrero a happy birthday. She spent years watching Eddie lie, cheat and steal his way to the top. Last week she was in the main event of Raw, just like Trish Stratus and Lita were all those years ago. Sasha knows the rematch is coming at Hell in a Cell so let's put it inside the Cell for the first time ever.

Cue Charlotte but Rusev (now with sideburns) and Lana of all people come out to interrupt. Rusev says no one cares about this women's revolution but Charlotte takes the mic from him and, with Stephanie style tones, asks Rusev who he thinks he is. The match with Sasha is on inside the Cell.

Rusev takes the mic back and says good for you but he wasn't done. This time it's Sasha taking the mic away and throwing it to the mat. Lana says Sasha and Charlotte need to learn their place because they're whining like little girls. That earns Lana a shove down and Rusev gets dropkicked out to the floor. Roman Reigns comes out to prevent the male on female violence. The match really doesn't need to be inside the Cell from a storyline perspective but this is the next logical step for the women being treated as equals and there's nothing wrong with that.

Here's New Day to talk about the history of sports in Oakland, including the Splash Brothers and the Bash Brothers. That brings them to the most famous friends though: Danny Tanner and Uncle Jesse. See, there's about to be a full house because New Day is three of a kind and they're about to deal with a pair in Cesaro and Sheamus. Kofi has a hot garbage sign to describe Sheamus and Woods says the title match at the pay per view will prove that New Day rocks.

Cesaro vs. Kofi Kingston

Cesaro shoulders him down to start as we hear about Demolition's record again. Apparently Sheamus is on Facebook while he's sitting on the steps, not watching the match. They head outside for a staredown as we take a break. Back with Kofi getting two off a middle rope crossbody as Sheamus is still on Facebook. Trouble in Paradise misses and it's time for the Uppercut Train. Kofi escapes a Sharpshooter attempt but tweaks his leg on a springboard attempt. Sheamus decides to go after Francesca and the distraction lets Kofi small package Cesaro for the pin at 7:45.

Rating: C. This was more about advancing the story than the match itself and that worries me. The announcers kept talking about how Cesaro and Sheamus have no chance to win the titles, making me think that's exactly what's going to happen. New Day has gone on WAY too long to let this

thrown together team beat them for the belts two months before they break a nearly thirty year old record.

Tonight it's Charlotte/Rusev vs. Reigns/Banks. Am I missing something or did Charlotte dropkick Rusev earlier tonight?

We see Goldberg's comments on "Sportscenter", where he said he'd love to face Brock Lesnar again.

Bayley vs. Cami Fields

Cami starts fast with some shoulders in the corner and stomps her way out of a sunset flip attempt. That's about it though as the Bayley to Belly finishes Fields at 2:19.

Dana Brooke jumps Bayley post match.

Chris Jericho is on the phone with someone and says he wants a pay day. R-Truth comes up and offers him a Payday candy bar. I'll take it if Jericho doesn't want it.

Drew Gulak/Tony Nese vs. Sin Cara/Lince Dorado

You knew Cara would be involved in this sometime. Gulak and Dorado start things off but an early headscissors means it's off to Nese. Dorado gets taken into the wrong corner as the fans are dying by the second. A Gory Special has Dorado in trouble and it's back to Nese for a chinlock. It's back to Cara for a moonsault to both villains and a springboard crossbody for two on Gulak. Everything breaks down and Cara suicide dives onto Nese. Dorado hits a shooting star press to pin Gulak at 3:17.

Rating: C+. The best thing they could do here is get them out of the ring quickly. This division isn't working and there's really no hiding that anymore. Would it really kill them to let some of these guys talk about something other than being athletes and wanting to prove that they're the best in the world? Like, giving them some characters etc?

Stephanie McMahon invites herself to join Mick Foley's Cell address.

Here are the bosses with Stephanie making fun of Foley's red flannel

suit. In what sounds like a Home Shopping Network ad, Foley and Stephanie talk about the Women's Title match being inside the Cell and confirm it for a second time tonight. But wait: there's more. In a THIRD Cell match, Seth Rollins will be challenging for Kevin Owens' Raw World Title as well.

This brings out Chris Jericho and Kevin Owens to say Mick has outdone himself this week. Owens doesn't want to be in the Cell because he doesn't want to be an old, broken down man like Foley. Jericho wants to know if he and Kevin can have their own private jet if Mick is just throwing out presents. The recklessness involved in putting Owens in the Cell means FOLEY JUST MADE THE LIST! Foley: "I started the List." Jericho: "YOU JUST MADE THE LIST AGAIN!"

Stephanie tells Jericho to show Foley respect (MAKE UP YOUR FREAKING MIND ALREADY STEPHANIE!!! TWO WEEKS AGO YOU TREATED FOLEY LIKE A THREE YEAR OLD AND NOW JERICHO NEEDS TO RESPECT HIM???) so she has an idea: if Jericho can beat Rollins tonight, he's in the title match as a triple threat. Because Raw needs to top Smackdown's triple threat!

Rollins says Stephanie loves to pull strings and is always five moves ahead. Tonight though, he's going to ruin those plans by beating Jericho. Rollins wants to know what Owens is thinking though because Jericho might go into business for himself.

Curtis Axel/Bo Dallas vs. Enzo Amore/Big Cass

And never mind as Anderson and Gallows jump Enzo and Cass from behind before the match starts. No match.

After a break, Axel and Dallas say they want a tag match.

Curtis Axel/Bo Dallas vs. Sami Zayn/Neville

Bo beats on Sami in the corner to start as we hear about Foley making three Cell matches. Well given that they were all challenges issued by wrestlers, that's not the most impressive things in the world. Axel takes over on Sami and hits a good looking dropkick. Not that it matters as an exploder suplex sets up the Helluva Kick and the Red Arrow for the easy

pin on Axel at 2:28.

Lana comes into Charlotte's locker room and snipe at each other a bit.

R-Truth vs. Titus O'Neil

Apparently Titus is mad about Truth getting the commercial for Payday earlier tonight. Titus throws Truth around to start as Graves plugs the Titus Brand. Goldust gets on the steps for a distraction and Truth grabs a rollup (with Titus' feet in the ropes) for the pin at 2:12. That's the second distraction finish tonight.

TJ Perkins comes in to see Brian Kendrick and talks about how Kendrick deserves another shot at the title. They shake hands but Kendrick goes after him, earning a right hand from the champ.

Braun Strowman vs. Splash Brothers

The Brothers are Steven and Clay. Strowman treats them like you would expect and splashes Steven while Clay is on Braun's back. A double dropkick puts the Brothers down and it's a running powerslam for Clay. Steven is reversed chokeslammed onto his brother for the pin at 59 seconds.

Braun still wants better competition. In other words: nothing changed this week and the writers get to stretch it out even more.

Roman Reigns and Sasha talk strategy.

Of all things, we get the Rumble by the Numbers video. Tickets go on sale soon it seems.

Charlotte/Rusev vs. Roman Reigns/Sasha Banks

The genders have to match so we start with multiple tags before any contact. Rusev punches Reigns to start and a clothesline gets two. Reigns starts a comeback as the fans want Sasha. The villains are knocked to the floor and we take a break. Back with Reigns caught in a chinlock and more WE WANT SASHA chants. A Superman Punch allows the tag to Charlotte, meaning it's off to Sasha to clean house. Wouldn't it have been smarter

to not have Rusev tag so the advantage isn't lost? The double knees in the corner get two on Charlotte and the Bank Statement makes her tap at 9:48.

Rating: D+. Well that happened and it was nowhere near as amazing as the announcers tried to make it seem. The fans really didn't seem to care about Rusev vs. Reigns as there's almost no way Rusev is getting the title back and everyone knows it. There was nothing to the match anyway and the sudden ending didn't help things.

Tom Phillips asks Jericho and Owens about the possible change to the title match at the pay per view. Jericho: "That's a stupid idiom." Jericho says if one of them is champion, both of them are champion. Owens throws Phillips out but since Tom doesn't get out fast enough, HE MAKES THE LIST, under the name Felipe Thomastein.

We see the Goldberg clip again.

Here's Paul Heyman to discuss said Goldberg comments but first we get another WWE2K17 video, this time of Lesnar vs. Goldberg. Heyman has heard people whispering about Goldberg returning for years now because they want one more spear and Jackhammer. You still hear the chants today and there they go again.

Everyone that got in the same ring as Goldberg was conquered while he was running parallel to Brock Lesnar. It keeps Heyman up at night that Goldberg is one up on Brock so as of tonight, Goldberg is officially challenged to a fight any place anytime. Goldberg can either live in the past or step in this ring and be conquered. In Suplex City, Goldberg is next.

Emmalina video.

TJ Perkins vs. Ariya Daivari

Non-title with Brian Kendrick on commentary. Daivari has to go to the ropes to get out of an early kneebar and we hit the chinlock on Perkins. A neckbreaker gets two on TJ but he comes right back with one of his own. The slingshot dropkick sets up the kneebar to make Daivari tap at 5:14.

Rating: D+. This might have been my breaking point for the division. These matches aren't interesting and having random people who happened to be in the tournament job to Perkins isn't helping things. It's just a total misfit on this show and nothing they're doing is making it any better. Either make it interesting or scrap the thing already.

Jericho and Stephanie run into each other with Chris saying he thought about putting her on the list. Stephanie is cool with that though, as long as the Raw triple threat beats Smackdown's triple threat. Jericho needs to remember that Stephanie can't help him inside the Cell. Not that Jericho asked about it but Stephanie seems to think everyone needs her help. Owens comes up and asks what that was about but Jericho just says friendship.

Hispanic Heritage Month video on Tito Santana. It's nice to have it be about a wrestler again.

A Tweet from Goldberg says he'll be on Raw next week.

Seth Rollins vs. Chris Jericho

If Jericho wins, the Universal Title match becomes a triple threat. Rollins doesn't care for having a toothpick thrown in his face so he smacks Jericho around. A Blockbuster gets two for Seth and Jericho bails to the floor, only to get caught by a slingshot dropkick. Cue Owens for a distraction so Jericho can take over and we take a break.

Back with Jericho kicking Rollins off the top and slapping on an abdominal stretch. Rollins sends him face first into the middle turnbuckle and gets two off a Sling Blade (which Jericho called loudly). Seth goes up top and slams Jericho off, only to have his crossbody dropkicked out of the air. The low superkick gets two on Jericho but Owens offers a distraction, allowing Jericho to grab the Walls.

A belt shot from Owens gets the same and Rollins takes him down with a suicide dive. The springboard knee to the head gets two on Jericho but he avoids the frog splash. A Lionsault gives Jericho a near fall of his own but he misses a high crossbody. Jericho reverses the Pedigree into another Walls attempt, only to get small packaged for the pin at 19:14.

Rating: B-. The ending was more of a relief than anything else as I really, really didn't need to sit through another triple threat title match, especially inside the Cell. Rollins vs. Owens isn't the most interesting thing in the world but Jericho can go and do something else instead of trying to salvage this upper midcard feud.

Post match Owens and Jericho beat on Seth but Rollins fights back and gives Jericho a Pedigree as Owens bails to end the show.

Overall Rating: D. What is the top story on Raw right now? Is it the Lesnar vs. Goldberg? Jericho/Owens vs. Rollins? One half of Raw vs. Smackdown? Charlotte vs. Sasha? The problem is nothing is standing out right now and it's hard to care about a bunch of stories that feel like they belong in the upper midcard. I can't even blame it on Stephanie this week (though her defending Foley had my jaw dropping) because it's a recurring problem. Owens has had his legs cut off as he's really just an afterthought at the moment in what feels like multiple feuds.

There's too much stuff going on near the top and the LONG list of midcard and lower card feuds and stories don't help things. Tonight you had two cruiserweight matches, that stupid Titus Brand stuff, the random tag feuds and Braun Strowman and I'm probably forgetting some. They need to trim some of this stuff down and stop trying to throw so much bad, unfocused stuff at us at the same time.

Results

Kofi Kingston b. Cesaro – Small package

Bayley b. Cami Fields – Bayley to Belly

Sin Cara/Lince Dorado b. Drew Gulak/Tony Nese – Shooting star press to Nese

Sami Zayn/Neville b. Curtis Axel/Bo Dallas – Red Arrow to Axel

R-Truth b. Titus O'Neil – Rollup

Braun Strowman b. Splash Brothers – Reverse chokeslam to Steven

Sasha Banks/Roman Reigns b. Rusev/Charlotte – Bank Statement to Charlotte

TJ Perkins b. Ariya Daivari – Kneebar

Seth Rollins b. Chris Jericho – Small package

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No Mercy 2016: The Same Old Surprises

No Mercy 2016

Date: October 9, 2016

Location: Golden 1 Center, Sacramento, California

Commentators: Mauro Ranallo, John Bradshaw Layfield, David Otunga

It's the second Smackdown exclusive show and things have already been shaken up a bit. As announced by WWE.com, the Smackdown World Title match will open the show, presumably to avoid direct competition with the second US Presidential Debate. Why someone couldn't watch both at once isn't clear. Let's get to it.

On the pre-show, Curt Hawkins comes out, says hello to San Francisco, and

then leaves because he only said he was stepping in the ring. Ok that's funny. His first match is Tuesday.

Pre-Show: American Alpha/Hype Bros vs. Ascension/Vaudevillains

Bonus match and PLEASE let this be the only pre-show match. Gable and English get things going and it's already time for an NXT chant. Both Vaudevillains are thrown into the corner and English takes a double hiptoss. Viktor and Ryder come in and guess which one the fans like best. It's off to Mojo for some dancing and again, WHY DOES JBL LIKE HIM SO MUCH??? Ryder tags himself in and everything breaks down so a quadruple clothesline can put the bad guys on the floor.

Back from a break with Ryder in trouble with English grabbing a chinlock. They head outside with Konor being sent into the barricade and then missing a charge into the post, allowing the hot tag to Jordan. Everything breaks down again and the Grand Amplitude ends English at 9:13.

Rating: C. Nothing we haven't seen a bunch of times before but it's a good choice for a pre-show match. Just let the guys go nuts with Alpha doing their stuff to hype up the crowd as a glorified dark match should. Above that though: they kept it relatively short and didn't try to do anything more than they needed to. It's better than Corbin vs. Swagger at least.

The opening video features a voice asking for mercy for the sins about to take place.

Smackdown World Title: Dean Ambrose vs. John Cena vs. AJ Styles

AJ is defending and the fans do not like Cena in northern California. For a change of pace, we get a recap video after all three guys have their entrances. Short version: AJ has beaten them both and we're having a triple threat because TRIPLE THREATS RULE! It's a big jawing session to start before all three fail at their finishers in the first minute. Ambrose takes over with some of his brawling and takes AJ outside for a few rams into the announcers' table.

Cena follows them out but walks into a slingshot Phenomenal Forearm (that looked great). Back in and Cena German suplexes both of them at the same time (Mauro: "MAMA MIA!") but AJ flips out of the AA and Pele's Cena down. AJ moonsaults into the reverse DDT on Ambrose and grabs a regular version on Cena for a bonus. Ambrose is tossed outside and hits the steps, leaving Cena to grab a Code Red for two on the champ.

In something you don't often see in a triple threat, AJ and Cena trade sleepers but Ambrose comes in and grabs one of his own. That goes nowhere so Cena initiates his finishing sequence on Ambrose until Styles makes the save with another German suplex. The finishers don't work again so Ambrose and Styles suplex each other, leaving Cena to come in and pick up the pieces.

A Ten Knuckle Shuffle doesn't appear to do much damage because it's just a fist drop so Cena goes with an AA and STF on Ambrose. Styles makes the save and gets two on Ambrose with the springboard 450. The Styles Clash takes Ambrose out but Cena grabs the STF on the champ. Ambrose saves that so Cena picks them both up for the AA at the same time. I know it's been done before and it's been done with bigger people but THAT IS NOT NORMAL!

Neither guy gets flipped though as AJ escapes and Dean clotheslines Cena down. The Calf Crusher has Cena in trouble but Ambrose makes the save. Dean puts AJ in the Calf Crusher while Cena gets an STF, making AJ tap at 19:27. That doesn't count though because it's a double submission so the match continues. Dean gets two off Dirty Deeds with AJ pulling the referee out. Cena comes right back with the super AA but Styles blasts Cena with a chair to retain at 21:39.

Rating: B+. The match was great but can someone explain the false finish to me? Somehow Ambrose is the only one here who didn't lose but AJ is the one leaving with the title. AJ winning is the only logical winner here as Ambrose had his one title reign and is much more interesting chasing the belt anyway. Cena can win the big one at Wrestlemania and that's all that matters in the long run.

We recap Bray Wyatt vs. Randy Orton. Wyatt targeted Orton for whatever reason (like he has logical reasons) and they were scheduled to fight

last month but Orton's injuries prevented it from happening. Their big showdown is tonight and there's a possibility that Sister Abigail is lurking.

Carmella vs. Nikki Bella

Standard "you're famous but I'm better than you" feud. Carmella goes right after her to start but gets thrown outside. Nikki follows her out and is tossed into the LED board to mess her neck up all over again. Back in and we hit the chinlock on Nikki, followed by the moonwalk into the Bronco Buster for two. Carmella cranks on the neck even more before just pulling on the hair.

A quick Bella Buster and small package get two each on Carmella but she grabs the Code of Silence. Nikki isn't about to sell a neck hold though and powers up, followed by the big forearm. Another Code of Silence sends Nikki to the ropes and the Rack Attack 2.0 (TKO, which isn't a move out of a rack) is enough to pin Carmella at 8:05.

Rating: C-. Now come on. You knew Nikki wasn't about to lose her first singles match when she can get out of a finishing move twice and prove that she's the real fearless star in a match. Carmella will be back, though hopefully nowhere near Nikki in the future. The build to this was good but Nikki winning the way she did made my eyes roll.

Miz comes up to the bosses and says Daniel Bryan and Ziggler will have a lot in common after tonight. Miz: "Maryse, say adieu." Maryse (looking insanely good here): "Adieu."

Tag Team Titles: Heath Slater/Rhyno vs. Usos

Usos are challenging. Jimmy pops Slater in the face to start so the fans remind Jimmy that SLATER HAS KIDS. Jey comes in and lets us know that he has kids too. An early chinlock doesn't last long and it's off to Rhyno for a running shoulder to the ribs. The running Umaga attack puts Rhyno down for two as the fans aren't exactly thrilled with this so far. Rhyno fights out of a chinlock but gets dragged into the Uso corner to keep him in trouble. The twins keep taking turns on Rhyno until Jimmy runs into an elbow in the corner.

That's enough for a hot tag as Slater comes in to clean house but the fans still aren't getting into it. Everything breaks down and the fans get behind the champs as Jimmy punches Slater in the face. Heath is right back up though and powerslams Jimmy off the top for two (cool little spot). It's time to go after Heath's leg but Rhyno breaks up the Tequila Sunrise. Rhyno Gores Jey to retain at 10:17 in what I'd call a big surprise.

Rating: C. This got better by the end and the ending was a surprise but it didn't get off the ground for the most part. I'm not sure I get the booking here but maybe the Usos get the titles back in the next few weeks on TV. Not a bad match though the lackluster crowd reactions didn't help things here.

Bray Wyatt speaks in tongues before shifting to He's Got The Whole World In His Hands.

Quick recap of Baron Corbin vs. Jack Swagger. Corbin lost to Swagger via submission but claimed he was reaching for the ropes instead of tapping out, which the video seems to back up. It's nice to have a rematch over something that makes sense instead of just having one after someone wins clean.

Baron Corbin vs. Jack Swagger

Corbin goes right after him to start and sends Swagger outside to crush his hand between the steps and the post. Back in and Swagger starts wrenching at the bad hand before getting two off a hard clothesline. Swagger drops him close to onto the post but the hand keeps Jack from following up. Something like a belly to belly plants Corbin, who comes right back with a Deep Six for two more. One heck of a clothesline drops Corbin and it's off to the Patriot Lock. This time Corbin makes the rope and pokes Swagger in the eyes, setting up End of Days for the pin at 7:27.

Rating: D+. This show needs a charge soon as it's starting to lose a lot of steam. This wasn't the best match in the first place but at least the story made sense. Swagger coming over to Smackdown is fine as he's only there to be a jobber. Hopefully this leads to Corbin climbing the ranks

as he has all the tools, save for the experience. Wins like this help, but Swagger doesn't have the most value in the world.

We recap Ziggler vs. Miz. Ziggler has lost two straight title shots and is on a major losing streak. He has to win one big match though and is willing to put up his career for one more shot.

Intercontinental Title: The Miz vs. Dolph Ziggler

Ziggler is challenging and has his career on the line. Dolph tries to take it to the mat to start but opts for a pair of dropkicks instead. Miz comes back with a double underhook crank before doing Daniel Bryan's YES double knee stomp. The Reality Check gets two but Ziggler comes back with another dropkick. The Fameasser is countered into a slingshot sitout powerbomb and a rollup with a handful of tights gets two on Ziggler.

Miz changes gears by going after the knee with a dropkick to the back of the leg. That means the Figure Four goes on and it's time for the long screaming session from Ziggler. A rope is grabbed and Ziggler comes back with a Rough Ryder of all things for two. The drama is really starting to take hold here and it's working way better than I was expecting.

Ziggler is sent head first into an exposed buckle, setting up another slingshot sitout powerbomb for two. Miz is so furious that he gets caught in the Zig Zag for a VERY close near fall. The Skull Crushing Finale is countered into a rollup for two more so it's off to a sleeper on the champ. Miz gets the ropes and hits the Skull Crushing Finale, only to have Ziggler get his boot on the ropes.

Miz rips Ziggler's boot off and walks into a superkick but Ziggler's injured leg delays the cover. Cue the Spirit Squad for a distraction so Ziggler superkicks Mikey down. The Skull Crushing Finale gets one of the closest near falls I've seen in a long time and Miz is ticked. The referee finally ejects everyone from ringside and it's a superkick from Ziggler for the pin and the title at 19:33.

Rating: A-. It says a lot when I was begging for Ziggler to lose and was still getting into the near falls. They might have overdone it a bit with the Spirit Squad (Maryse could have done the same thing) but the drama

was insane here because it felt like something was on the line. Miz's reign made the Intercontinental Title feel like the most important thing in the world at times and that means Ziggler winning the title is important. Now, I have no faith in him to keep things going this strong because Miz is that much better than Ziggler and we've been here WAY too many times before, but very well done on the moment.

Randy Orton's reflection distorts in a mirror.

Pre-Show recap.

Alexa Bliss vs. Naomi

Naomi is replacing an injured Becky Lynch, who will defend against Bliss on November 8 from Glasgow, Scotland. Bliss goes after her to start but gets dropped into the corner for the split legged moonsault. Naomi kicks Bliss away but gets her arm cranked to put Alexa in control. Bliss: "I DON'T LIKE YOU!" A dropkick knocks Bliss away and the Rear View gets two. Alexa grabs a cross armbreaker but gets rolled up for the completely clean pin at 5:01.

Rating: D+. Regretting this immediately, can someone explain the thinking here? Unless they're setting up a triple threat (which is what they're probably doing), this is another really head scratching result because Bliss should be rolling over everyone to set up the title shot. Instead she gets pinned by a replacement to....I have no idea actually.

Hell in a Cell ad.

We recap Orton vs. Wyatt again, this time focusing on Wyatt tormenting Orton and playing mind games.

Randy Orton vs. Bray Wyatt

Bray laughs throughout Orton's entrance. An early lockup sends Bray outside for a bit before it's time to slug it out. The threat of Sister Abigail sends the fight outside again with Orton being thrown over the announcers' table. Bray sends him into the steps and does the Orton pose before taking him back in for the running backsplash.

The slow beating continues with more clotheslines and a chinlock. Bray takes his sweet time going to the middle rope and misses the backsplash, which would have missed by two feet even if Orton hadn't rolled away. Some forearms don't have much effect for Orton so he goes with clotheslines because that's how you make comebacks in WWE.

The snap powerslam gets two on Bray but the RK0 is countered into Sister Abigail which is countered into a rollup for two more. Bray plants him with the release Rock Bottom and it's back to the floor, only to have Bray miss another backsplash onto the steps. A belly to back suplex onto the barricade sets up Orton's elevated DDT....and there go the lights. Luke Harper shows up in the ring for a distraction and it's Sister Abigail for the pin on Orton at 15:37.

Rating: B. So in other words it's the old standard for Bray: the Family has to come in and help him out because Heaven forbid he does anything on his own. At least Bray won a pay per view singles match (first time since Battleground 2015) and it seems that we're waiting on the Orton vs. Styles title feud that seems to be inevitable. It's a good main event but this wasn't going to follow Miz vs. Ziggler.

Overall Rating: B. The three main matches all nailed it but the rest of the show was pretty dreadful. They still don't have enough to warrant three hour pay per view but at least the top of the card worked. Having the World Title match go on first was stupid and the Intercontinental Title match would have been a better main event, though at least the matches were good. This show really isn't memorable aside from Miz vs. Ziggler but at least it was entertaining and went off the air early enough. Good show but it's going to fall through the cracks.

Results

AJ Styles b. John Cena and Dean Ambrose – Chair shot to Cena

Nikki Bella b. Carmella – Rack Attack 2.0

Heath Slater/Rhyno b. Usos – Gore to Jey

Baron Corbin b. Jack Swagger – End of Days

Dolph Ziggler b. The Miz – Superkick

Naomi b. Alexa Bliss – Rollup

Bray Wyatt b. Randy Orton – Sister Abigail

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